

VICTORIA MUSIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE – Minutes March 12, 2020

11am to 12:30pm, VCM – 900 Johnson St (Green Room)

In Attendance: *Kathryn Calder, Christopher Butterfield, Kim Persely Kozlowski, Dane Roberts, Vanessa Leong, Dylan Willows, Sarah Pocklington, Neil Cooke-Dallin, Jane Butler McGregor, Katerina Ivanova (Sound Diplomacy), Jeff Day, David McConachie*

Regrets: *Gary Preston, Gaby Marchese, Lindsay MacPherson*

Review of Minutes

February meeting minutes are available at Victoria.ca and there were no matters arising from the minutes.

Venue update

- Jeff has been fielding inquiries about the closure of Norther Quarter and Copper Owl in relation to the music strategy. Jeff has cautioned against aligning the closure of these businesses to the music survey. Businesses open and close all the time. Without knowing the specifics that informed their business decision to cease operation, we can't assume that the two closures are aligned in any way.
- MAC is concerned and disappointed with the venue closures. Both venues served a unique demographic downtown.
- Legacy venues continue to be challenged by development downtown.
- A new Arts, Culture and Events Liaison position has been posted as part of the Create Victoria Strategic Plan. The position focuses on cultural spaces - working with planners and the business hub to identify how the City can remove the red tape to advocate for cultural spaces, and how public & private spaces can be utilised to strengthen the arts and culture sector in the core.

Sound Diplomacy

- Nicholas Aramouni has replaced Elizabeth Cawein as the Sound Diplomacy rep for Victoria.
- Councillor Loveday to be invited to either the next meeting or the following meeting where Sound Diplomacy will present some findings from their research in the Victoria music community.
- Initial response to the survey has been very positive in terms of the number of completed surveys – already more than 1000 responses after 1 week. However, responses from minority and indigenous groups are relatively fewer.
- Dane is working channels to have the survey distributed to the black community.
- Sarah expressed that mainstream processes for engaging minorities fail to connect with indigenous artists and audiences. There is a need for more intentional and direct effort to engage the local indigenous community. Members of the committee should reach out directly to Ron Rice at VNFC and arrange a roundtable with indigenous audiences and artists.
- Sarah and Katerina from Sound Diplomacy to coordinate how to begin one on one interviews with indigenous or marginalised communities. A roundtable meeting at VNFC including indigenous and other communities was suggested. Sarah to contact Ron Rice at VNFC. Kathryn has connected with Songhees and School District 61 to identify youth to participate in an Artist in Residence workshop on song writing.

- The plan is to identify a timeline for a roundtable discussion over the next 1-2 weeks. Nicholas from Sound Diplomacy to possibly come to Victoria to participate.

Musicians Roster

- The five-member musician's selection panel submitted their musician adjudication scores on Monday March 9, to select musicians for the City's summer outdoor concert series.
- The musician's selection panel met yesterday at City Hall to discuss final musician selections and provide feedback on the selection process.
- Selected musicians are now being contacted, offers and negotiations are being made, and the summer music program is being developed.

Festival Investment Grants (FIG)

- A record number of organisations applied for FIG for 2020 events - 45 applications received.
- Council has proposed to add \$25k to the fund as part of the 2020 financial planning process. Council increased the fund by \$100k over the previous two years.
- Recommendations for how FIG will be allocated are being drafted, however event organisers are changing events dramatically in response to COVID 19 and the uncertainty this is creating.
- An issue was raised that sometimes FIG money is only confirmed and released after an event is held or shortly before. This restricts organizers ability to accurately budget and plan. Jeff explained that timing depends on council approval and the annual financial planning process. It is a challenge that plagues all levels of government. This feedback has been received by staff in the past from organizations and staff will continue to look for way to improve the process and shorten timelines whilst operating within the parameters of the municipal act.
- Jeff to contact event organisers over the context of their event and the impact of COVID 19.

COVID 19

- The committee raised great concern of the effect on the arts community – attendance, ticket sales, venues and festivals will all be affected, and we are seeing cancellation of shows. Insurance will not cover events cancelled as a result of COVID 19. Artist incomes will be affected as tours are cancelled and venues close. Supply chain issues will mean months of lead time is needed to ship supplies required to stage major events. Artist travel will be restricted.
- The City defers to provincial and federal government health orders related to event capacity restrictions.
- There is also concern about the public reaction to venue closures and concert cancellations – people may become less willing to purchase tickets in advance in the future as they don't get refunded following cancellation.
- Vanessa attended a COVID 19 webinar which encouraged pre-emptive transparency - event organisers should be open and transparent about their refund policy or exchange policy.

Next Meeting

Thursday April 9, 11am - likely online as distancing measures are put in place.