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ARTSBUILD ONTARIO
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VOLUNTEER BOARDS AND CREATIVE SPACE PROJECTS

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>> ERIN BORCH: Hi, everyone. So I guess we're going to get started. Welcome, everyone, to our Volunteer Boards and Creative Space Projects webinar featuring the Dundas Museum & Archives as well as the Stratford Perth Museum. My name is Erin Borch. We're very pleased to have two guest presenters for today's webinar. We're joined by Kevin Puddister, who is the curator and general administrator at the Dundas Museum & Archives, and we also have John Kastner, who is the general manager of the Stratford Perth Museum. We'll hand things over to them in just a minute, but we do have a few housekeeping items to cover before we get started. So firstly, you can hear us but we can't hear you. Your microphones have been disabled for this webinar, but you're welcome to use your speakers and headphones to listen in. You can adjust the sound by clicking on the speaker icon at the top of the meeting room. We will also be offering closed captioning throughout the webinar today. The closed captioning will be happening at the bottom of the screen, participants can change the font size, shape, and color. If you can confirm in the chat box on the right that you can see the closed captioning box at the bottom of our meeting room?

Perfect. Thank you. So a record of the closed captioning will be sent to the participants following the webinar and made available on our website.

A couple more things to mention is that we will be recording this session, and we'll also be emailing out a quick survey following our webinar along with this recording. We ask that you please

complete the survey so we can continue to improve our Learning Series for Creative Spaces.

Secondly, we have roughly 10 to 15 minutes at the end to answer questions. Please use the chat box at the bottom to answer your questions, and we'll get to as many as possible.

All right. On to the introductions. Firstly, if you haven't heard of ArtsBuild, we're a nonprofit organization that provides programming and learning opportunities that help make Ontario's creative spaces more sustainable. One of our core programs is the Learning Series, which is a series of webinars, workshops, and resources that support our core programs, which are SpaceFinder in Canada, Creative Spaces Mentoring Network and Asset Planer for the arts. Many of the webinars we'll be offering over the next year will focus on capital projects and accessibility in creative spaces.

All right. So next slide. I would like to introduce our guest presenters for today's webinars.

Firstly, Kevin Puddister has an SBA in history from the University of Guelph and a post-graduate certificate in museum management and curatorship from Fleming College in Peterborough.

Kevin joined the team at the Dundas Museum & Archives as a collections manager. In this role, he oversaw the creation of a number of exhibitions as well as the development of a collection digitization program.

In 2013, Kevin took on the role of curator and manager of the museum during an extensive renovation and expansion project. In this role, Kevin's goal has been to continue to develop the museum as an accessible and welcoming space for the community.

Secondly, we have John Kastner, and he in his second career currently as the general manager at the Stratford Perth Museum. John has worked for over 33 years in the newspaper industry, retiring as a manager editor of the Stratford beacon Herald in 2012. He started at the museum in 2013, and since that time, the museum has experienced incredible transformations. This year, thanks in no small part to the Justin Bieber exhibit, the museum had 20,000 patrons. John also sits on the board of the Ontario hockey federation, a branch of hockey Canada, and is the commissioner of the intercounty baseball league.

So now we'll be hearing from both Kevin and John today on their building projects. I'm now going to turn things over to Kevin to help get us started.

>> KEVIN PUDDISTER: Okay. Thank you, Erin. Can everybody hear me okay? I hope so. I just want to thank you very much for joining us here and for listening in on our story and the things that we've learned from our project at the Dundas Museum & Archives. For those of you who don't know, the Dundas is a distinct community, but it's part of the amalgmated City of Hamilton, and we sit just nestled in the Niagra Escarpment at the head of Lake Ontario.

Formerly and legally known as the Dundas Historical Society Museum, the historical society that founded the museum dates back to the 1940s, which is around the same time they began collecting artifacts. Although we have always interpreted and collected the

history of the community of Dundas, we were set up as a private nonprofit organization from the start. Our operating is funded in part through annual request to the H.G. Bertram foundation. That's a foundation that was started by our founder and builder H. Graham Bertram who was a business magnet and concerned citizen and interested and passionate about heritage. He helped to establish the museum that we have today.

And this support by the H.G. Bertram Foundation remains the case today, but thanks to CMOG. municipal project funding and donor support, their support represents less than 65% of our annual operating budget to this day.

The museum that was originally built by the historical society and was built in a residential neighborhood and opened in 1956 as a purpose-built museum for the Community of Dundas. Why in a residential area, you ask? Well, the property had been donated and severed from a next-door neighbor, Ms. Della Pirie, who was a member of the historical society executive at the time and she donated it in memory of her late husband. Della's house would later play a key role in the museum's most recent expansion project.

