



Minutes

Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee

**November 2, 2022, 2:00 p.m.
City Hall - 808 2nd Avenue East - Council Chambers**

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Councillor John Tamming
Member Mary Anne Alton
Member Tom Burri
Member Peter Tovell
Member David Taylor

MEMBERS

ABSENT/REGRETS: Member Megan Celhoffer
Member Constance Maconaghie
Chair Richard Thomas

STAFF PRESENT: Tim Simmonds, City Manager
Aidan Ware, Director and Chief Curator
Lauren Stewart, Community Services Administrative Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Tovell called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Vice-Chair Tovell paid respects to Judy Thomson, a long-time volunteer and supporter of the Gallery, who recently passed away.

2. CALL FOR ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

2.a Vice-Chair Tovell Re: Outgoing Committee Members

Vice-Chair Tovell thanked outgoing Committee Members for their service: Councillor Thomas, Councillor Tamming, Member Alton and Member Celhoffer.

2.b Councillor Tamming Re: Social Media Post Concerning Gallery Budget

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

- 4.a Minutes of the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee meeting held on September 28, 2022

AG-221102-001

Moved by Member Burri

"THAT the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on September 28, 2022."

Carried.

5. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

There were no deputations or presentations.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

There were no questions from the public.

7. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR WHICH DIRECTION IS REQUIRED

There were no correspondence items presented for consideration.

8. REPORTS OF CITY STAFF

- 8.a Report AG-22-009 from Director and Chief Curator re: November Update

The Director and Chief Curator of the Tom Thomson Art Gallery (TTAG) provided an overview of the November Update Report.

- The current and upcoming exhibitions were highlighted, including:
 - a new exhibition by the regional artist Nicholas Bent;
 - a new exhibition of Tom Thomson's work and other works from the collection; and
 - the ongoing exhibition *Showing 55*.
- Public Projects and Events were highlighted:
 - The Gallery has applied for a grant that would support the initial stages of the OPEN Team Pollinator Corridor Project; a stakeholder meeting is being held soon;
 - Teimojin Tan, a local doctor, will be providing a talk respecting his experiences;
 - Collaborations with Coffin Ridge, and Georgian Bay Symphony are in development;
 - Gallery Night at the Movies has successfully kicked off after a hiatus due to the pandemic;

- Enhancement and improvement of the ways in which individuals can access the collection is continually a focus for the Gallery;
- 110 of the Gallery's works from the collection are currently on view in various exhibitions;
- 85% of the Ontario Arts Council grant will be received this fall, with the remaining funds provided in 2023;
- Canada Council of the Arts has suspended applications until Spring 2023 due to the pandemic; and
- The re-opening grant received from the Museum Assistance Program will partially be deferred to 2023.

Respecting the facility accessibility renovations supported by the Canadian Revitalization Grant, there was a delay in beginning the work due to additional costs. The deadline has been extended to the end of March.

The Director and Chief Curator praised the staff for their resilience in coming back from the pandemic. It was further noted that TTAG has an advantage over many large-scale museums due to its intimate nature and willingness to show its collection.

The Director has been in discussion with Roots regarding the relaunch of their clothing line in association with the Gallery's collection. There is a 2024 product launch date.

In response to a question from a Committee Member, the Director noted that attendance numbers would be provided in a future report. The Gallery is getting close to pre-pandemic visitation. Member Alton noted that there is a wonderful interaction between staff and visitors. She emphasized that it is important to have enough staff, as well as engaging and professional staff at the Gallery. She stated that visitor experience is as important as attendance numbers.

It was noted that several of the Gallery's collection works are at other institutions on display, including at the National Gallery in Ottawa, and several Thomson works will be included in an upcoming travelling exhibition. The Director stated that she could provide information on these works in a future report. Vice-Chair Tovell noted that it is important for the community to see how significant the Gallery's collection is within this context.

AG-221102-002

Moved by Member Burri

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report AG-22-009 respecting November Update Report, the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee recommends that City Council receive the report as the Director and Chief Curator's update on the Gallery's Programming and Operations for information purposes."

Carried.

9. REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES

9.a Verbal Report from the Chair of the Fundraising Sub-Committee

The Chair of the Fundraising Sub-Committee, Member Alton, provided an update on the Calendar Working Group's work with this year's Calendar Campaign.

The final list of retail locations supporting the Calendar Campaign includes 28 regional businesses across Grey and Bruce Counties. These supportive local businesses are being featured and promoted on the Gallery's social media feeds and in the Gallery's newsletter.

The Committee discussed some ideas surrounding future fundraising opportunities. The Director noted that she and Member Alton have talked about developing specialized and meaningful events that are more inclusive and intimate for participants, connecting patrons to the exhibitions through curatorial practices. This approach will create unique and memorable experiences.

Fundraising Sub-Committee Chair, Member Alton, noted that there would need to be a balance between provisions of core services - that the Gallery staff is currently doing so well at providing - and any work that staff does on fundraising projects. The Fundraising Sub-Committee volunteers are also working hard, and it will be important to keep from over-taxing them.

Input is welcome for ideas respecting these opportunities.

AG-221102-003

Moved by Councillor Tamming

"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided by the Chair of the Fundraising Sub-Committee on November 2, 2022, the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes."

Carried.

10. MATTERS POSTPONED

There were no matters postponed.

11. MOTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN

There were no motions for which notice was previously given.

12. CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION

There were no correspondence items presented for information.

13. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

13.a Councillor Tamming Re: Social Media Post Concerning Gallery Budget

Councillor Tamming had observed a social media post whose author commented on the Gallery's budget at length and was wondering if the Director wanted to respond to these comments.

The Director indicated that she could respond to those comments now. The social media post stated that the Gallery's budget had significantly increased in recent years. The Director noted that the comparator used was the year 2018, in which there was no Director, and much of the staff had been let go during a particularly difficult period in the Gallery's history. In order to support the vision and mandate of the Gallery, the position of Director is required, and she noted that she was hired by the City for that reason.

It was further noted that an Assistant Curator position had been included to support the Director's vision and to regain the Gallery's standing with Ontario's Art Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. The City has supported the Gallery moving forward during this rebuilding time. People have been returning to the Gallery and are also supportive of the Gallery's new direction.

The Director further stated that often the public only sees the amount the City allocates to the Gallery's budget; what the public does not see is the amount that the Gallery raises - more than half of its own budget.

Councillor Tamming's recommendation was to respond to social media posts publicly.

The Director stated that the author of the social media piece had been invited to visit the Gallery and engage with its staff.

Finally, Councillor Tamming noted that he has thoroughly enjoyed his time serving on the Committee. His parting recommendation would be for the Committee to be more robust. He indicated that he would like to see more Committee input; he cited the hiring of the new Director, wherein the Committee had no input, which he found surprising, as an example. He acknowledged that while the group is an Advisory Committee, he felt that the Committee should have more input into the Gallery's budget.

Councillor Tamming made special note of the Director's passion for the arts - and her desire to have others share that passion – and remarked that it is effective, as evidenced by the positive growth and engagement currently happening at the Gallery.

14. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion.

15. ADJOURNMENT

The business contained on the agenda having been completed, Vice-Chair Tovell adjourned the meeting at 2:47 p.m.