

## Recommendation for Future Use of Brookside Youth Centre

MPP Piccini,

On Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> a group of Cobourg's Arts and Culture organizations met to discuss the future use of Brookside Youth Centre and Strathmore House. Although the participants represent 14 different community organizations, the recommendations made suggest a collaborative model that would see the re-development of Strathmore House and a number of buildings on site transitioned into multi-purpose spaces that would generate revenue opportunity for the property owner through annual memberships and daily/weekly/monthly rentals.

We would like to draw your attention to the success that the Town of Cobourg has had with Venture 13 and introduce an additional example, Artscape, a community cultural hub. <https://artscapeyoungplace.ca/>. We believe that based on the current and future needs of Cobourg's arts and cultural organization, that a model such as this would not only be celebrated in the Town of Cobourg, but also provide a new revenue stream for the future property owner.

During our discussion the following key elements were highlighted as a need for our community:

- Additional rehearsal space
- Flex studio space
- Flex office space and meeting rooms
- Recording space
- Additional storage space for props/set pieces/costumes
- Additional exhibit space
- Additional film space/space to host a film festival and larger viewings
- Additional performance centre (Smaller or larger than the Concert Hall at Victoria Hall that would provide additional options and variation for performances)
- Larger, multi-use space
- Lesson space for educational programming
- Wood shop and working lab to make sets

The group has a significant interest in Strathmore House, the historic property on site. In addition to preserving the heritage and character of the building for generations to come, the group sees an opportunity to breathe new life into the home through the use of a trade school. A trade school would also require the use of one or two of the other buildings on site to use as student housing. Some recommendations for trade schools included:

- Hospitality/Food & Beverage School that would include a commercial kitchen for local residents and tourists to enjoy. The property surrounding the home could be turned into a community garden where students grow the produce used in the kitchen.

- Heritage Conservation and Management
- Arts Campus with lecture halls and adjoining performing arts centre for future Canadian playwrights and script writers
- Branch of OCAD

The need for additional creative space was not only strongly felt by all participants during the March 24<sup>th</sup> call, but has been identified in the Town of Cobourg Cultural Master Plan (2019) and the Resident's Survey associated with the original Downtown Vitalization Action Plan (2013)

**The Residents Survey, Downtown Vitalization Action Plan (2013):**

- When queried, over 80% of residents surveyed felt it was “somewhat or very important” to have a performing art/cultural facility
- 30% of unsolicited residents' suggestions related to youth, suggested a youth centre as the most important downtown improvement

**The Cultural Master Plan (2019) Strategic Actions:**

- Invest in cultural facilities as anchors for cultural development in Cobourg (1.4)
- Support the cultural sector with funding, grant and training opportunities (4.1)
- Foster opportunities for cultural expression and experiences for Cobourg's youth (6.1)

A number of our local cultural groups have outgrown their current rentals, struggle to find appropriate rehearsal space or seek the opportunity to expand their organizations. Some groups are currently paying over \$1,000/month for storage and rehearsal space that is not suitable to their needs. Therefore, would greatly appreciate a joint venture centre they could rent monthly but would also provide flex space for meetings, showcases or other events.

With Strathmore House at the centre, we believe the repurposing of Brookside Youth Centre could become a vibrant cultural hub that inspires collaboration, facilitates a platform for cross sector partnerships and stimulates multi-generational learning opportunities for members, Cobourg residents and guest.

This proposal has been submit on behalf of:

**Northumberland Orchestra & Choir** (100 members + 25 volunteers)

John Kraus, Music Director & Conductor/ 'Maestro's Pick', host, Northumberland 89.7

Francine Nesbitt

Kenneth Noronha, President, Northumberland Orchestra and Choir

**Northumberland Players** (320 members and volunteers)

Jack Boyagian

**VOS (Victoria Opera Society)**

Florence Fletcher

Alan Fletcher

**Oriana Singers of Northumberland (70 members)**

Lynn Janes, Artistic Director

Jeff Pudwell, President

**Film Access Northumberland**

Micol Marotti

**Cobourg Museum Foundation**

Mary Dunphy, President

Stanley Isherwood

**Cobourg Art Club (55 – 60 members)**

Sheila McCoy

**Pine Ridge Art Association (55 – 60 members)**

Sheila McCoy

**Northumberland Hills Stitchery Guild (25 – 30 members)**

Sheila McCoy

**Northumberland Creates (65 members)**

Shannon Linton

Saskia Tomkins

**Sounds of the Next Generation (SONG) (90 members, 40+ volunteers)**

Shannon Linton, Administrative Coordinator and Choral Director

**Architectural Conservancy Ontario – Cobourg & East Northumberland**

Esther Robson, Co-Chair

Barb Robins, Co-Chair

Gail Rayment

**Art Gallery of Northumberland**

Olinda Casimiro

**Marie Dressler Foundation**

Rick Miller, President & Chair

**Denny Manchee**, Cobourg resident and Jane's Walk Organizer

**Carol McCann**, Chair of Downtown Coalition Advisory Committee (2015 - 2018)