Built as a fire-resistant concrete box, it was typical of mid-century institutional architecture. Many people actually inquire if it was a schoolhouse originally or even a Bell telephone building. Fair enough. Not the most aesthetically pleasing today but served its purpose at the time. In fact, it was relatively rare for its time that the Dundas Historical Society Museum was one of only two purpose-built museums in this era. Historic house museums were most common, and, of course, this is before the era of the Centennial Museum that bloomed across the country only a decade later.

Thanks to the consistent funding from the Bertram Foundation, we had a period of incredible stability, but that eventually led to stagnation. Our curator, Olive Newcombe, served faithfully the museum for nearly 45 years, and her collections assistant served for 41. That combined with a very conservative board, and you've got a recipe for trouble.

It has been often said that you only needed to stop by to see what was new at the Dundas Museum once a decade. We were known for our outstanding doll collection, which you can see in the bottom right-hand corner, and it took pride of place in our permanent gallery for many years. The building was beginning to be a liability to the museum collection and the staff's ability to do a professional job. After years of discussion, everyone agreed that changes needed to be made. In addition to our board and staff, we were encouraged by the plans of other organizations in the community, including the Carnegie Gallery and the Dundas Valley School of Art. It was at that point that the board chose to step up and develop a plan. As with any project we do as nonprofits, we needed to find funding if things were going to change.

The Board of Directors, alongside the staff, developed a case for expanding the museum from the past to the future in 2009. That's

the brick brochure you can see on the left. The pitch to perspective funders costed out our priorities and focused on a few key points, the visitor experience along with improved exhibition space, physical accessibility had been identified as a significant issue to address. This was a very typical institutional building from the 1950s. It's a split level, inexcusably, which created significant physical barriers for everyone entering the space.

Preservation of the collections was also identified. The collection space was cramped, and the storage space needed relief. This issue, although not what we're speaking of today, would be primarily dealt with in the interim with the successful trillion capital grant that allowed for the installation of compact mobile storage.

Finally, exhibitions, our feature gallery left much to be desired for an exhibition space. It had poor fluorescent lighting, plaster walls, and a significant lack of flexibility.

In the initial concept, we sought funding for included a modern-looking addition to the front. You'll see that in the design image to the right. While the museum was happy with this plan, it would have required a variance from the city and wasn't well received by the neighbors in our residential area. It would have seen the structure encroach on the sidewalk and would have blocked a number of sight lines up and down our quaint street.

The project developed by the architects did deal with many of the perceived shortcomings of our building. To say the least, we were looking at solving the problem of a building that was inaccessible and hopelessly dated. Education and programming space was limited, office and workspace was at a premium. In fact, all of them were often the same space. And we needed a dramatic change to bring the community back.

Despite having the support of our member of parliament, David Sweet, who helped shepherd our request, our efforts to gain funding in the 2009-2010 federal infrastructure program, the one with the green and blue arrows, failed, as our project wasn't deemed to be shovel-ready enough and we would need to regroup as an organization.

Our partners at the Dundas Valley School of Art were successful in their request. They would also get a sizable amount of support from the City of Hamilton to match the federal contribution.

The board continued to invest time and money into developing the plan further, and it was during this period that we began to focus on ways to make the project and the museum, in general, more sustainable for the long run.

The museum had owned the Pirie house, the building on the right there, the house next door to the museum for nearly 40 years. It had been rented as a family home, generating some revenue on an annual basis. Staff recommended that we explore an expansion to this space, and it was taken up by the board and developed into the visionary idea to join the buildings. This idea was, in turn, taken up by our architects at McCallum Sather, and drafted into a workable plan. The new plan would have the same goals as the first, but now we would

have a physically accessible building and galleries with the addition of ramping and an elevator. There would be an improved LED lit feature gallery and all new third gallery as part of the re-design. The Pirie house would be transformed into a comfortable and functional rental and programming space which was a key aspect of the sustainability of the project. They would have a designed reference room space to facilitate research inquiries as well.

The Board of Directors, using their contacts in the community, worked alongside our partners at the Carnegie Gallery, the other project that wasn't funded federally or municipally from Dundas, to approach our member of provincial parliament with our request. The board member familiar with law of the provincial government worked with government, his staff, and other people to find funding of the projects through whatever program possible. \$2,450,000 was found through a program at the Ontario Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Affairs. In 2012 the province announced that each organization would receive \$1.225 million, and we were finally off to the races.

