

MINUTES

Groundstory Toronto Advisory Convening 1.1

Dancemakers Centre for Creation, Distillery District, Toronto
May 3, 2018

Attendees

- Maura Broadhurst, Ontario Arts Council
- Adil Dhalla, Centre for Social Innovation
- Yolanda Ferrato, Theatre Gargantua
- Lisa Fiorilli, WorkInCulture
- Liz Forsberg, Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Erika Hennebury, Toronto Arts Council
- Tim Jones, Toronto Artscape
- Netta Kornberg, Artists' Health Alliance
- Conor McSweeney, 918 Bathurst
- Nicole Myers-Mitchell, Roseneath Theatre
- Cecelia Pye, Research Assistant, University of Toronto, M.Sc. Planning (Candidate)
- Pru Robey, Consultant
- Tamara Romanchuk, Clay & Paper Theatre
- Ronnie Sekulin, St Jamestown Community Corner
- Pat Tobin, City of Toronto
- Gerry Trentham, lbs/sq" performance
- Michael Vicker, Akin Collective
- Scott Walker, C-SARN
- Maria Wodzinska

Regrets

- Cara Eastcott, Feminist Art Collective
- Aviva Fleising, Canadian Dance Assembly
- Janna Hiemstra, Craft Ontario
- Sally Lee, CARFAC Ontario
- Allen MacInnes, Youth People's Theatre
- Nikki Shaffeeullah, The AMY Project
- Matthew Thomas, City Proper

Facilitators

- Jessa Agilo, Lead Facilitator (Founder & Project Manager, Groundstory; President & CEO, ArtsPond)
- Jen Tindall, Assistant
- Cayley James, Assistant
- Brenda Nistor, Assistant
- Alejandro Paton, Assistant

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Participant Survey Results (as of May 3, 2018)
- Appendix 2: Participant Exercise Results – Empathy Map
- Appendix 3 : Participant Exercise Results – Rainbow Map
- Appendix 4: Backgrounder – Groundstory Stage 1 (2017-2019)
- Appendix 5: Convening Presentation (jessa Agilo)
- Appendix 6: Participant Workbook

AGENDA & NOTES

1. Welcome

2. Getting to Here – Founder's Story

3. Bird's Eye View – Groundstory Overview

No notes.

4. Mapping the Room

Centre for Social Innovation

- Properties they own are affected

- The communities CSI serves are vulnerable, sensitive to changing prices
- Hoping to have more holistic understanding of how to better serve the community, and who else this initiative is relevant to

Maria Wodzinka

- Working with a theatre company for 7+ years
- Clay and Paper has been struggling so much
- Displacement is happening a lot in theatre communities
- Displaced four or five times
- It is challenging for several reasons because of this precarity it impacts the company's ability to serve our community around Dufferin & Bloor
- Finishing MA with York University so is very interested in how research can be used to further the conversation
- Breaking the silos of information is important

Toronto Artscape

- The conversation about gentrification is happening all around the world
- Artscape was created to address it 30 years ago and has been having the conversation for ages
- The context has changed however because it isn't just low income but established and middle-income players too
- Interested in trying to change or have stakeholders adapt to this newer context
- Might be useful to look at the allies you want to bring in on this issue including middle-income earners
- At the World Cities Cultural Forum in 2017 they declared an affordability crisis
 - Artscape and City of Toronto are working with the Forum to create a toolkit that looks at all the things that can be used to create more liveable cities
 - City of London has lost 50% of their music venue in recent years and artist studios are going to disappear by up to 20% in the next few years
 - Artscape is hosting a study tour that will bring together the directors of culture from several cities to address the issues
 - Hopeful because there are some innovative things happening at micro-scale that can be scaled up
- Gentrification is a loaded word
 - A lot of people love it! Particularly home owners because it increases property values
 - It is a by-product of growth which is a good thing for the city but there are consequences
 - When you frame gentrification as a challenge it can become adversarial but if you frame it as "constructive growth" it could be more productive
 - Conversations need to be proactive and set up for success as opposed to polarizing
- How to frame the problem so that polarization is minimal

ArtsPond

- Responsibility for gentrification is deeply complicated
- Some of the most deeply impacted of gentrification don't have the means to engage in dialogue
- Artists can be conveners for conversation that is not happening and facilitate using our creative skills
- Who is at the table when we design cities?

Theatre Gargantua

- Responding to densification vs gentrification (not as loaded a term) connected to growth
- Developers are setting the agenda for densification and they need to understand the long-term impacts of their choices
- As an indie theatre company trying to find appropriate space it is very challenging

- Has lost office space due to gentrification
- Shared solutions with multiple companies trying to find an answer
- Part of an activist group at the Bloor Dufferin site to address affordable housing - lots of cross over and linkage with issues they are facing in the community and overall community impact

Roseneath Theatre

- Accessibility is a challenge in addition to gentrification
- We have an inaccessible space – a big challenge in terms of welcoming an inclusive audience and staff
- Welcoming differently abled people is hugely important to us
- Workman Arts is leaving for CAMH when new space is complete – uncertain future for our building, who will take an inaccessible space with 13 stair levels in the building

918 Bathurst

- Heritage space, privately funded
- Asking the questions: as a venue how do we engage with people?
- Located in the Annex where there has been tremendous change
- Insecurity as small spaces are just disappearing

Artists' Health Alliance

- Committed to social determinants of health, but also a personal issue
- Became involved in a group in the Junction that advocates on behalf of the last low-income residents in the area
- Particularly concerned the link between gentrification and more broadly is very important
- This question about artists that don't participate in the economy but have a dedicated practice – how do they fit in?

5. Mapping the Problem

6. Mapping the Response

7. Next Steps

- Break-out groups and discussion of Empathy Map and Rainbow Map exercises
- Detailed notes attached (**Appendix 2: Empathy Map, Appendix 3: Rainbow Map**)
- Summary presentations:

Group 3

- There is a hierarchy of needs
- Breaking down silos and about newcomer artists and lower-income people
- Potential solution maybe

Group 2

- Young theatre artist hypothetical person
- How do they live and work when there isn't money?
- Life becomes collaborative when companies and artists
- come together
- They started to talk about shared producers and admin staff
- Just being able to come together and collaborate and brainstorm

Group 1

- Wants included affordable housing, sustainable long-term solutions from the government
- Possible responses include a database, videos available to inform and connect people, research case studies, inclusive governance etc.