



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: February 5, 2008
Author: Margeret Specht
Phone No.: 604.871.6842
RTS No.: 6755
VanRIMS No.: 01-5200-50
Meeting Date: February 26, 2008

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Co-Director, Office of Cultural Affairs
SUBJECT: Mayor's Arts Awards May 26th, 2008

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve in principle the 2008 Mayor's Arts Awards as outlined in this report with an overall budget of \$131,750 as per Appendix A, subject to the confirmation of sponsorship necessary to produce the event without loss, by April 25, 2008.
- B. THAT Council approve an award budget of \$50,000 as per Appendix A to support cash awards of \$2,500 each to be given to:
 - i. the winners of The Mayor's Arts Awards in ten categories to be chosen by a jury of peers in recognition of significant contribution in their fields as well as to Vancouver's position as a Creative City; and
 - ii. ten emerging artists to be chosen by the recipients of The Mayor's Arts Awards.

Source of funds to be the unallocated funds remaining in the Cultural Budget.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

City Manager recommends APPROVAL of the above recommendations.

COUNCIL POLICY

The *New Culture Plan 2008 -2018*, adopted by Council on January 29, 2008 sets out in a strategic theme entitled “Valued and Valuable” the goal of increasing public awareness and consequently participation in the creative sector by working with partners in the non-profit arts and cultural sector, cultural industries, business and public sectors to develop new and innovative ways to highlight and profile the creative sector to the citizens of Vancouver and promote Vancouver’s reputation as a Creative City.

Section 204 of the Vancouver Charter enables City Council to provide for the expenditure of money for the recognition of “guests or persons of importance whom the Council deems worthy thereof”.

Approval of grant recommendations requires eight affirmative votes.

PURPOSE

This report outlines a plan to host the 2008 Mayor’s Arts Awards and makes recommendations, based on community and stakeholder input and previously identified best practices for an event to be held on Monday, May 26th, 2008 at the Vancouver Playhouse.

BACKGROUND

Arts Awards are a common way for communities to recognize the contribution that artists make to civic life. It is also a way to acknowledge and celebrate the many people who work in support of the cultural community as volunteers, patrons and audience members.

In recognition, 2004 Council approved the first Vancouver Arts Awards. The Vancouver Arts Awards celebrate achievements and promise in the arts through honouring senior artists and patrons who in turn commission emerging artists. In addition to awards in the fields of performing, literary, visual, and culinary arts, there was an award for philanthropy which recognizes the support, whether financial or through volunteer contribution to the advancement of the arts.

The 2004 and 2005 Vancouver Arts Awards were produced as a fundraising initiative in support of the Society to Bridge Arts and Culture, a non-profit society associated with the Alliance for Arts and Culture. The City provided funding through the Opportunities Grants program as well as funding received by the City from the Federal Government through the Cultural Capitals of Canada program. The Society to Bridge Arts and Culture also secured private sector and media sponsorships and realized ticket revenues.

The 2004 event was held in the Atrium at the Vancouver Public Library. The 2005 event was to be held in the CBC Studio One. Unfortunately, due to labour disruption at the CBC the event had to be moved to the Great Northern Way Campus and the Society incurred significant additional expenses to mount the production.

Early in 2006 a request came to The Mayor’s Office from the Alliance for Arts and Culture to reframe the “Vancouver Arts Awards” as “The Mayor’s Arts Awards”. This is based on a very successful model in Edmonton and was felt by the Alliance to be critical to securing private

sector support, ensuring future financial viability and raising the profile of Vancouver's arts and cultural community. Based on that request, staff engaged the services of a consultant to research best practices in other communities, including Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Seattle. In November 2006, Council approved in principle the restructuring of the existing awards and directed staff to seek proposals from qualified professionals for the production of an annual Mayor's Arts Awards event. Further, Staff were directed to seek input from the Arts Community on significant components of the awards event, categories and criteria, and report back with a sustainable business model, identifying community and corporate partners.

DISCUSSION

In an effort to seek broad input from the arts and cultural community and related stakeholders, the City commissioned an independent survey that reached over 1,500 people between September 14 and November 2, 2007. Within the survey, respondents were asked some specific questions about awards in general and specifically about elements of a potential awards event and nomination process. The following are the highlights of those findings and the resultant staff recommendations.

1. MOST VALUED COMPONENTS

The survey respondents valued these four components to the awards most highly:

- Cash awards to artist
- Modest ticket price ensuring artists themselves may attend the ceremony
- Presentation of an award plaque
- Performances at the awards event

2. CATEGORIES, TYPE AND AMOUNT OF AWARDS

In 2004 and again in 2005, cash awards were made only to the emerging artists. Survey respondents identified a need to offer cash awards to both honourees and emerging artists.