Our renovation project affected all areas of our facility except the storage vault, and the expansion aspect saw the Pirie house physically joined to the original museum structure with a new accessible atrium entrance. The museum now occupies the entirety of a corner property, the two atrium entrances, one accessible by ramp, in addition to a circa 1848 doctor's office moved to the property in the 1970s and two large pieces of industrial machinery made in Dundas and installed in 2017. All this has been joined together with the recently developed and completed landscaping plan that you see here.

The museum was reopened by Lieutenant Governor David Andly on November 22nd, 2013, amazingly, just one year after the museum had closed for this construction project. A great lesson learned from the funding side of this project was that it's not what you know or how significant you feel your project would be to your organization or community but to who you know. Build relationships with and bring alongside supporters of what you do. It's important for a board to continue to work at these relationships for the long-term success of your organization.

Politicians won't fight for a nonprofit that they don't know, and our board had spent a number of years developing solid relationships with both our member of parliament, our member of provincial parliament, and our local counselor.

What role did our volunteer Board of Directors play in the project? Our board chair and president, Clare Crozier, had worked hard to build his board with a group of individuals with specialties to offer the organization. Made up of nine members from the Dundas community, the group included a diversity of experience and interests with specializations that included marketing and sales, a lawyer, for whenever that might come in handy, a school principal and teacher with political background and historical interest, a teacher -- excuse me, a treasurer with a financial audit and accountability background, and individuals with municipal politics and building

permits experience. In fact, the assistant to the sitting ward councilor at the time was very familiar with the building department, had joined the board and helped our permit process along with the building department.

Additionally, we had a member with provincial governmental lobbying experience and several members who were active business people with deep connections in the community. A pretty good team to tackle any project, I would say.

To ensure the project was completed right on time and on budget, the museum put together a dream team building committee that would attend on-site meetings with the architect and contractor and make informed decisions. The committee would keep the board apprised of the construction progress but only come to them for major financial decisions. This was an important step. If we had to go back to the board for every little thing, the project would have surely run well over time and budget. Board chair and president Clare Crozer had served on the board for about a decade at this point and knew what the limitations of the old structure were. As mentioned, he had looked to the community to recruit board members that could bring specializations to the museum. When it came to the major renovation project, Clare knew what he and the board didn't know.

Although a leader for the organization, Clare brought on Bill Stewart, a veteran contractor with over 6 years of experience, to act as the main liaison with the contractor and architect on a day-to-day basis. Bill knew what was supposed to happen and when, how it was supposed to be done, and what questions needed to be asked along the way.

Ron Simpson joined the board as treasurer around the time the project was being approved. As a former CFO in private business and experienced CRA auditor, Ron was the perfect treasurer to ensure the project remained on firm financial ground. He meticulously reviewed each transaction and provided thorough monthly accounts to the board. This included weekly adjustments to our cost estimates, gathering invoices from the contractor, and communicating regularly with the granting agency at the province, ensuring that we were paid on a regular basis for the work.

All this proved invaluable when our organization was eventually audited by CRA after the project's completion. Ron knew what all the questions would be and had the answers they needed. In fact, he knew we were going to be flagged for audit even before the project's completion based on the influx of cash to the organization through this project.

Board member and chair of the Property Committee, Keith Green, brought an eclectic entrepreneurial background, which included, of all things, locksmithing, and data security combined with business relationships with lighting and electrical. His passion for technology and economizing on energy usage was helpful during the project and continues to pay dividends to the museum to this day.

And I joined the museum in 2010, as Erin said, with a degree in museum management and curatorship, but I had previous non-museum

experience in facilities management, having worked with conservation authorities for over eight years. Although a board-directed process from the start, I was brought in once the construction project began to bring a museum's professional eye to the table and open a regular communication line to staff throughout the project.

Originally, a rotary association with one of our board members, architect firm McCallum Sather had been brought in from the earliest concept. Architect Drew Houser and project lead Michelle Austin were with us every step of the way and literally held our hands from the permitting process to the RFP and contractor selection to regular on-site review and consultation to inspections and final occupancy. Aside from funding, the success of the project really began and ended with the architect. They were a true partner throughout the project.

We were also fortunate to work with a group of individuals at Collaborative Structures, limited, our general contractor based out of Cambridge, who cared about the project and did everything they could to make sure everyone was happy with the final product.

Lessons learned. Plan early and plan often. Continue to review the ideas and plans until the best, most well-thought-out project emerges. Although we thought we had a great plan initially, it was only the setback of funding that allowed us to regroup and refocus on the project and come up with what we all agree is the best possible scenario and outcome.

