



TOWN OF STRATFORD

News Release

For Immediate Release
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Harkins Praises Council Selection of Shakespeare Theater Consultant

STRATFORD— Mayor John A. Harkins today praised the Stratford Town Council's selection of the Arts Consulting Group to conduct a marketability feasibility study examining the potential future uses for Shakespeare Festival Theater.

“After a careful vetting process of several impressive proposals, I am pleased that the Council has selected the Arts Consulting Group to make an informed recommendation as to the future of Shakespeare Theater,” said Mayor Harkins. “I believe that ACG's approach to this long vacant and controversial property is appropriate: take an objective, critical assessment of the market's ability to sustain this facility as an active theater, and make recommendations for reuse if a purely theatrical restoration cannot be sustained by the market. I've long said that we must approach the future of this property in a dispassionate manner that is mindful of market demand, and I believe this achieves that goal.”

The Arts Consulting Group is a national arts and cultural organization management firm with offices in Los Angeles and New York. Work conducted in Stratford will be led by Vice President Willem Brans, who counts the New York City Opera and Philadelphia Museum of Art among his clients.

ACG has proposed a five phased study as follows:

- Needs Assessment (\$50,700)
- Market Analysis (\$51,600)
- Cost Estimates (\$35,100)
- Community Engagement (\$25,800)
- Fundraising Study (\$34,800)

The Town will fund a portion of the work, totaling \$198,000, through bond monies previously appropriated for the renovation of Shakespeare Theater under the now defunct contract with William Hanney.

Council Chairman Tom Malloy stressed that his colleagues have adopted a measured approach to this project. “No matter what the future holds for Shakespeare Theater, the Town of Stratford needs a plan that is palatable to both this community and to the consumer market as a whole,” he said. “In hiring Arts Consulting Group, we will finally

have a non-biased answer to the question to what the market and the taxpayers can support at this site. This approach also allows us to pay for the initial study phase from previously appropriated funds, reducing the burden placed on the taxpayers. I look forward to seeing ACG's finished product."

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