



Cultural Round Table

County Culture: It's more than you think!

Cultural Round Table
Shire Hall, Picton
June 10th– 4.30 pm – 6.00 pm

Present:

Jean Anne Carroll – County of Prince Edward, EDO, Judith Zelmanovits - Museum Advisory Committee, Jeff Keary – Art House Gallery (Rednersville Church), Sharon Jarvis - General Manager, Regent Theatre, Ian Balsillie - Prince Edward Round Table on Environment and Economy, Myrna Mather – Arts Council, Monica Alyea - Councilor, South Marysburgh, Wendy Lane – Manager, Recreation and Culture.

Minutes:

1. **Governance and Focus** – JAC and Wendy – As a result of going through the process of working with the Ministry of Culture's consultants on the assessment of the Municipal Cultural Plan JAC and Wendy put some thoughts out to the group. Do we need a chair? Where are we going from here with a work plan? How do we raise the status of "Culture" with the Municipality? Some documents were also distributed to the group to read as "homework" as there are many newer members at the table who did not participate in the original work of the group. These documents are attached for your reference. If you did not attend the June meeting please review the attached as we will discuss at the next meeting.
2. **Community Events Planning** – lack of a central tool to help with planning dates for activity has been raised by quite a few parties – most specifically in the area of performances. It has been found that when multiple performances are planned with the same timing attendance to all suffers. Attendance at performances also suffers if community events such as Rotary fundraisers etc are planned on the same night. A meeting of parties interested in discussing this was held last month at the EDO's office. Notes are attached. Ian Balsillie noted that there used to be a master book listing events kept at the Gazette – people would call in and ask re dates and add theirs. Sharon Jarvis from the Regent Theatre has her summer student working on building a master calendar. It was noted that the Breakaway Magazine calendar does a good job of capturing events. She thinks that based on published materials and websites her student should be able to put something together that reflects 60% of what's on. At that point communications can be sent out to the community and groups asking for their participation. Jennifer Goodman can be contacted with regard to usage of County spaces and facilities. Suggestion was made that it would be great to extend the exploration of usage to all facilities including the Elks Halls etc. It was again noted that the hardest part of any initiative like this is getting people to participate. A visual calendar that people could come in and look at for example at the Regent Box Office could be very useful both as a planning and marketing tool. If a calendar could be kept online also that would be great. Sharon will speak to her website resource at the Regent to understand what is possible on the Regent's site.
3. **Status of Committee** – the group discussed the fact that the CRT is not a committee of

council and wondered what the pros and cons of that would be. JAC will ask the Clerk, Victoria Leskie, if she can attend the next meeting and discuss this with the group.

4. **Upcoming Election** – It was discussed that it is important to prepare for the upcoming Municipal Election (2010) in order to put culture on the agenda. The importance of participating in the public meetings leading up to the elections and asking questions of the candidates re culture was noted as a key activity to be undertaken.
5. **Budget Year 2010** – It was discussed that there is one more budget cycle to be completed under the current Council and that there is still an opportunity to lobby Council on allocations to Culture.
6. **County Culture** – A discussion was had around the definition of “culture”. If culture is everything then you loose focus. Some of the people who have been at the table since the start of the CRT noted that it was and remains important that the Culture that the CRT is concerned with is the broad culture of Prince Edward County, v’s a narrower definition of culture that is exclusive. This raised quite the discussion:
 - Are the audiences for theatre and hockey the same? Depends on the content of the theatre.. example given was that a production like the recent Wingfield’s Inferno at the Regent was observed by one attendee to have a “different” crowd in the audience.
 - Is sports Culture or is it Recreation? The physical playing of a sport like hockey is recreation, however hockey is very much part of the PEC, and Canadian culture and identity. Sharon Jarvis noted that that this doesn’t change the fact that these 2 things (Culture and Recreation) compete constantly for funding.
 - Judith Zelmanovitz noted that the Cultural Rally did a great job of communicating this broader understanding of County Culture... diverse representation of people, trades and interests participated... but were consistently presented through storytelling, performance etc.
 - Sharon and Myrna both still felt a lack of definition
 - JAC noted that many people at the table were newer and the documents provided to the group as reference at the meeting would be good tools to provide background.
 - Other examples of how the cross pollination of different aspects of Culture can, and is already, happening are: Public Art from the Art Council’s *Art in the Community* Program on both the PELA CFDC and Municipal Floors of the Edward; Room is being made for art in the new Wellington Arena – imagine something like having the school children in the area be involved in painting a mural there.
7. **Recap of Municipal Cultural Policy** – the group then recapped the Municipal Cultural Policy and it’s definition of Culture. Based on this new understanding Myrna encapsulated her role at the table for the Arts Council as “Arts is part of the culture of the community of PEC”.
8. **Where are we now with the policy?** Monica Alyea noted that the CRT did a good job with the last Council, specifically giving them language and understanding of Culture. It is not that Council and Municipal staff do not consider culture in their work... there is a perception that “nothing” is done. Many of the groups whose requests for funds were not successful in the 2009 budget round were cultural. There are some examples from the Dept of Recreation and Culture and the Economic Development Office, other Departments and Committees of Council where contributions are made – Provision of in-kind or cost sharing arrangements with cultural events for usage of County spaces, on-going financial support of the Regent Theatre, the Settler’s Dream Ad-Hoc Committee, the ongoing work of the Heritage Advisory Committee through the Planning Dept, Council support of funds for the Macaulay Church project, Public Works and Building Maintenance staff paying attention to input that helps preserve the character of things within their control – eg the discussions around addressing the safety of County Rd 12 – the starting point was that it should be straightened but through dialogue a solution was reached that will address the

