

Welcome everyone to the Haliburton Highlands Arts Centre Foundation's first Annual General Meeting. My name is Dan Manley and I am the foundation's president. I'm joined today by fellow board members Wil Andrea and Michael Clipperton.

To lead up this AGM's report, let me tell you a little about the organization's history.

The HHACF was formed in the Spring of 2018 by myself, Wil Andrea and Brent Wootton, spurred on by talk and inspiration during orchestra after-rehearsal get-togethers. Keeping things pretty quiet, we applied for incorporation and achieved it in December 2018. We developed our logo and website and, shortly after, sent in our application to become a charitable organization in the eyes of the CRA. In spring 2019, we started introducing ourselves to some local arts organizations and then the foundation was featured in local news media.

In August of 2019, we were surprised to receive notice that we had been approved as a charitable organization. Feeling bolstered by this new status, we created a social media account to raise awareness of the HHACF and its goals. We also created marketing posters and postcards which we featured in local holiday concerts. Come the new year, Brent Wootton decided to leave the foundation and we welcomed Michael Clipperton to the board.

2020 has marked a number of advances for the foundation. Through U-Links, the Centre for Community-based Research, we were picked up by a graduate class in Fleming College out of Lindsay. The goal being to create a Needs Assessment Report as a first step of research and study into building an arts centre in Haliburton County.

Meanwhile, we applied for a Seed Grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for \$75,000 to fund the next step in research: the Feasibility Study and Business Plan. We assembled 5 quotes and sent them along.

In February, we held a roundtable discussion and workshop moderated by Jim Blake. Attendees included stakeholders from various local arts organizations (film, music, theatre, education and concert programmers) and the entire class from Fleming College. Data was gathered on organizations' wish list items, ranking of features/requirements, and projected use of facilities.

Then COVID hit in March. We decided to pause our social media postings and advocacy to not distract from health- and care-based causes and fundraising. Research at Fleming finished and 7 NARs were delivered to us.

Soon after, we were delivered the unfortunate news about not being awarded a Seed Grant from OTF. We received feedback from our grant representative and were encouraged to apply again in early 2021.

On the local funding front, we applied for HCDC's LIP and were successful in getting the full amount requested: \$5000. The basis of the project was to hire research consultant Melissa

Johnston to synthesize the multiple NARs from the Fleming students into a single report, as well as filling in extra research where she felt there may be gaps. Her report is due in the next few weeks.

All-in-all, despite the unsuccessful application to OTF, we feel the fiscal year ending in July 2020 was a very successful one. Three main goals were to officially become charitable, raise awareness of the HHACF within the local community and to kick off research. Though we would all love to see an arts centre built as quickly as possible, feasibility studies and business plans will be essential in understanding what will be right fit for the county and sustainable in the future.

For the coming fiscal year 2020/21, we look forward to growing and developing our board. Our bylaws state we can have up to 10 directors, so we have lots of room for growth. We also will be developing our strategic plan and initial fundraising plan with a focus on funds required for research and studies. And, as always, we will continue to raise awareness of the HHACF and advocate for the creation of a world class arts centre in Haliburton County.

On that note, please spread the word of the HHACF far and wide. And, if you can, please consider setting up a monthly donation via Canada Helps. Of course, one time donations are always welcome, but monthly giving allows the foundation to create more predictable budgets and to plan for the future.

Finally, I'd like to say thank you for your support in attending our first AGM. The HHACF wants to build an arts centre for all of us. Together, we'll reach this goal!