

December 22, 2012

This update is coming from Montgomery's Inn Museum INNovators. Montgomery's Inn staff members are not allowed to speak publicly about what has been happening since the KPMG report on the City of Toronto's Core Services was released in July, 2011.

The good news is that no Toronto museum will have its City funding cut in the 2012 budget. All of our efforts have, at the very least, bought time.

Thank you for all of your support. Please keep it coming! A checklist of some of the things you can do is at the end of this message.

The message is divided into sections

Short-term challenges

Longer-term challenges

What Montgomery's INNovators plan to do

What YOU can do

Details are provided for those who want them. If you don't want all of the details, feel free to skip to the sections that interest you.

The single most important thing that all of us need to do is STAY POSITIVE. There is good reason to be optimistic that by working together, Montgomery's Inn will move into a new phase of its life, strong and healthy.

We have to make good use of the next few months to ensure that both the Inn and the INNovators move forward together to secure a future that is in keeping with our missions and goals, and with the community's aspirations for the Inn.

A) Short-term challenges (January to June, 2012):

Upcoming reviews:

The City Manager and the City's General Manager of Economic Development and Culture will be conducting the following reviews after the 2012 budget is approved in January 2012:

Examine divesting Heritage Toronto, and divesting the museums to it, in some reconfigured form: We do not consider this a viable option. One alternative being discussed is the creation of a foundation to operate the city museums.

Find operational efficiencies and increase fundraising: In a vacuum of any deep understanding of what museums do, why they do those things (e.g. the Inn's farmers' market), and how they function, this is scary. For example, some councillors seem to think that all paid professional staff can be replaced by

volunteers, and they can't.

Alternate models of service delivery: Examples might include divesting to site-based groups or some kind of privatization. This kind of language discounts the reality that museums do not just operate facilities. They display collections of artefacts that must be cared for. They are also artefacts themselves, which have significant capital needs because they are historic structures that must accommodate modern uses.

The results of these three reviews are to be reported back to the City's Executive Committee by the end of June, 2012.

Possible labour disruption: This may occur in early 2012, as early as January 17. If the June deadline for completing the above reviews stays firm, it seems likely that decisions will be made by the same staff people who put us on the list for closure in Fall 2011. Also, we may start losing our part-time staff, who are the backbone of many of our programs. They will have no choice but to seek work elsewhere, and there is no assurance that they would come back.

3. **Need for new measures of performance:** Judging the performance of community museums – especially ones in suburban areas – has to involve more than looking at the number of casual visitors who come for tours!
4. **New model of governance for the museums (Fort York excluded):** A new model was approved by City Council and the Province in April, 2011, at the time that the City-appointed museum boards were disbanded. The new model took over two years to develop and reflects the changing role of museums. Performance measures must be rooted in that new model, not ones that are anchored in a now-outmoded idea of what museums are and what they do.

Montgomery's Inn was the only museum that immediately implemented the new model by creating Montgomery's INNovators. It is currently the only community museum with a citizens' group to speak for it. The INNovators have done their best to speak for the others as well, whenever the opportunity arose.

B) Longer-term challenges (by the 2013 budget process and beyond):

Closing the doors: This is perhaps the smallest of the risks we have to understand and deal with. Some councillors say that we don't need to worry because the doors will never close. What they don't say is that Montgomery's Inn may no longer be a community museum, accessible to the public.

2. **Museums are no longer core City services:** The museums have been removed from the list of the City's core services. If they are not core services, they will no longer be included in the City's budget. Some councillors have estimated that this could happen within two years.

3. **The City's museums actually fall into two categories, which have been treated as if they are one:**

Tourist attractions: Fort York, Spadina House, and possibly Mackenzie House

Community museums, which by definition, have a high level of community involvement: Montgomery's Inn, Gibson House, Zion Schoolhouse, Todmorden Mills, Scarborough Historical Museum, Mackenzie House (?), and Colborne Lodge. The York Museum has been open only for research purposes for some time now.

As long as there is one category of museums administered by the Economic Development and Culture Division, attendance numbers and revenue generated may continue to be the primary performance measure used.

Numbers are obviously important, but higher visitation and revenues will only result from program and service development, changing exhibits, and making the stories of the museums significant and more relevant to individuals and communities.

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In other words, as the head of Museum Services wrote in 2008: *The City needs a fresh perspective on the museums – to view them in a positive way – as opportunities for community and civic engagement and passion.*

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C) What Montgomery's INNovators plan to do about these challenges (remember that staff at the Inn and in Museum Services cannot advocate for any of the museums):

Advocate, advocate, advocate for Montgomery's Inn to remain part of the City, and to continue receiving core funding. Our goal is to support the direction in which the Inn has been moving to engage more people in its activities, and to heighten awareness of and appreciation for the history of our community. The difficult time we are going through now will become a chapter in that history.

Get our house in order, and build membership in Montgomery's INNovators. The stronger our membership, the stronger our voice will be. As of December 21, 2011, it stands at 300 and grows daily.

Influence the reviews and how they will be conducted to ensure that performance measures are in sync with the new model of governance, which the former Inn board supported. That model will have to be tweaked if there is willingness to accommodate the two categories of museums that are housed within the City structure.

Use income from bread and fruitcake sales to strengthen existing programs, and fill in gaps with important activities or physical items that are not in the City's budget allocation. In November 2011, the INNovators allocated funding to make it possible for groups that

have never visited the Inn to do so.

Support new marketing initiatives to broaden community awareness of Montgomery's Inn and its many programs and services (watch for the Inn's new brochure coming soon!)

D) What you can do:

There are many things that you can do to support Montgomery's Inn:

If you're a volunteer, keep volunteering... and thank you! The value of volunteers' contributions is truly immeasurable. And if you're not a volunteer now, please consider becoming one.

If you're a casual visitor, become a regular visitor.

If you've never taken a tour of the historic house, there was never a better time.

Become a member of Montgomery's INNovators.

Buy our bread, which will continue to be available in 2012. Details are being worked out.

Come for tea, Tuesday to Sunday, 2 to 4 p.m.

Come for special events, workshops, community gatherings.

Spread the word that the Inn has facilities to rent: two large rooms (one will hold up to 70 people, and the other up to 50, depending on the room configuration needed..) The Inn also has a modern kitchen that is inspected by Public Health.

Book a birthday party, a pizza party, a meeting, a cooking session in the historic kitchen, or a day of bread baking.

If you have specific skills or knowledge that could be useful to the INNovators, let us know.

To find out what's happening, check our website and Facebook for updates:

www.montgomerysinn.com

www.facebook.com/#!/montgomerysinn

If you have a suggestion or comment, write to us at montgomerys.innovators@gmail.com or 4709 Dundas St. W., Etobicoke, Ontario M9A 1A8.