Presentation to the City of Winnipeg Museums Board
Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre
Tuesday, October 20, 2015

Introduction

Oseredok Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre is a multifaceted heritage institution whose aim is to preserve, present and share Ukrainian cultural heritage with our fellow Canadians. Oseredok collects and cares for museum artifacts related to material culture, ethnology, and community history; works of fine art by Ukrainian and Ukrainian Canadian artists; archival documents and photos related to Ukrainian Canadian community life; and it houses a research library with books and periodicals in support of its various collections. This Ukrainian cultural legacy is shared with Canadians through exhibitions, workshops, public lectures, and special events, as well as through research and reference services.

As you were able to ascertain from our 2014/2015 Annual Report, Oseredok has had an outstanding and unusual fiscal year, posting a surplus of $84,105. This achievement reflects the results of our foray into a major fundraising event with corporate and individual sponsorships. The event was a dinner evening of opera with Tracy Dahl and Andrianna Chuchman called From the Met to the Met. The project demonstrated to us that we have the capability and capacity to deliver on large fundraising projects, and it also showed us some of our limitations. We can build on this experience for the future.

This afternoon I want to share with you something about the Centre's immediate concerns and long range plans.

Sale of Land to Sport Manitoba

Over the last two years the Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre has been negotiating with Sport Manitoba to sell a piece of Oseredok's property located immediately to the east of our building and which Oseredok received from the Province of Manitoba. Let me clarify. In 1995 the Centre purchased from the Province of Manitoba for the price of $1.00 land surrounding its building. A condition for the sale was that the land would be developed for the purposes of Oseredok. A similar arrangement was made with the City of Winnipeg in 1998 by which the Centre acquired Alexander Ave. west of Martha Street, a lane west of our building connecting Alexander to Pacific, a grassy triangle of land immediately north of Oseredok's building, as well as one just west of our building. The land from the Province became a significant source of revenue for Oseredok as a parking lot.

The sale of land to Sport Manitoba was concluded successfully with the approval of the Centre's membership. Construction of a Sport for Life facility, stretching from the Sport Manitoba building at Lily and Pacific, over Martha Street, and into our parking lot has just begun and will last until the spring/summer of 2017. The facility will be opened for the 2017 Canada Summer Games.

The sale of land brought forward a number of issues for the Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre that we have been addressing over the last year and some that will impact our operations going forward.

1. The sale of land affected the Centre's original agreement with the Province of Manitoba, since part of the land sold to Sport Manitoba would not be developed for the purposes of the Centre. Oseredok dialogued with the Province about the sale and, subsequently, structured a new agreement with the Province of Manitoba that reflects the land remaining to Oseredok and a ten year timeline to develop it.

2. The sale also affected the Centre's agreement with the City of Winnipeg, as the size of the property changed. A new title to the property and a revised agreement with the City of Winnipeg were drawn up.

3. Revenue from the sale of property, $509,000, will be set aside to create Oseredok's own capital development fund.

4. The immediate financial impact of the sale on our operations will be a significant reduction in revenue from parking. Our 2016/2017 budget projects parking revenue of $33,000 compared to an annual average of $67,279 between 2010 and 2014. Prior to 2010 and before demolition of a warehouse on our site, average annual income from parking came in at $25,403. Thus, our loss of annual parking revenue will be $34,279 based on current averages. However, we will gain $8,000 more than we earned pre-2010 when our lot was much smaller. Oseredok is making adjustments to this new reality within the parameters of a balanced budget.

5. During construction we expect some reduction in the number of visitors to Oseredok. Less parking spaces in Oseredok's parking lot, and in the area in general, will discourage our patrons from attending events or shopping in Oseredok's Boutique. With Martha Street closed permanently between Alexander and Pacific, our visitors will need to adjust to the new access points to Oseredok. We plan to mitigate some of this disorientation, first of all by signage indicating that Oseredok is open for business despite the construction next door, and secondly by providing information on the new access points to our members and donors via newsletter, email and website postings.

6. Less visitor traffic during Sport Manitoba's construction phase will also impact the level of donations to the Centre and net income from Oseredok Boutique. Some mitigating strategies to deal with this potential loss of income include an enhanced online presence, together with online giving options.

These are some the challenges facing Oseredok into 2016 and 2017, the context of which may affect Oseredok's annual operations. We are confident that with foresight and good planning the Centre will be able to manage and weather these changes.

Oseredok's Long Range Capital Development Plans

Going forward, Oseredok is also looking at the challenge of undertaking its own capital development project. This commitment derives in part from the new agreement with the Province of Manitoba and from the dire shortage of space within the current facility.

The Board of Directors has had conversations on this issue. Four assumptions directed the Centre's discussions on this topic:

1. The capital development project must be guided by reasonable and realistic goals and expectations commensurate with the Centre's capacity to finance such a project;

2. A capital development plan must be an integrated one that recognizes the operational requirements of the institution during and post construction and will not jeopardize the fiscal stability Oseredok has achieved. It must take into account any upgrades to the current facility necessitated by realigning functions in the present building.

3. The plan must take into account the capacity of the Centre to sustain the operating costs of the new facility, as well as the current one and, for this reason, must include a revenue generating component or components.

4. It must be open to creative ways in its implementation, seeking partnerships with developers, other museum institutions, and/or community groups or any other forms of collaboration.

Within the parameters of these assumptions, Oseredok envisages a phased development of a multilevel facility with an access point from Pacific Avenue, creating a visual synergy with the Manitoba Museum, the Centennial Concert Hall, the Manitoba Printmakers and the Sport for Life Centre. In essence, Oseredok is seeking to enhance its public space and to increase capacity for storage of collections, work and office space.

The Board of Directors has already moved on this initiative by striking a Capital Development Committee to steer the project and to develop the processes and plans that need to be put in place to bring this vision to fruition.

For Oseredok, this capital project represents a huge challenge that will require community consultation and support, as well as a good dose of measured discipline to plan within realistic achievable goals within fiscally sound parameters.