SUBJECT: City of Hamilton Arts Awards Review (CS09053) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the City of Hamilton Arts Awards be suspended for 2009.

(b) That the current portion of the Culture Division budget assigned for the City of Hamilton Arts Awards, in the amount of $15,000, be reallocated to hire a consultant to work with staff, the Arts Advisory Commission, and the arts community to conduct an Arts Awards Program review.

(c) That, upon completion of the Arts Award Program review, staff be directed to report back report to the Emergency & Community Services Committee, with recommendations on how to improve the Program.

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager,
Community Services Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Culture Division is seeking Council approval to suspend the 2009 City of Hamilton Arts Awards and reallocate the funds to undertake an Arts Awards program review. The City of Hamilton Arts Awards are organized by the Culture Division staff with the assistance of the Arts Advisory Commission and have been presented annually since 1976 to practicing artists in the Hamilton area in recognition of their significant contributions in a chosen discipline.
The request to conduct an Arts Awards program review is based both on a recognition the arts community in the city has grown and changed significantly in the last decade, and the need to ensure the current structure and goals of the Arts Awards Program recognizes and reflects the ongoing contributions of the arts in Hamilton. The Culture Division is proposing to suspend the Arts Awards, for 2009 only. Instead of the 2009 Arts Awards event being presented, staff and the Arts Advisory Commission are proposing to hold a day long consultation opportunity called the Arts Forum, an education and outreach event for artists and arts groups in the community.

**BACKGROUND:**

The City of Hamilton Arts Awards are awarded to practicing artists in the Hamilton area in recognition of their significant contributions in a chosen discipline. The Arts Awards have been presented annually since 1976 and are organized by the Culture Division with the assistance of the Arts Advisory Commission, a City of Hamilton volunteer committee, whose mandate, in part, is to select and recommend the annual winners of the Hamilton Arts Awards. A panel of professional artists, community representatives and members of the Arts Advisory Commission jury the awards. The Arts Awards have an annual budget of $15,000 allocated in the Culture Division budget.

The Arts Awards have typically been comprised of five awards, one representing each of the following disciplines:

1. Literature;
2. Visual Art;
3. Theatre;
4. Dance; and,

Nominees are named in only one of the five categories. All nominees’ applications are considered for three consecutive years and after three years, a nominee may be re-nominated. An award recipient may not be re-nominated in the same category for which they have previously won an award. Each award winner receives a prize of $1,000 and a commemorative bronze medal designed by artist Dora de Pedery Hunt.

A Lifetime Achievement Award is also awarded, based on activity over an entire career, including volunteer work and the commitment to public awareness of the arts in Hamilton. Individuals with an extensive history of artistic activity and dedication to the Hamilton arts community, through volunteerism or advocacy or teaching, are considered. Past winners of the Lifetime Achievement Award include: Stan Rogers, Jackie Washington and Robert Mason among many others. In 2008, the Lifetime Achievement Award winners were Barbara Milne and Gary Santucci.
ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

The City of Hamilton Arts Awards have been presented annually since 1976 and have not changed substantially in format or mission in the last decade. During this same period of time, there has been a great deal of growth and change in the arts community in Hamilton. The city has attracted new artists to live and work here as well as national media attention for successful artist initiatives such as the James North Art Crawl, an evening of art, discussion, and lively entertainment occuring the second Friday of every month, and the Imperial Cotton Centre for the Arts, which provides affordable work space for artists. The arts and culture sector continues to be recognized as an important part of Hamilton’s economic development. New initiatives such as the Hamilton Music Awards and gritLIT, a festival to celebrate and engage the community in the city’s diverse literary culture, have also become important cultural events in the city.

In reviewing the 2008 Arts Awards Program, Culture Division staff and the members of the Arts Advisory Commission recognized that changes in the city’s arts community may not be reflected in the structure and mission of the current Arts Awards Program. There was general consensus on the Arts Advisory Commission that the Arts Awards Program could be more effective in promoting the arts and local artists. The Arts Awards would also benefit by having a more defined goal and clear mission against which to measure the success of the annual event, and to ensure that financial, staff and volunteer resources are allocated efficiently. Furthermore, there was a recognition by staff and the Arts Advisory Commission that there are other awards programs in the community that may duplicate components of the City’s Arts Awards and that there are new art forms beyond the traditional five, such as film and multi-media, that are not necessarily recognized in the current award program structure.

As a result of this review of the 2008 awards program, the limited volunteer time the members of the Arts Advisory Commission can provide and the current allocation of Culture Division staff resources, it is recommended that the Arts Awards be suspended for 2009 and the funding used to hire a consultant to prepare a study that reviews the current awards program and makes recommendations to address the following:

1. That the awards program is reflective of the current needs and character of individual artists and the arts community in Hamilton;
2. That the awards have an increased profile;
3. That the awards have a distinct role and do not unnecessarily duplicate the work of other community groups; and,
4. That the structure of the awards is such that the quality and effectiveness of the event can be maximized utilizing the volunteer, staff and financial resources currently available.

In place of the 2009 Arts Awards, staff and the Arts Advisory Commission are proposing to move its planned Arts Forum event to November 2009. This will be a day long moderated event where local artists and arts groups are invited to share their concerns and ideas for strengthening the arts community and guest speakers with expertise in specific arts related topics will make presentations.
ALTENATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:
The existing Arts Award Program could be maintained in its existing format.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial:

No additional funding is required as the monies already budgeted in the Culture Division for the City of Hamilton Arts Awards is proposed to be used to fund the review of the awards.

A majority of the funding for the Arts Forum has already been approved in the 2009 Arts Advisory Commission budget and additional funding is available in the Arts Advisory Commission reserve account.

Staffing:

If this recommendation is approved, the Culture Division’s staff time to support this initiative will be reduced. Culture Division staff with the assistance of the volunteers of the Arts Advisory Commission will prepare the Request for Proposal for the arts awards review. Culture Division staff will also assist with the organization of the Arts Advisory Commission’s Arts Forum. It is estimated that the staff time involved in the above two initiatives will be considerably less than the 400 hours of staff time that was required to present the 2008 Arts Awards.

Legal:

There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations of Report CS09053.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

This proposal is consistent with the 2003 Policy for the Arts, which states “The Arts Advisory Commission manages the annual Hamilton Arts Awards on behalf of the City”.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

The recommendation to suspend the 2009 City of Hamilton Arts Awards and conduct a review of the Arts Awards program resulted from comments received from the general public, artists attending the 2008 event, staff from the Culture Division of the Community Services Department and by members of the Arts Advisory Commission.
The Arts Advisory Commission has been consulted on the recommended approach and is fully supportive.

**CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:**

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, and economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

**Community Well-Being is enhanced.**  ☑ Yes  ☐ No  
A successful and celebrated arts community enhances our understanding and experience of our community and builds community pride.

**Environmental Well-Being is enhanced.**  ☐ Yes  ☑ No

**Economic Well-Being is enhanced.**  ☑ Yes  ☐ No  
A successful and celebrated arts community promotes innovation

**Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?**  
☐ Yes  ☑ No

**Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?**  
☐ Yes  ☑ No