safety issue and consider the character of the road.

9. **How do we make the Policy Live** – Key feeling of the group is that now in order to get some real work done we need to focus. Monica Alyea shared that in a Planning Meeting there was a discussion around use of the Henry Ousterhout Hall as a base by the Festival Players. A planner thought that the use by the Theatre company of the space to originate their work, to rehearse and work through staging was possibly a borderline usage of that facility. Municipal Staff training/familiarization on the Cultural Policy and examples of the needs of non-traditional businesses such as Theatre Companies and other cultural industries would further everyone's understanding of emerging usage needs. As a point of interest there are now 9 theatre groups operating in Prince Edward County.
10. **Shameless Promotions:**
 - a. **Library** – has a new website - <http://www.peclibrary.org> . New design has improved usability for the public. In the future will be willing to put links to community orgs.
 - b. **Museums** – A comprehensive Flyer and events listing has been produced for the Museums. Full event listings can also be found here:
http://www.pecounty.on.ca/government/rec_parks_culture/pdf/MuseumEventsandExhibits2009_003.pdf
 - c. **Museums** – Mat. Leave replacement for Jennifer Lyons hired. He has lots of great experience including working at the Black Creek Pioneer Village.
 - d. **Settlers Dream** – Re-printing of the Settler's Dream is going ahead with Council agreeing to provide money to cash flow the project, understanding that it will be paid back in full from the proceeds of the sale of the book. The project did not prove eligible for any funding, however there is interest from the public in having their names included in the book in return for a donation. A limited edition of 1,200 copies will be produced and will be sold at Books and Company. There is a waiting list at Books and Company that you can add your name to if you are interested. The committee hopes that the current edition will be sold out by Xmas. Ultimately the committee would like to rework and update the original including making it available by section and on CD.
 - e. **Arts Council** – Myrna Mather is the new representative from the Arts Council. She noted that the Arts Council's events are great and are even making a little money, but are based on volunteer contributions and would not exist without the Arts Council. Myrna shared that the Arts Council is concentrating on building membership and relationships with their existing membership. She noted that the Regent has set a great example of giving back to and providing value to their membership. Membership is a very important support of the Arts Council's work. Arts Council memberships are \$25 and are available through the office in the Edward, 280 Main Street. Art in the County will open Friday June 19th and run till July 5th.
 - f. **Regent Theatre** – Sharon Jarvis shared that there are many exciting upcoming events at the Regent. Jim Whittaker "the Piano Man" Concert, Via Satellite Racine's *Phèdre* starring Helen Mirren.
 - g. **Rednersville Church**- Jeff Keary continues to work through his building challenges. He is learning more about what is possible with his space and Council woman Sandy Latchford continues to be a great support to him.
 - h. **Creative Minds** - The Economic Development Office is holding it's second "creative rural economy" business networking session at Fields on West Lake on July 14th from 6.45pm – 9pm.