The categories most identified for cash awards (in alphabetical order):

- Community Arts
- Craft and Design
- Culinary Art
- Dance
- Film and New Media
- Literary Arts
- Music
- Public Art
- Theatre
- Visual Arts

Respondents also identified the need to recognise community support with the award of a recognition plaque (in alphabetical order):

- Business Support
- Philanthropy
- Volunteerism

Finally, respondents felt that the City should also acknowledge and celebrate recipients of other civic awards at The Mayor's Arts Awards event. These would include (in alphabetical order):

- Poet Laureate
- Vancouver Book Award
- Vancouver Artists in Residence Awards

3. ELIGIBILITY AND JURY SELECTION

Generally the existing Award eligibility criteria, nomination and selection processes were well supported. Nominations are received from the general public, are reviewed by a jury of peers representing all of the disciplines and categories. The jury selects an honouree in each of the categories in recognition of significant contribution in their fields as well as to Vancouver's position as a Creative City. The honouree is then invited to select an emerging Vancouver artist who is celebrated and provided with a cash award.

4. EVENT STRUCTURE

The event is proposed to be a ticketed evening event to be held at the Vancouver Playhouse with a pre-show reception, formal award ceremony and celebration. The event would be hosted by Mayor and Council and marketed widely to the creative and business sectors. Ticket prices are proposed to be a reasonable \$25 to ensure accessibility to the cultural community. As with the 2004 and 2005 Vancouver Arts Awards, presenting and award sponsors will be sought to offset production costs.

Unlike the previous awards events, staff are proposing a new partnership with the Society to Bridge Arts And Culture. The Society was in the past responsible for all aspects of the event and was exposed to significant financial risk in producing the Vancouver Arts Awards. As demonstrated in 2005 through no fault of their own, the Society experienced a \$17,000 loss. Staff are recommending a new model which would share the risk and responsibilities as follows:

Nomination and Jury Process:

- The City will enter into a contract in the amount of \$5,265 with the Alliance for Arts and Culture for the provision of the nomination and selection processes.

Sponsorships and Event Production:

- The City will engage professional expertise to secure appropriate sponsorships and to produce the event. A 90-minute award show will feature both video and live performances and will be hosted by well-known cultural personalities.

Communications and Ticketing:

- The City will work with our partners, the Alliance for Arts and Culture, Tourism Vancouver through Tickets Tonight and the Board of Trade to promote the event and encourage ticket purchasing. The City will also seek a media sponsor.

Awards:

- The City will provide awards through \$2,500 cash grants to each of the artist honourees as well as their selected emerging artists. In addition, the City will provide plaques to the business, volunteer and philanthropy honourees; source of funds for the awards to be the 2007 Cultural Grants budget.

Additional Fundraising Opportunities:

- The Society to Bridge Arts and Culture will be invited to mount a live and silent auction associated with the event to maximise the fundraising potential in support of their ongoing operations.

With consideration to the community input, previously identified best practices, and revised partnership model, staff recommend that Council approve the plan for the 2008 Mayor's Arts Awards to be held on Monday, May 26th, 2008 at The Vancouver Playhouse.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of supporting the cash awards to all artists honoured, both recipients of The Mayor's Arts Awards and the emerging artists identified by the recipients is set at \$2,500 each to a total of \$50,000. The source of funds is the unallocated balance remaining from the 2007 Cultural Budget carried forward to 2008. In order to minimize the City's risk a deadline date of April 25th has been set by which the sponsorships necessary to produce the event without loss must be secured. Failing that, staff recommend that the event be cancelled in order to minimize any financial risk to either the City or our partners; however, the cash awards will still be given out to the artists. The budget for The Mayor's Arts Awards in Appendix A lists revenues through partnerships and ticket sales and production expenses.

CONCLUSION

Culture is an important aspect of the quality of life which Vancouverites enjoy and take pride in. The contribution that our artists make to our city must be celebrated – for the enrichment they bring to our residents, businesses and tourists, for diversity and breadth of their achievements and for the potential they have to shape our City into the future.

Recognition by the City of this role is critical to the community and to the message that it sends more broadly – that we are a City that values the contribution of the creative sector and supports increasing awareness among the general public. Working in collaboration with partners, The Mayor's Arts Awards can highlight and profile the creative sector to the citizens of Vancouver and promote Vancouver's reputation as a Creative City.

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MAYOR'S ARTS AWARDS	
EXPENSES	
AWARDS	
Nomination process - managed by Alliance for Arts and Culture	\$5,265
Awards to Artists	\$50,000
VENUE CHARGES	
Room / tech / crew costs	\$10,000
EVENT PRESENTATION & MANAGEMENT	
Emcees / Artists / Direction / Programs / Sponsorship / Catering	
Video / Photography / Marketing / Invitations / Website	\$66,485
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$131,750
SOURCE OF FUNDS	
2007 OCA Operating Budget carried forward to 2008	\$50,000
Sponsorship - Cash & In Kind (to be confirmed by April 25 th , 2008)	\$73,000
Tickets Revenue \$25 per person at 50% capacity (350/700)	\$8,750
TOTAL REVENUE	\$131,750