The good board and staff relationship and communication is essential. Although they were an active board, there are any number of things you don't know unless you work in a place day-to-day, and with a museum, there are particularities in the space that makes it different. Museum professionals can help identify priorities in the space. Use a building committee, not the board as a whole, a smaller committee can include professional staff and will be more efficient in making better-informed decisions or just making decisions in general. The board needs to trust the committee. That's very important, as too many cooks in the kitchen can spoil a stew.

Assemble that building committee with specialties of the individuals in mind. As Clare Crozier was able to do in this circumstance, it's important to have someone who knows construction processes, and it's crucial to manage the finances of the project with a treasurer involved.

Plan to give your contractor the space they need to complete the project. This will likely mean shutting down for a time, depending on the size of the project, but plan on an alternative office and service location. Contractors will work more efficiently in a space where they don't have to accommodate open hours and staff on a regular basis, and especially not the public, as well as develop a communications plan to share the developments and successes of your project as it proceeds. Who's going to do this and how will they stay on top of it throughout the way -- throughout the whole project?

This will help you develop a momentum a capital project brings to any organization that you can raise additional funds that you might need to pay off the project or to see other projects come to fruition

sooner. People are more likely to donate to a project that they can see and feel emotionally connected to it. And certainly, that is the case in our circumstance where we were, after a only few short months, able to complete the project without any debt on the organization.

And those are my lessons learned. I'm happy to answer questions at the end of the process.

>> ERIN BORCH: Great. Thanks so much, Kevin. That was really great. Next up we have Kevin -- or sorry, John, and just as a reminder to everyone, we will have time for questions at the very end of the presentation.

All right. Over to you, John.

>> JOHN KASTNER: Okay. Can everybody hear me okay? Can everybody hear me okay? Good? Okay. Well, thanks very much, Kevin. That's a great lead-in, I think, to the Stratford Perth Museum environment. I started here in 2012. Actually, I left the Stratford Beacon Herald in 2012, and they started a recruitment process here in 2013. I was hired in May and started in June of 2013. I remember during the interview process, they talked about what changes should we be making to the Stratford Perth Museum to make sure it's successful, and I didn't really no know, but I thought they would -- know, but I thought they would become apparent within a few months of starting, and that's pretty much what happened.

I think the one thing that I'd like to talk about today is the differences in a strictly board environment. The Stratford Perth Museum is operated by a not-for-profit board, and there are some changes -- there are some differences to a municipally-operated environment, but in many cases, I think there's some similarities. First off similarity, you have to make a case for the capital project, but instead of pitching it to a municipal council or your local municipal government, you've got to convince the board of that, and the other similarity is that you can't, in many cases, do things right away. You know, we'd like to do this or we'd like to do that, but because we've been fortunate enough to have all of our capital projects grant supported through either service clubs or cultural spaces or other grants, community foundation, we quite often, obviously, have to plan a year out, and right now we're looking at projects for 2019.

The differences, I think, are -- in talking to people that work at the municipal environments, there's quite often topic experts that they may have, an engineering department, a building department, even people that deal with accessibility issues and making sure you're compliant there. The difference is for us, on the positive side, is that we're not beholden to municipal policies regarding tendering and the choices of vendors, and in some cases, we're able to get things like gifts in kind and donations of labor and materials and expertise, for example, in the most recent case we're doing, in engineering advice.

So there is a picture of the Stratford Perth Museum. It's a house that was built in 1874. It was purchased by the Stratford Perth

Museum Association in 2009. Right after purchasing the property, they did a major addition to the property, which was 10,000 square feet. Later on in the presentation, there's an aerial view of the entire building, which will, I think, be beneficial.

In 2013, there was certainly a need, as we described it here, to catch up as far as a number of capital things. The project -- the major construction project that took place in 2009 ran into some real problems, and, in fact, impacted the solvency of the Stratford Perth Museum. As an editor at the local newspaper, I knew once every couple of weeks there's a significant story in the paper about the museum and how it was on the precipice of going out of business, essentially. They had done a major renovation, as I mentioned, about a half a million dollars. They had hoped for a major grant to come through, and as most of us on this call know, don't start before you get the grant. You can't assume you're going to get it, and, in fact, they didn't get it, and they ended up going to the City of Stratford and the County of Perth for what amounted to a major bailout, for want of a better term. That also led to a ten-year funding agreement with the city and the county where the museum was prohibited from doing any capital projects without having approval of the two municipalities.

