

Dear Councillors,

my name is Yvonne Mullock, I'm a member of the Public Art Alliance, today I would like to read a statement on behalf of Tristan Surtees artist and resident of Ramsay, who cannot be here today.

Council, we have endured with you the historical mismanagement of the public art program, been buoyed by promises of shared decision-making process, and yet 12 months on, we're here to ask for your support once again.

As of yet we Calgary's artist community have had zero opportunity to participate in "an inclusive decision-making process" as promised in the notice of motion made to council on the 13th March 2019, at the Corporate Public Art Program Review. Your artists, artist-run centres, academics, arts administrators, curators are subject-matter experts in their field, together we have a depth of local, national and international knowledge, experience and expertise to offer our home.

Calgary's Public Art Alliance respectfully ask you, Councillors, to engage this art community in the decisions you are making about the Public Art Program. It is surely inconceivable that the year the City of Calgary is named 'Canada's Creative City of the Year' and hosts the National Creative City Network Conference, its own arts community is excluded from decisions that will drastically shape the future of art in this city. The way in which this decision has been arrived at is a self-made Public Art controversy - we are becoming a laughing stock around the country and beyond, needlessly.

It is my understanding that Council has been provided with unsubstantiated claims about best practice and Cultural Community support on which to base its decision. The hurdles that come with this decision have not been outlined by the Administration and are profound.

To move the Public Art Program outside of municipal government raises so many questions that require robust and in-depth exploration, and as yet no one outside administration has been part of shaping these changes or has been furnished with these answers:

- How would a new program develop its mandate, what might this incorporate?
- Where is the evidence it will maintain the level of service to Calgarians that we have come to expect, at the same or higher standards?
- How will we ensure it is committed to models of contemporary best practice?
- With a "leaner" staff and less budget how will it deliver ground-breaking new programs?
- Being at arm's length, how will it work in collaboration with Municipal departments, Parks, Water, Transportation, with the same if not better level of current cooperation and support?
- Who will make decisions about its programming and commitments?
- How will the Citizen oversight process function?
- How will the constraints for the third party organisation be any different than a municipal government, when both are funded by tax-payers?
- Where is the evidence the program will be brought closer to the community, without the trust, respect and relationships formed by the current program subject-matter experts already embedded and working in the community?

- How can we ensure openness, transparency, accountability can be upheld by a third party at arm's length for Council and Administration?
- Where is the evidence this will avoid potential 'controversies' for our City?

-How long will we have to wait until a skilled team in this field is established? There is no organization in this city that has the existing expertise to run and deliver a public art program. Experts will have to be brought in, isn't that replicating existing expertise and collaborations in the current program?

To make the decision to move a Public Art Program to a third party without knowing answers to these and many more questions, is a crashout.

Are we really saying to Citizens the best place for a public art program is beyond the oversight and management of Administration?

If we are so confident that these are good decisions arrived at honestly, why does administration have to work in secret. If we are working towards decisions this city can be proud of, why can't we share what administration is considering with citizens before options are floated and a decision is made.

How can we support administration's recommendations when in the last two years we have not seen the vision, mission or principles the organisation will be tasked with delivering, when fundamental questions remain unanswered, and when a vision that is sold to you as being closer to local artists is being developed without any of our own arts community involvement.

I understand from meeting with the acting manager of Arts & Culture last Friday that this recommendation came from Council, not administration, and so Councillors I appeal directly to you, don't let it go down in history of this City that Council wilfully ignored its community.

If we are to build a new foundation for this program with optimism and pride we need to honour promises, listen to our home-grown expertise. We, your cultural community, are the people who will be delivering the future culture of this city. The Public Art Alliance and its signatories respectfully ask you to **halt** this process, before it is too late to turn back, please trust and listen to your arts community as administration stated it would. Please engage us in these vital decisions that will affect the cultural future of our city.

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