Discussion of Cornerstone Arts
Operating Process and Recommendations

Background

In 2013 the Edmonton Arts Council implemented a new process for determining annual City of Edmonton Community Investment operating grants for large arts institutions that combine a major resident arts production/presentation organization with the direct responsibilities associated with the ownership/operations of a major building in the city. The term used by the EAC for these institutions is Cornerstone Arts Organization.

This review process applied to the Citadel Theatre and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra / Winspear Centre for Music.

A similar process is underway as the Art Gallery of Alberta transitions to the Cornerstone Arts Operating stream, and will be reported on separately at a future date.

Assessment Process:

The EAC created a separate review panel for each cornerstone organization. This panel included representatives from the organization, City administration, the EAC board and staff, as well as an outside peer recommended by the applicant organization. The process involved a face-to-face meeting and discussion based on material submitted and relevant questions from all members of the panel.

Discussion

These review processes were productive, and allowed in-depth discussion regarding these organizations. The overall feedback from the panellists and organizations has been positive regarding this relationship-building funding process.

The Cornerstone Arts Organization process encompasses grants previously provided through both the Arts Operating and Arts and Museums Building Operating programs, and both recommended support amounts are increases year-over-year.

The outcome of this process is a funding agreement between the organization and the Edmonton Arts Council.

In the case of the ESO/Winspear Centre, that agreement is for two years, with the 2014 grant amount recommended in principle pending an administrative review. The Citadel Theatre elected to undertake another Cornerstone review in 2014.