That said, 2013 things started to turn around, and I was fortunate enough to be here at the time. The first thing was the relationship with the Stratford Festival. About 600,000 people come to the Stratford Festival every year, hugely beneficial to the museum, in as much as not only are these people who have a cultural interest to begin with, but they also have the day off, they're on holidays, they're museum-goers in many cases, there's a lot of similarities of people who go to the theater and go to museums. They reached out to us to partner with them to bring in Shakespeare's First Folio in 2013, and that showed immediate change for us. We had 853 visitors in 2012. In 2013, thanks in no small part to Shakespeare's First Folio, we had 3,500 the next year, and then in 2013 we had the -- an exhibit from the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. That coincided with the Stratford Festival production, The Diary of Anne Frank. Since that year, 2013, we've had an exhibit every year that augmented the visitor experience for people going to the Stratford Festival.

This past year, for example, we had an exhibit from the Harper Lee Museum in Monroeville, Alabama, and the Stratford Festival presented To Kill a Mockingbird. We've done this every year, including the lion, wardrobe, witch exhibit, and next year we're looking at an exhibit to augment the production of the crucible, where we're looking at an exhibit about Arthur Miller.

So part of this, you know, rapid change in the culture, to steal a phrase, at the museum, was that we needed to make some major changes and needed to bring the museum up to standards that not only we were happy with but also the people that we were associated with. You know, for example, the Stratford Festival and, you know, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Anne Frank House and places like that.

First things first, though, and we decided here that we needed to do some major projects that impacted the museum itself, and that was the treatment of the collection and the treatment of the exhibits at the museum, so you can see there -- I won't go through each of them, but we purchased PastPerfect, we installed LED lights throughout the building. The lights we had in the collection room were actually awful, they were sodium lights that were actually damaging the artifacts. Similar, the heating system was a natural gas tube heater that had, you know, the flame reflected off it. Also, parts of the collection room were 30 degrees Celsius, parts were 15, so it was not very good.

And then we made some structure changes to the museum, which impacted the actual patron flow. We had -- people came to the front door of the museum when I started here. We moved the main entrance to halfway down the museum, which was an accessible entrance, and it also allowed us to create a gift shop, which has been very good for us.

Non-core projects, we developed a speaker space. That was a result of the Anne Frank House exhibit. They showed a movie, and we had six speakers that year that talked about not only The Diary of Anne Frank but the Holocaust and the Jewish experience in Canada. Structurally, we did a 150-year-old wrought iron fence that was restored. We had a major flooding problem here when they built the archives next door, and as a result of that, we built some additional parking, which was designed by the Conservation Authority, which allowed a lot of the stormwater runoff to go into the porous parking area before it ended up on our trail system. I would say I'm not sure which came first, but we had some success, and then it prompted these capital projects, and as a result of that, we started to do better here from a revenue standpoint and also from a gift shop standpoint.

So there's our admissions over the last number of years. You can see beginning in 2012. 2013 is when we started the capital projects, and we've had a number of good years there. Notice in 2017 there was a drop-off. Ironically or not ironically, the relationship at the Stratford Festival was both good and bad. Stratford Festival had a very tough year last year, and it impacted the Stratford Perth Museum as well. This year they've had a great year, and that's certainly contributed to our successes in 2018.

Our gift shop sales, there's another example there. I can tell you that the spike in 2018 has a little bit to do with the increase in traffic at the Stratford Festival, but there's no question it has a lot to do with the Justin Bieber exhibit that we have here. Of that \$43,000, \$35,000 of that is Justin Bieber merchandise, which includes T-shirts and key chains and skate board decks and cell phone covers and things like that.

There's an aerial view of the Stratford Perth Museum, which gives an idea of the addition. You can see where the original house was and you can see how it extends out on the back of the property, so the addition is about 10,000 square feet.

Here's the first area that we renovated. This used to be a lunch room and office. It was located right in the middle of the museum as you came through the front door. It was very offsetting for patrons, and I saw it on a daily basis where people would come in the front door of the museum, they'd come to this area. We had a board table there. It was a lunch room, somebody's office, a photocopier, and it was an obstacle between the front of the museum and the rest of the museum, so we did two things. We created this space to do two things. One, we could have events in there, but we could also have it as a curated space and we could show exhibits and artifacts.

So it's been very successful for us. You can see that's a board table where we have our board meetings, but also we -- this past weekend, we had a local charity do a tour of homes, and we served tea in that area, tried to restrict the amount of food to things just like that, tea and cookies, but it's been a really good change for us.

It was also a line-up in that room where we had Shakespeare's First Folio because we only allowed so many people in at one time, and would he had a speaker in that room from Ontario who fielded questions about Shakespeare's First Folio, and that was a change for us and sort of the maturation of the museum that took place in 2013.

