

## Let the facts speak for themselves

The Art Gallery of Hamilton is one of Hamilton's gems. Although some have unfairly described the AGH as an elitist organization that makes unreasonable demands upon the City, the facts confirm otherwise.

Consider the following:

### **FACT: The amount of City funding sought by the AGH has not changed**

The AGH's level of annual funding received from City sources has remained steady at \$1 million dollars since 2002. The Art Gallery did not ask the City for extra funding when it made its annual presentation to City Council on February 27<sup>th</sup>. Rather, the AGH simply requested that the same level of funding (i.e. \$1 million annually) continue not only this year but through until 2016. The only change suggested was in the method of funding.

It is helpful to understand the background. From 2002 to 2006, the annual \$1 million contribution from the City was funded from two sources – direct City funding augmented by annual transition grants from the City's *Future Fund*. In keeping with the arrangement implemented in 2002, the *Future Fund's* share of that annual amount decreased each year in proportion to the increase in the City's share.

In 2006, the *Future Fund* revised its policies and announced that the AGH was no longer eligible for grants. This prompted two things to occur. First, the City, recognizing that the AGH could not operate without the annual \$1 million contribution, took steps to ensure that adequate funding was provided in 2006. Secondly, the AGH undertook a year-long process of planning, which included close consultation with City staff and Councillors, to develop an alternate funding method. Our proposal – one of many that had been discussed with City representatives over the past year – was presented to City Council on February 27<sup>th</sup>. It was made clear during the presentation to Council that our proposal was just one possible approach to a sustainable arrangement for providing the \$1 million annual contribution to the AGH on a long-term basis.

### **FACT: The AGH is not greedy**

The City's contribution represents only 22% of the AGH's total annual budget. The AGH receives one of the lowest levels of municipal funding for galleries in Canada – for instance, the Mendel Art Gallery (Saskatoon, population 207,000) and Museum London (population: 337,000) receive municipal funding at the level of 57% and 56%, respectively. The AGH also receives limited additional support from the provincial and federal governments. The total level of support (municipal, provincial and federal combined) for the AGH is 33%, which again is at the low end of the range compared to other galleries in the country – for instance, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the Winnipeg Art Gallery (population: 620,000) receive combined funding at the level of 65.1% and 48%, respectively.

**FACT: The AGH has increased its self-generated revenues enormously**

The City's investment in the AGH at the \$1 million level since 2002 was based on the expectation that the Gallery would significantly increase its earned revenues. The Gallery has met this challenge. Revenues have increased 500% since 2002 – from slightly more than \$400,000 in 2002 to over \$2 million a year in 2006.

**FACT: The AGH brings economic value to the City**

Every dollar invested in the AGH results in a direct return of \$4.50 to the City. Based on accepted measures of economic impact, the Gallery's economic impact on Hamilton has tripled since 1998 to \$90 million a year. The Gallery has gone through a fundamental change over the last several years, which change is reflected in more than just our beautifully renovated and inviting building. In 2006, more than 160,000 people, from all walks of life, visited the AGH (compared to only 20,000 in 1998); they came from all parts of Hamilton, this province, and this country. We also attracted many international visitors as well.

**FACT: The AGH is not elitist**

Why have people, from all walks of life, come in such great numbers to the renovated AGH? Because of the quality, diversity and broad appeal of our programming and the warm and welcoming atmosphere of our building. Where else can you see some of the best art exhibitions produced in Canada or abroad (most with no admission charge) next to such celebratory community shows as *The Golden Age of Hamilton Curling*? Where else can you enjoy one of Canada's best art collections and attend a first run movie such as *Half Nelson*, all for \$6-10 a person? Where else can you hear expert opinions on surveillance issues in a dialogue between the chief of police, a legal expert and an artist? Where else can your wedding guests enjoy a tour of an exhibition? The AGH is a place where people from all walks of life come to engage with art in whatever manner they like, whether through exciting hands-on activities on Family Fun Days, through volunteering (our volunteers donate 10,000 hours of their time each year), through visits with school children during and after school hours, through buying gifts at our Shop or by simply wandering through our exhibitions at their own pace.

Let's understand the facts about the AGH and celebrate this magnificent part of our City.

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