

Good morning Your Worship and City Councillors.

My name is Keltie Brown and I am co-vice chair of PACE, the Professional Arts Coalition of Edmonton, and the chair of our advocacy committee. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I appeared before you last year in support of the Edmonton Arts Council's recommendation to increase it's funding in line with ***THE ART OF LIVING***, our city's ten-year plan for arts and heritage, and you responded for a second year in a row by supporting this recommendation. Thank you!

In granting those recommendations, supporting the Mayor's Arts Visioning Committee, and continuing to support the measures outlined in *The Art of Living*, this council has proved itself to be visionary. And the results of that vision can be felt and seen in this city right now. The incredible difference the arts have made to the Alberta Avenue revitalization, the sense of hope for the Jasper Place community as the arts begin to take root, and the strength of our community of emerging artists from all kinds of cultural communities and in all kinds of arts disciplines – all a direct result of this council's vision for a progressive, innovative, vibrant city, to which the arts play a vital part.

This year, you have before you a third unfunded service package from the Edmonton Arts Council which will bring an overall increase to the Arts Council budget of \$5 million over the past three years which was, we understand, your intent in supporting the implementation of *The Art of Living*. PACE, along with our membership, the artists we represent, and the thousands of Edmontonians that we serve, are in support of all of these initiatives and sincerely hope that you are able to support them.

This package will bring the EAC's Arts Operating and Festival Operating grants to their targets of about 10% of the required operating revenue of the over 160 organizations supported by the Arts Council and to a stable-and sustainable level for this city's arts and festival organizations. These organizations are the pillars of the arts community. They provide support and employment for local artists. They serve Edmontonians by providing access to the arts. And they create the continuity and stability necessary for a thriving arts scene.

This package also includes funds designed to support new arts organizations. This program will increase both cultural diversity and diversity of practice in our community. It will help us move forward as an innovative arts centre in this country. As a city of fresh, local voices.

As you know, great cities are cities that are able to offer and sustain a high quality of life, and we know that this quality is essentially defined as being cultural: great cultural institutions, opportunities for cultural innovation, and vibrant street life.

You also know that the arts industry in Edmonton employs more than 11 000 people every year, who live and work in Edmonton, and are cultural leaders and contributors to the revitalization, the stability and the safety of their communities.

Further, you know that every dollar invested in the arts returns 11 to 12 dollars directly and indirectly to the economy.

We understand that this is not an easy budget year. We know that there are other arts related requests before you, and we encourage you to look at those requests with the long term future of this city in mind. As citizens and taxpayers ourselves, we understand the challenges you face and appreciate that hard choices must be made. This Mayor and Council have clearly and consistently recognized the value of our

industry and the contribution of artists to Edmonton. This package from the Edmonton Arts Council will protect this city's investment in the arts, and put our industry in a place of strength and stability moving forward.

Anyone who has been in this city for the past five or six years knows that Edmonton is in the midst and on the verge of something remarkable. Something grassroots that builds on the strengths of the past, while youth and innovation flourish. Leadership from: this council, strong communities, local businesses, and the Arts have brought us this far. We appreciate your vision for this city and your support for the Arts as essential to that vision.

With that said, we would like to very respectfully recommend that, if you are able, you continue your support of the implementation of *The Art of Living* via the Edmonton Arts Council. We are on the tipping point of accomplishing great things and your continued support is very much appreciated.

Thank you for your time.