I would say that was a bit of a transformation for us as we went from being a straight community museum where we began to have what I would say were not only national exhibits but international exhibits as well.

This is the collection room, and it was very early on that we decided we needed to pay attention to our core purpose, which was to protect the 20-some-thousand artifacts which are in our collection and our responsibility, so the first thing we did was replace the lights with LED lights, which you can see, and then secondly, there's a new four-stair heating and cooling system, which goes through the collection room and also goes through our performance space, which really changed things for us and was a significant development for us, and that took place in year three of the five-year cycle.

Those were installed last year as well, so we literally had a gas tube heater called convection heating, which was a gas burner which went across the top of the collection room and across the top of our -- what became our performance space. Incredibly inefficient and might be -- other than a gas stove or a wood stove -- might be the worst form of heating you could have for a museum, but that was part of the problem with the construction when they ran out of money in '09, they had to do some things that were done on the cheap and were not very conducive to a museum environment.

This is the open storage space. When I came here in 2013, it had large farm implements in it, you know, it was tractors and large things. It was not really curated, it was really a storage space.

The Anne Frank here prompted us to do two things. One of the conditions were we be able to show a film, as I mentioned earlier, but we were able to curate that space more professionally and keeping

the museum environment. In this photo here, you can see the installation of what we called theater lighting, and these are LED lights that are controlled by a panel. We had a local company that designed it for us and did a lot of the work gift in kind, and each of those 75 lights are -- you can control each of the lights individually from a control panel.

This is the theater space we have now. That's a woman there speaking, Julie. She's from the Anne Frank House, and every day in that space we show the Justin Bieber movie "Never Say Never," which is a feature length movie, and quite often we have 20, 30 people watching the movie there that loops all day, but we have speakers that go into that place as well. We have weddings take place in that place. The County of Perth is doing presentations next week for their strategic plan over the next three years, and the real estate company has got their client appreciation day back there, so we make great use of that space, and it has turned into a real revenue source for us as well, in addition to creating a curated space.

There's a picture of a local craftsman who replaced our 150-year-old rod iron fence. And I mentioned earlier about the flooding problem. The Stratford Perth archives, we sold a quarter of our property to the County of Perth and City of Stratford to build the archives. That took place in 2013 as well. A lot of good came out of that. We have a shared parking lot, which includes snow removal, we -- it's -- there's a lot of people who come to one institution and then go across the parking lot to the other and a lot of shared interests and a lot of people that take great advantage of us being right across the parking lot. That's in addition to it being a real advantage for staff, as most days we're going across the parking lot to, you know, find some history on an artifact or vice versa.

The downside was when they paved the parking lot, there wasn't a great stormwater or parking plan in place, and we ended up with 10,000 square feet of our trail system being underwater. The Conservation Authority stepped up to help us out, and that was thanks in no small part to a board member who worked in a planning department at the County of Curren and put us in touch with them, and they were able to create a -- not only another 6,000 square feet of parking, which is porous parking, but then also control the stormwater very holistically. There was no pipes. It was all done through swales, and this pond has really changed our trail system in a number of ways. It's a great asset and feature to it, but also it was -- it was done very holistically and has changed the animals that are in our trail system as well, which is an important part of our programming, because we -- we have an orienteering program and a nature program, and that stormwater pond has been critical to that. Not only that, but the change of vegetation and animals as well.

So I can tell you that the major takeaways in a more -- in a board environment, the pluses are that we've been fortunate to find experts that have helped us with each of the capital projects. The shortcoming, of course, is a lot of municipalities may have those

people or have access to those people. We did not. Our board was really good. For example, I think the first person was a guy named Randy Matthews who was our finance chair. He was also project manager for Scotiabank in Central America when they moved into Central America and bought up a lot of banks there during the deregulation of major institutions. He -- I'm an English major and degrees in English and history before working at the newspaper. My expertise is not doing RFPs or calls for proposals or working through quotes. He was very good at that. Not only would he create the initial call for proposals that we would post and distribute to interested vendors, he would go through the first rounds of proposals, create subsequent questions, which we would send off, and then we would sit down and work as to who the winning vendor would be, and I didn't have a lot of selling to do when we got to the board level, and that's because there's that level of expertise that was so helpful throughout that process that got us to a really informed decision when it went to the board, and I can remember there being very little discussion at the board when we moved forward.

Other than that, I would say that we've had a board member who worked in the Tim Horton's chain that had gone through a number of retailers. She was an excellent contact with skilled trades, and in many ways I would act as the general contractor and Randy and person who worked at Tim Horton's were great resources for me as we dealt with skilled trades and scheduling and issues that would arise quite often between contractors.

