

From: "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
"Singh, Sandra" <Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca>
Date: 6/16/2020 9:28:52 AM
Subject: Update: William Clark Studios

Dear Mayor and Council,

Following up on my note from 4 June 2020 about William Clark Studios, I wanted to give you an update on most recent developments.

Issue:

Every artist (50+) in the William Clark Studios (1310 Williams Street) received notice to vacate the studio by end of June 2020. The 12,000 square foot space at the corner of Clark and Williams Street; one of the main venues that has participated in Eastside Culture Crawl for more than 20 years. Additionally:

- There have been several changes of ownership and several years ago the City was alerted to significant owner-implemented rent increases in this space , but the leaseholder William Clark Studios Inc. (existing artist tenants) were able to sustain the business with a renewed model (smaller spaces, more artists, increased rent rates);
- In early June of this year, leaseholder William Clark Studios Inc. notified all subtenants (artists) to vacate within 30 days.
- It became clear last week that the leaseholder was doing their best in a very difficult financial situation.

Update:

- Cultural Services staff have been in contact with the owner's representative and have received an official confirmation today that the current leaseholder will be stepping away from the current lease;
- Staff's understanding is that the owner will be meeting with a potential new private cultural operator (who is also operating other cultural spaces in Vancouver) later this week. The staff at Cultural Services know the potential operator and will also follow up with them directly;
- In addition, now that the owner has clarified their intention regarding next steps, the staff will endeavour to connect the owners with additional NPO space operators in the event that the initial plan does not come to fruition;
- Staff have been in ongoing communication with Esther Rausenberg from the Eastside Culture Crawl, who has been in contact with the subtenant artists; and
- Cultural Services staff has asked the owner's representative to consider providing some level of confidence to the existing artists in the space by letting them know that all parties are working towards a resolution of this situation to retain the studio spaces. The owner's representative has committed to getting back to staff regarding this question.

The following is a recent article regarding this situation, written by Dan Fumano for the Vancouver Sun and Janet Smith from the Georgia Straight.

- <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/questions-surround-vancouver-art-studios-closure-blamed-on-covid>.
- <https://www.straight.com/arts/fifty-artists-evicted-from-william-clark-studios-as-managers-blame-rising-rents-and-covid-19>

If Council has any further questions or needs additional information, please contact Sandra Singh directly at Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

Sadhu Aufochs Johnston | City Manager
Office of the City Manager | City of Vancouver
604.873.7627 | sadhu.johnston@vancouver.ca

Pronouns: he, him, his



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh peoples.