



Statement from The Steinbach Arts Council re: Steinbach Performing Arts Centre project termination

July 5, 2017

To the Community:

The Board of the Steinbach Arts Council is extremely disappointed with yesterday's announcement by the City Council that the Steinbach Performing Arts Center project will be terminated. An enormous amount of hours have been put in by many dedicated volunteers over the past 18 months in order to try and bring this project to a reality, and to have it simply terminated is particularly difficult to accept.

Although there were many roadblocks in this process, the "Friends of SPAC" committee worked tirelessly to overcome them and ensure that accurate facts and information were appropriately relayed to the public domain. They also worked to obtain financial commitments from individuals and business leaders alike as they were directed by City Council. In short, this committee met every target that they were asked to meet. Anything that could have been done, was done. They left it all "on the ice" so to speak. This outcome is certainly not the result that we wanted, nor is it the result of a lack of effort or dedication to the project by these individuals.

This project was a state of the art facility that would have drawn many people to Steinbach resulting in a positive economic spin off. It is frustrating that little consideration was given to extending the "deadline" to allow the results of the government grants process that had been applied for. Perhaps most frustrating is that council seemingly put very little weight on the positive public fund raising campaign that was undertaken. It would have been more appropriate for council to say that there has been progress made in terms of the private funder campaign and for that reason they would wait for the outcome of the grant procedure from both levels of government. We felt it was not appropriate for City Council to take the position that "the funding ran out". It did not run out, as it hasn't even been announced....by either the provincial government or the federal government.

Moving forward throughout this process, it has been made abundantly clear that Southeast Manitoba needs a facility such as this and this need is great. Through many meetings, we believe that the message is clear that this was not just a facility for the performing arts but would have been something for everyone. Education facilities, businesses, community organizations as well as the many arts groups in this region, voiced support for this project citing many ways that their particular organization would utilize such a space. City Council must now figure out a way to meet that need.

The Steinbach Arts Council will continue to provide top of the line programming for our youth, seniors and everyone in between. We will continue to partner with the many groups that come together to bring quality productions like *The Wizard of Oz*, or our amazing concert series highlighted by the *WSO Christmas Pops* concert to Steinbach and surrounding area. Our disappointment lies in the fact that our own young people will not have a quality facility to hone their craft, perform their recital or exhibit their artwork.

In the end, The Steinbach Arts Council does not feel like we failed. This was the City's priority project and SAC was one of three organizations invited to participate in the consultation process. Again, our role was to encourage community advocates to form a Friends of SPAC fundraising committee, meeting with many funders, businesses and government officials over the past months. And to create awareness - we proudly secured a generous donation for promotional materials and the creation of a professionally designed website - [www.friendsofspac.ca](http://www.friendsofspac.ca). SAC did exactly that.

SAC experienced some positive outcomes throughout this process: it was an honor working with community advocates so passionate about their City and the southeast region; and it encouraged dialogue and awareness of the value of arts in our community, creating a win-win result for SAC, for our City and for our community!

The Steinbach Arts Council looks forward to continuing our work with the City of Steinbach in order to create something that we can all be proud of, something that fills the needs of a growing community and a space where dreams and passions can become reality.

Graham Pollock, Board Chair, on behalf of  
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## RESPONSE from Michelle Sawatzky re: SPAC project termination

So, here we sit. The Steinbach Performing Arts Centre as it was presented is something that will not be at this time. I understand that not every project that is proposed will come to be. While that is too bad -- I can understand that. But how this project was named and who it was, that actually poured themselves into trying to make it happen, is where there is a disconnect.

Here are some of my thoughts for our City Council. I am not looking for any replies... I am simply sharing how I feel and how I see it. Perhaps it will be a perspective you haven't heard before on this particular project.

Hello Mayor Goertzen and City Councillors,

Thank you to those of you who wanted to hear ALL sides of this project before simply throwing it aside. Thank you Mayor Goertzen for encouraging us and doing your best to be at some of our meetings. But for the rest, I need you to know that some hearts were fully in this project, and those hearts belong to people who live in the city that YOU represent!

I do feel it is very important to share my thoughts on one HUGE part of this entire project. Quite simply, I am SAD. I am sad because this was supposed to be the CITY'S PROJECT... and yet, it seems the city did nothing to make it happen. You, as a council, voted and the majority of you said that the Steinbach Performing Arts Centre was priority. To me, then, that means that you would all work together and tap any shoulders you could to give it your all to make it happen. You would have joined us at our meetings. To represent those of us, who live here, and who support a centre such as this. If you asked anyone, they would have no idea. They would think it's Cindi Rempel-Patrick, the Arts Centre and a few of us "Friends of SPAC" putting in countless volunteer hours to create a website, spread the word, be a cheerleader for the dreamers in this city who are trying to make this centre a reality. It feels like the city just waited for June 30th to come and go. Perhaps you NOTICED that a select few of us were working to secure donors, to meet with other levels of government and more, but I never sensed any passion for this project from the city... I did not sense any of you councillors ever willing to step up and come alongside us... for YOUR project!

Sport shaped my life but equally so, did the arts. It shapes our young people far beyond the notes they play or sing, the paint on the canvas or the lines they have memorized. You KNOW this!! Art is part of the FABRIC of Steinbach. It always has been and it's begging to continue to be.

The return on investment on the Steinbach Performing Arts Centre, if built properly and with the ability to house all of the myriad of events that it could have, would have been immeasurable for Steinbach. But only if we would build it so that all of the people that are already ASKING to come, CAN!! It would have brought our community together for more than just for sports for once!!

Anyone who has ever reached their dreams took risks and made sacrifices. Any city council that EVER left their mark took risks.

Yours respectfully AND as someone who loves living here and who is honoured to represent you in so many places in SO many ways!

Michelle Sawatzky-Koop

Proud member of the Friends of SPAC