In the case of the parking and stormwater projects, we had a board member, I mentioned earlier, who worked for a municipality who had a real relationship with the Conservation Authority. Most recently, we have a capital project for 2019. We're going -- in the process of constructing a bell tower that will be about 20 feet high that's going to house a 150-year-old bell that was at the Stratford Post Office, which was torn down in the 1960s. We have a volunteer who's an engineer who has designed the -- done the drawings and done the work that we have a tower that's sufficient to not only hold a bell that's about 2.5 tons but also for it to ring. We have a steel company who donated all the materials, a fabricating company that builds and paints farm equipment that's going to fabricate it and paint it and install it, a cement company that's donated time and materials to put a cement base there, and a technical training group, which is an adult learning organization associated with the school boards. These are adults who are in the process of finding a second career, and they've -- they've stepped forward to help with the fabrication as well, and that's very atypical of what happens here at the museum.

I think before I go to the challenges, which there aren't very many, we've been very fortunate in each of these cases to get grants, and each of the major projects that we've done the last few years have either been supported by grants or significant gifts in kind or a combination of both. I can't speak to what a municipal environment's like, but I suspect that that -- as I understand, that

can be more problematic for municipal museums, so we've been very fortunate.

The challenges for us is we don't have real oversight here other than the board. We don't have -- we have a relationship with the municipalities, but I would say we don't really report to them, as it were, so I'm -- we're fortunate this institution is compliant with municipal standards and the expectations of the municipalities.

We're also very compliant, and it was a priority when I started here that we be -- reach museum standards and be compliant there. We were not when I started, and I can say with some pride that we are now, and those include the standards that are issued annually plus the other areas we were not compliant.

We have to have an audit each year, and that is a result of the funding or because of the funding that we have at the municipality. Our board makeup compliance, which is an internal expectation, our accessibility standards, and we're compliant in those areas now, and I think in some cases, particularly predating 2012, there were issues with the board, how often it met, its compliance, the expectations it had with the two municipalities.

We have been -- the board here was very receptive to the need for change, as you can see from the admission numbers at the start, this museum was not doing very well. It was literally on a month-to-month existence until the ten-year funding agreement with the city, and then some very progressive and I would aggressive changes that we made here, and I cannot stress enough that there are a lot of good things that happened at the museum. All of those can date back to the relationship with the Stratford Festival. A lot of good things happened. The board did a lot of heavy lifting during that period, but the relationship with the Stratford Festival where we -- they embraced us and we came together with a lot of collective ideas to augment the visitor experience at Stratford really was a game changer for us, getting things like the Anne Frank House exhibit, so on, put us in a position where this year, 2018, we had the ability and the infrastructure, including security systems and LED lighting, to go after and to mount the Justin Bieber exhibit, which has been incredibly, incredibly successful for us.

Okay. And that's my presentation, and I'll turn it back to Alex and Erin for any questions for either Kevin or myself. Thanks very much, Kevin, for doing this as well, and I think there's some similarities between Kevin's environment and mine, and I'd also -- if we sign off quick at the end, I'd like to thank our chair for allowing us to talk about the Stratford Perth Museum.

>> ERIN BORCH: Great. Thanks so much, John, and thank you to both of you for sharing your projects and your insights with us. We have about ten minutes for questions now from participants, so I'd ask you to please type it out in the chat box to your right.

The first question we have is from Laurent who is asking, I think, if you could expand a little bit more on what PastPerfect is.

>> JOHN KASTNER: So PastPerfect is a museum-based system that is designed specifically for your collection, and it stores --

there's a lot of merits to it. We had an internally built database system here that was built by a friend of a friend, and it wasn't very robust. It limited as to how much you could do, and one of our major purchases was PastPerfect. It was about \$10,000, and we had a project manager, the aforementioned Randy, who installed it, and you can access the collection remotely. It backs up daily. You can integrate pictures with it. And for me, it also has a database of our members, of people who've donated money, we track our volunteer time, et cetera.

>> ERIN BORCH: Okay. Perfect. Thank you. The next question we have is coming to us from Prince George, so thanks, John and Linda -- Sean and Linda, and they're wondering if you have any suggestions for how to attract and recruit the types of board members needed for a successful capital project. So John and then maybe Kevin, if you guys would like to speak really quickly to this, that would be great.

