

TOWN OF COBOURG - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - 28 NOVEMBER, 2019

A Delegation of One, but speaking for many.

As some of you know I was a member of the recent Cultural Master Plan Committee.

It was very obvious to many of us around the table that Cobourg has been, and still is very much a Recreation and Sports town.

The local Community Centre reflects this very well, as does the one newspaper per week. Sports Groups belong to larger Associations, so advertising is readily available to them. Arts and Culture Groups are all individual, so it is much harder to promote to large audiences.

The current Director of Community Services seems to lean more toward Sports and Recreation than the Arts and Culture; indeed his previous and current interests reflect this.

Therefore, when a new position for a Recreation and Culture Manager was brought to my attention, I have to concur that this position leans very heavily toward Recreation and Sports.

The Town's web site covers Arts and Culture by advising us of TOWN facilities The Concert Hall at Victoria Hall, the Firehall Theatre and The Art Gallery of Northumberland.

When looking for Art and Culture happenings the Events Calendar again is only showing items connected to town bookings. Trying to insert individual items to the Event Calendar is a nightmare of accounts and passwords, and waiting for staff approvals.

I digress. Back to the advertised position of Recreation and Culture Manager.

Reviewing the whole document it constantly stresses "Recreation".

I personally believe the position should be renamed to: "Arts, Culture & Recreation Manager".

It would be even better to have an "Arts and Culture Manager" and a "Recreation & Sports Manager" - both of whom could report to the Director of Community Services.

At least this way, we know that one of them would be fully supporting the Arts and Culture and not just backing up the Director.

The whole Job Description document constantly puts the word Recreation ahead of Culture.

Verbally it may be easier to say, and because the whole Town Department is named Recreation and Culture, the web site also stresses Recreation ahead of Culture.

The recent "Leisure Guide" - a lovely, colourful production, is the start of something very helpful. It has roughly:

- 20 pages dedicated to sport, recreation and groups,

- 10 pages dedicated to Town events and Town recreational activities;

- 5 pages to Arts and Culture;

- (leaving out two local Art Clubs and entering one group in two different locations)

- 2 pages for Senior activities (not conducted by the town).

I would suggest that this document, when re-issued in 2020, take into consideration how many years the groups have operated in Cobourg, and base this on who gets printed and who does not, and it should restrict coverage to local organizations and not religious groups.

This town has to change its approach if it intends to cash in on the existing Arts and Culture events that take place, or what was the reason for spending some \$90,000 of Tax payers' monies on a Consultation exercise that is constantly being ignored?

The consultants for the Cultural Master Plan laid out an extensive series of strategic directions backed up by separate action plans. Most of these involve staff time. Surely any new staff hire should be someone with the qualifications to carry out these actions.

If this advertised position is the start of a new trend toward recognizing Arts and Culture in Cobourg, then let's get the job position and wording right the first time around.

I recommend that before receiving Budget approval, this Job Description be reviewed to reflect Arts and Culture more prominently.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheila M. McCoy

President, Cobourg Art Club

Ex-President, Pine Ridge Art Association

ONN Rep, Northumberland Hills Stitchery Guild