



PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday, November 05, 2008

Richmond Arts Coalition surveys municipal candidates

Mayoral, Council and School Trustee candidates had their opportunity to voice their position on the arts in a recent survey sent out by the Richmond Arts Coalition. Important questions about funding, location and interest in cultural districts and partnerships in the community were asked.

Response rates were high with 18 out of 26 of municipal council candidates responding and 10 out of 12 school board candidates responding. "This project not only provides the community with a stated position by candidates on the arts," says Suzanne Haines, Chair Richmond Arts Coalition, "it also educates those who have not been involved in the arts community about the arts priorities and goals of RAC as a representative group. The majority candidates indicated an understanding and acknowledgement of the arts in Richmond as a significant industry in their responses."

Mayoral and Council Candidates

It was clear that the lack of facilities is recognized as an issue for the arts and the majority of candidates responded in favour of giving Richmond artists priority for City of Richmond initiatives, given that we have talented professionals living and working in Richmond.

RAC asked about the candidate's philosophy on single or multiple arts districts. Incumbent candidates referred to the City Centre Area plan which places a single district under the flight path. Linda Barnes, Malcolm Brodie, Cynthia Chen, Gary Cross, Sue Halsey-Brandt, Ken Johnston, and Bill McNulty all responded that one district is preferable. William Chen agreed that one district was the best idea because it would be 'easy to control and administrate'. JJ Cheng, Kichi Kumagi, David Reay, Harold Steves, Michael Wolfe, Pat Young, all felt multiple districts would be best and Linda Burchill, Derek Dang, and Neil Smith discussed the need to consult and consider where the growth is happening right now. Steveston and City Centre were the primary locations for such districts where indicated.

Questions about changing the structure of the departments at City Hall to support the arts & heritage communities in a greater way through professional development, funding and staff support were positively received. The prevailing response was a willingness to look at separating Arts, Culture and Heritage from Parks & Recreation based on a business case for need.

Based on the responses received, the most supportive candidates for the issues raised by RAC are Linda Barnes, Malcolm Brodie, Linda Burchill, Sue Halsey-Brandt, Ken Johnston, Bill McNulty, David Reay, and Harold Steves. Linda Barnes and Bill McNulty are Founding Members of RAC. Malcolm Brodie, Cynthia Chen and David Reay are current members of RAC.

School Trustees

Of the 12 candidates, 10 responded. All candidates appear to understand the importance of creativity in the classroom and there were varying opinions about how to accomplish more creative time and arts related

activities in the classroom. Grace Tsang and Debbie Tablotney are quite active in the arts through their current and past volunteer activities. Chak Au, Linda McPhail, and Eric Yung are current supporters of arts programming in the schools and using partnerships with local arts organizations to build and provide the programs where the schools have been unable to provide this access. “These opportunities build capacity for the arts organizations and provides the opportunities for youth in the classroom” says Richmond Arts Coalition Chair, Suzanne Haines. Rod Belleza, JJ Cheng, Carol Day, Donna Sargent, Michael Strachuk also responded to the survey.

All survey responses can be seen on the Richmond Arts Coalition website: www.richmondartscoalition.com

Please find all responses attached.

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