>> JOHN KASTNER: Sure, if you want to go first, Kevin. What we do, we create a nominating committee here, and we try not to, you know -- you know, to put a shingle out and say we're looking for -- we're looking for board members, we need three people this year, et cetera. We have a real recruitment process where a nominating committee identifies people in the County of Perth who are topic experts, and similar to what Kevin said where they look at their board makeup, we go through and we look at people who are experts in a field that may be beneficial to the museum. Sometimes those are just connections, that they work in an industry or -- where they've got regional or provincial connections, but, for example, I know as Kevin said, you know, it's really good to have a lawyer. We have a project manager, we have someone who's with the -- has worked previously with the municipality. The person we're going to add to our annual meeting in February is a former CEO at the County of Perth who's retired, and those sorts of attributes are the characteristics we look for.

We had two really good politicians who lost in the last municipal election, and we're going to approach those people, and I hope one of those come onboard as well.

>> KEVIN PUDDISTER: I guess what I would say from our experience here is that while the board has become a lot more progressive, especially around the renovation and expansion project, the group as a whole is fairly stable. They are very involved members of the community, and through that involvement have become connected with other perspective board members. It's certainly not an open recruitment process, being that we are a fairly private organization, but it's more that -- looking to their contacts in the community for replacing board members as they leave in most cases, so we had a long, longtime board member who was the lawyer on the board retire, and the board chair and president, the current board chair and president, Russ Powers looked to his experience in municipal government and found actually a solicitor who's currently -- works for the City of Hamilton, but he's come on to our board and is kind of a legal mind that we can tap, so it's always keeping your ears and eyes open and

continuing to make those connections in the community.

>> ERIN BORCH: Great. Thanks for that advice. And next, they were wondering how much you know about the characteristics of your audience and how important is this?

>> JOHN KASTNER: Well, I'll go first. I think the museum, Stratford Museum, we're almost -- I steal a phrase from a Hugh McClellan novel, *Two Solitudes* where we're a traditional community museum where we run traditional exhibits. We've got an exhibit about the county of Perth and the history of rail in Stratford, and at the same time, we have exhibits about the Stratford Festival and *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Justin Bieber. For us, we really try to take advantage of the people who are going to be in Stratford for the festival, and apart from the same time, our core mission is to run a community -- at the same time is our core mission is to run a community museum. It is serving two masters. In the last couple of years, we've been able to do that, but it's not without its challenges. You can't sort of stray too much to becoming completely dependent on the festival because that -- that relationship, as good as it is now, it's not -- it's not entrenched, so that's -- I think we try and have both a community museum and traditional museum-goers for a small museum as well as the people who come to the festival.

>> KEVIN PUDDISTER: Thanks, John. I kind of agree with that. We've got kind of a traditional museum-goer audience, sort of your retiree, you're older skewing group who are committed to not only volunteering at the museum but attending events and exhibit openings and things like that, but we've always tried to be that welcoming and open community space. Harder to do in our old building, but since our reopening, we've really made an effort to make the space welcoming to families, especially young families with children, and all of our events and free programs kind of reinforce that, so I guess I would say that that's kind of the audience that we spend the most amount of time developing and nurturing because we see the great benefits of building those relationships with younger people going forward. Thanks.

>> ERIN BORCH: Okay. Great. Thanks, guys. So I think that's all the time that we have for questions. So I think next I want to move on to speak really quickly about a couple of the programs that ArtsBuild Ontario offers. If you're a creative space attending today's webinar, we believe that these programs will be of interest to you. Firstly we have Plan It/Build It, which is ArtsBuild's free online guide to planning and completing capital projects. Since capital projects can range from a new construction to a large renovation to even small renovations and ongoing maintenance, Plan It/Build It let's you select the scale of projects that you're undertaking, and it makes planning and executing a capital projects in the arts simpler. It breaks it down into a process of more manageable steps for you.

Secondly we have SpaceFinder, and as many of you probably know, we have SpaceFinder active in nine Ontario communities. It's a free match-making tool for folks looking for space and spaces looking to

promote their rentals. It's free to list and free to search, so we encourage you to have a look at these spaces all over Canada.

All right. So our next webinar will be happening on Wednesday, January 30th, 2019, at 12:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, and it'll be on the topic of Engaging Community in Municipal Performing Arts Space Projects. So our guest presenters next time will include Steve Solski, who is the executive director at first Ontario performing arts center, as well as Kristopher Dell, who is the director of production with Civic Theatres, Toronto.

Great. So thanks so much, and just as a reminder, we'll be emailing you with a link of today's webinar, and we also ask that you please complete the survey, so I'd like to thank our sponsors, as well as Kevin and John for your presentation today, and you can check out more upcoming learning webinar series on our website at artsbuildontario.ca. Thanks so much, everyone.

>> JOHN KASTNER: Thank you.

>> KEVIN PUDDISTER: Thank you.
