

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Art Gallery of Hamilton announces Public Information Meeting and Discussion

Art Gallery of Hamilton invites the public to an **AGH Post-Renovations Update** on **Thursday, March 8th at 5:30 pm** in the AGH's Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Pavilion. Following the presentation, visitors can enjoy a guided tour of the current banner exhibition *FRAMED: The Art of the Portrait* and view the newly installed Lincoln M. Alexander Portrait Bust Tribute.

In the almost two years since reopening in May of 2005, the AGH has enjoyed many successes. Over 270,000 have visited the Gallery, taking in our many exhibitions, programming and facility rental events. In addition, the Gallery has quadrupled its earned revenues since 1998.

Recently, the Gallery made a presentation to the City Council at which time the Gallery outlined a recommendation for continued stable operations funding.

The AGH has consistently requested and has consistently received the same amount of funding from the City of Hamilton since 2002: \$1 million a year. Until 2006, the annual \$1 million amount was funded from a combination of 2 sources: direct City funding augmented by annual grants from the City's Future Fund. In keeping with the arrangement in place since 2002, the Future Fund's share of the \$1 million annual contribution steadily decreased while the City's share steadily increased. The combined total has been held at \$1 million in accordance with the original arrangement.

In 2006, the Future Fund altered its funding policies, thereby making the AGH ineligible for annual operating grants. As City Council recognized that the AGH depended upon annual \$1 million funding arrangement in place since 2002, it took steps to ensure once again that the \$1 million was in place through a combination of a Future Fund grant and direct City funding.

In view of the change in the Future Fund's policy, AGH staff worked closely with City staff and several Councilors over the past year to develop an alternate method to allow the annual funding to remain at the \$1 million level. The recommended solution was to augment the City's base funding with a supplementary grant from a Stabilization Fund held by the City. This \$1.1 million fund would augment the City's base funding to the million dollar level each year until 2016, at which point the City's base funding contribution would be \$1 million.

"There isn't a cent to spare," said AGH President and CEO Louise Dompierre. "The fixed costs of operating and maintaining an 87,000 square foot building and one of this country's best art collections consume a huge portion of the Gallery's earned revenues."

In 2006, utilities, building maintenance, insurance and security costs alone amounted to \$942,253.

"This was money well spent," added Dompierre. "We attracted over 160,000 visitors to the Gallery last year."

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For further information on the Art Gallery of Hamilton, its exhibitions and programming, please contact:

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