



**Date 4 June 2010**

## **City Council Committee Report**

**To: Mayor Compton & Members of Council**

**Fr: Karen Brown**

**Re: Songs for our Scene – Community Foundation Application**

### **Recommendation:**

**That** Council hereby approves an application to the Kenora and Lake of the Woods Community Foundation in partnership with the Kenora Music Scene in the amount of \$1,000 to be used for funding the Songs for our Scene project.

### **Background:**

The Kenora and Lake of the Woods Community Foundation (the Foundation) is required to only give grants to organizations with a charitable number. Over recent years, City Council has partnered with various organizations to assist them in obtaining a grant through the Foundation where it is felt there is a benefit to the City for doing so.

The City was recently approached on the “Songs for our Scene” project by the Kenora Music Scene. This group had already approached a number of other groups seeking a partnership, but had been unable to obtain one for a variety of reasons. A copy of the request has been attached to this report for your information.

While the City currently has no policy in place related to this type of partnering, this is considered an opportunity to lend support to the cultural community without any funding commitment by the City.

### **Budget:**

There is no cost to the City, other than staff time required for the administration of the grant, if approved by the Foundation.

### **Communication Plan/Notice By-law Requirements:**

Notice of the approval will be sent to the Kenora Music Scene and the Kenora and Lake of the Woods Community Foundation.

## Songs For Our Scene

Songs For Our Scene is an idea that matured from the Tunes For Our Town compilations, which were released in 2007 and 2008. Those CDs sold nearly 100 copies with minimal exposure but the maturation of the music scene and the explosion of social media marketing and online music distribution have overhauled the playing field completely in the past 18 months.

We were contacted by the Community Foundation on Tuesday regarding an opportunity to submit a project and we have been considering a more professional version of the underground compilations but have not reached the point of procuring funding. Over a period of 48 hours, we have received confirmation from every single act in town that performs with any regularity, universally and without exception.

The benefits of the compilation would enrich both the music community and the community at large.

Generating attention for the music scene:

Songs For Our Scene will fund local music compilations in perpetuity, the central aim of the Community Foundation. As the scene is larger and more active than it has been in a decade, this has the potential to create a consistent and recognizably branded platform for local artists to be "discovered" by both local arts enthusiasts and summer visitors.

The CD booklet will include full colour pages of each individual artist, including critical web-based access information. Once prospective fans access these free social media networks, musicians can keep in contact with each of them uniquely, notifying them each time new music is released and most importantly for economic development, when and where their concerts will occur. Communication is the largest barrier for both artists and the scene as a whole. A one-stop-shop such as this both broadcasts the music community and narrowcasts each listener's interest, engaging them in specialized musical cultural communities.

Breaking Down Barriers:

Just as in society as a whole, historic and involuntary barriers naturally exist within the music community. The outpouring of support has been unprecedented and the value of such a collaboration can not be overstated for the social health of the music community. Artists of three generations will be represented on Songs For Our Scene, which helps to pass on values and experience while helping the scene not to have to "reinvent the wheel," as it were. Both First Nations and Non-Native music acts will appear together for the first time ever, representing the broader social goals and destiny of our Treaty relationships. The gender communication gap is surprisingly large in global music culture despite its progressive values and although female artists do not represent an equal number of acts, their inclusion will clearly demonstrate acceptance and unity. Finally, the genre spread will be so wide that all forms will be represented including: Folk, Blues, Rock, Hip-Hop, Punk Rock, Heavy Metal, Rhythm & Blues, and Ambient. While each venue and show has certain parameters that can constrain artists, this will be their art as they see it, truly free.

Support Your Local Scene:

There has unarguably been a huge mobilization in Kenora's arts community as the city's culture positions itself to take a central role in the development of its tourism economy. While support from the broader community is visibly evident in the political movement, there is room for improvement in connecting that political support to genuine cultural support. Fostering a culture of live music as a lifestyle is a surmountable challenge that the music community is overcoming slowly but vigilantly. Songs For Our Scene will be a treasure map for those who are interested in not only supporting, but participating in, the ballooning music scene.

**Budget:**

- Each artist will be expected to provide his or her own recordings for the compilation. For those experiencing financial barriers to recording, the scene is willing to provide complete assistance.
- 200 CDs will be manufactured through Advanced Discs in St.Catherines, Ontario at a cost of \$400
- Online distribution through CDBaby will cost \$55 USD
- Anicinabe Park has volunteered to serve as a launch for the event, free of charge.
- Advertising in The Lake of the Woods Enterprise can be committed for \$270 at the charity rate.
- A combination of live shows and radio charitable advertising will cost \$300 or less.

Total: \$1,025

We intend to ask the Community Foundation for \$1,000.

We are currently, however, without a charitable sponsor and we come before City Council with humility. We have attempted to work through four separate organizations, who for a variety of reasons, have not been able to take us under their wing. Making Kenora Home felt as though the project did not conform to its mandate of the alleviation of extreme poverty and homelessness. We agree. The Kenora Heritage Festivals does not have charitable status. The Lake of the Woods Concert Series felt as though they had sponsored two projects to the Community Foundation this year and was unable to make additional commitments at this time. Trylight Theatre's board can not meet in time to approve our request.

Thank you so much for considering our request and we are more than willing to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

The Kenora Music Scene.