

## Arts Programming at Guild Park & Gardens December 16, 2015 Community Meeting Meeting Notes

On December 16, Toronto Arts & Culture, in partnership with Councillor Paul Ainslie, hosted its first community meeting on arts programming at the Guild Park & Gardens. Held at Chartwell Guildwood Retirement Residence, the goal of this meeting was to update residents on the status of refurbishing 191 Guildwood Parkway into an arts and cultural centre and to start a conversation with residents about future arts programming at the site.

During the facilitated session, three groups undertook the task of identifying the who, what and why of arts programming at Guild Park & Gardens - the people, programs and purposes to be considered in the planning for the new centre. Several individuals also documented responses in writing, completed surveys and submitted suggestions for what to name the new arts and cultural centre.

### Who attended?

The 68 participants at the meeting were local residents, park users, volunteers, artists, educators and representatives from arts and cultural organizations, community groups and institutions including:

- Guild Festival Theatre
- Guild Renaissance Group
- Scarborough Arts
- Friends of Guild Park
- Toronto Public Library
- Cedar Ridge Studio Gallery
- Tivoli House Concerts
- Art Guild of Scarborough
- Healthy Living Through Art
- Guildwood Village Community Association
- University of Toronto, Scarborough
- Rotary Club, Scarborough Community Renewal
- Guild Alive with Culture
- Toronto District School Board
- Dinner and a Song
- Scarborough Historical Society
- Scarborough Philharmonic
- Open Art Studio



## Why Arts Programming at Guild Park & Gardens?

A vision began to surface of the arts & cultural centre as an identifiable and inclusive arts hub – a resource and haven for the community, Scarborough and the city of Toronto where creativity is nurtured, celebrated and championed. Some of the responses included:

- Pride of place – new identity for Scarborough – place making
- Tap into the culture and diversity of Scarborough
- Honour the history and setting of the site
- Scarborough needs a cultural hub
- Art builds bridges between people and communities
- Bring more creativity to Scarborough
- Create a network of spaces – create a district for the arts
- Include Indigenous history
- Promote community spirit and the arts
- Local (walkable) arts activities in neighbourhood
- Preserving the legacy of the Guild of All Arts; bringing artists + crafts people back
- People can come to experience the "space" the outdoors and the culture
- A quiet thoughtful place to visit
- Health & creativity in all mediums/Physical and mental health
- Support and development of artists
- Resource for youth
- Designated space for young artists exhibits
- Accessibility for all abilities
- Self-improvement/education
- Community participation – eg. disadvantaged youth
- Strengthen the Guild Festival Theatre and other stakeholders



## What Arts Programming at Guild Park & Gardens?

Participants were asked what programming might be included at the arts and cultural centre at Guild Park & Gardens. There was a strong sense of honouring the legacy of Rosa and Spencer Clark and the Guild of All Arts using a contemporary lens to bring a variety of art forms, programs and partnerships to the site to serve a diversity of residents. A wealth of ideas were shared on the kinds of arts programming participants wished to see including:

- Artist residencies – Rosa & Spencer Clark vision
- Strength of past history – build from what's already there (sculptures, theatre etc.); history focus might be limiting, make it contemporary
- Children's art programs – be part of the history
- Bring back art from Guild Collection
- Accessible indoor/outdoor community space
- Newcomer/low income audiences
- Inclusive community philosophy
- Art for special needs (eg. low vision)
- Place to showcase local art
- Emerging artists/artists in residence
- Incorporate leadership programs
- Consider communities in need – neighbourhood artists, more accessible
- Galleries/Display space
- Greek Theatre needs to be more of a performing arts space
- Reflect the market/Don't duplicate
- Collaboration space for artists to work, create together
- Schools as partners
- Youth Portfolio/Professional Development
- Interactive/display studio spaces
- Rental/professional studio/retail spaces for artists
- Workshops
- Connect with local First Nations communities
- Work with Scarborough Arts
- U of T Scarborough (Community Outreach)
- Printmaking (etching, silkscreen, woodcut, lino)
- Food – community food/festivals
- Photography
- Art, music, drama
- Theatre school
- Fibre Arts/Textiles/Weaving
- Garden projects/community garden
- Glass art
- Sculpture
- Jewellery making
- Stone art
- Multidisciplinary arts
- Astronomy
- Folk art
- Poetry/literary arts/readings
- Furniture making – cabinetry
- Aboriginal Arts
- Drawing & painting
- Pottery
- Leather work
- Digital new media
- Dance performance
- Cross cultural programming
- More festivals and exhibitions
- Combine art and nature
- Self-guided walks
- Innovative projects
- Continuation of annual outdoor performance



## Name for Arts & Cultural Centre?

So far, there were 38 respondents to the question, some of whom offered multiple possible names for the new arts & cultural centre. Versions including either "191" or Rosa and Spencer Clark/Guild of all Arts were the most favoured. We will continue to gather suggestions.



## Some Last Thoughts...

Additional comments by those attending include:

- Make a major investment
- Explore additional funding sources
- Need an overall vision for the whole park
- Don't make it too exclusive, art needs an audience
- Citizens and artist community need to be involved
- Who is programming? City of Toronto? How will it be sustained?
- Represent students and youth/youth working with seniors
- Network centre for the artist
- Look at other models eg. Artfax – Board of Education, Harbourfront
- Curator/Art in the Park, arts for healing
- Cost of classes to all levels of adults, seniors, youth
- Upgrade the Greek Theatre
- Use social media
- The Guild is a national landmark, unique to the province
- Arts groups should support programming, city can't do it alone
- Need to be practical about space restrictions
- Please remember that we share this space with wildlife
- Be careful to not have such a variety of arts that they will not be properly funded
- We need to use the space to the ultimate use
- Don't charge a lot of money for people to use the facility
- Try to partner with other arts clubs in the area
- Consider having an artist market – weekends where artists sell their goods
- Think global
- Fabulous opportunity at last!

## Next Steps

Thanks to all who attended! Going forward, additional consultation is planned using a multi-pronged approach including stakeholder group meetings, focus groups, surveys (paper and on-line) and outreach targeted to specific areas and populations to gather diverse perspectives from a broad range of residents, including underserved groups. If you'd like to find out more, have any questions or would like to share additional comments, please contact Susan Kohler at 416-396-5142 [skohler@toronto.ca](mailto:skohler@toronto.ca) or Nadira Pattison at 416-338-1263 [npattis1@toronto.ca](mailto:npattis1@toronto.ca)