



November 9, 2009

Economic Development Committee  
City of Toronto  
City Hall, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor West  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5H 2N2

Dear Members of the Economic Development Committee,

As members of the committee may be aware, Artscape is an independent not-for-profit organization. While Artscape enjoys a close working relationship with the City of Toronto and was incubated by the Toronto Arts Council more than 20 years ago, it is not constituted as an agency, board, or commission. Our unique relationship with the City has been key in serving the shared interests of the City and arts community while attracting resources from senior levels of government and the private sector.

At the April 22 2009 meeting, the Economic Development Culture and Tourism Committee passed a motion moved by Councillor Nunziata requesting that Artscape's Board consider that:

1. In future proposal development as listed in recommendation 1b.i. of the report (March 30, 2009) from the General Manager of Economic Development Culture and Tourism, entitled "Toronto Artscape – Multi-Year Agreement", Artscape focus on the 13 priority neighbourhoods.
2. Artscape be directed to consult and work with the local Ward Councillor of the area for which projects are being proposed.

Due to scheduling issues, this matter was deferred until Artscape's September 23 meeting where it was discussed at length. The consensus of Artscape's board is that it is impractical to restrict future development activity to Toronto's priority neighbourhoods for the following reasons:

- a) Artscape projects respond to market needs and conditions. Given that our projects are self-financing once operational, Artscape only proceeds with ones that have the market conditions creative people need to thrive and strong market demand for tenancies.
- b) To best serve its mission and Toronto's creative community, Artscape needs the flexibility and independence to decide which opportunities to pursue. While

the City of Toronto is among Artscape's most important stakeholders it is not its only one. Artscape's choice of projects is heavily influenced by opportunities that arise where culture may be an important component such as Distillery District or Guild Inn. When a private donor or senior level of government steps forward with an exciting new opportunity, Artscape needs to be able to respond regardless of where in the city it is located. Long-term funding partners include: Department of Canadian Heritage, Canada Council, Ontario Ministry of Culture, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ontario Arts Council, Metcalf Foundation, TD Bank, and others.

- c) Artscape currently has more than 10 projects in some stage of development. It would be a significant waste of investment to abandon these initiatives.

Notwithstanding these rationales to preserve Artscape's independence, the organization is committed to exploring how we can apply the lessons of culture-led regeneration to a priority neighbourhood context. To that end, we have proposed to work with the City, United Way and others to conduct a pilot study in the Westin/Mount Dennis area. A copy of our draft proposal to the City and Councillor Nunziata is attached.

With regard to the issue of working with local Councillors on projects in their areas, we would like to note that this has always been our practice. In some cases, the idea for a project may originate in other places but engaging local Councillors and City staff is always been centrally important in our work. We have sensed in recent years that there may be some confusion among Councillors about the nature of our work and relationship with the City. To address this, we plan to hold a series of info sessions in the new year for Councillors and senior City staff.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about our response.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Sharpe  
Chair, Board of Directors



Tim Jones  
President and CEO

Encl: (1) Artscape Weston Mt. Dennis Pilot Study

cc: Terry Nicholson