

Culturals Under Attack in Niagara Falls



[Buffalo Rising](#)
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The Oishei Foundation recently announced a dollar-for-dollar challenge grant to the Niagara Falls City Council to help restore funding to the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center ([NACC](#)). The City Council Majority has recently eliminated \$30,000 in City funding to the NACC and has verbally turned down the Oishei Foundation's offer of \$15,000 if the City reinstated \$15,000 in funding.

Designed by William Ittner and built in 1924, the classic revival building at Pine Avenue and Portage Road served as Niagara Falls' central high school until 2000, when it was replaced by a new high school building. Slated for demolition, the NACC was rescued by a grassroots community coalition, Save Our Sites in Niagara Falls, Inc. Today the 166,000 sq. foot building is filled with more than 75 artists and is on both the Federal and NY State Registries of Historic Buildings. The mission of the NACC is to promote arts and cultural experiences in western Niagara County.

"I have submitted a formal agenda item, proposing acceptance of this challenge grant, for the Council's consideration at its March 4, 2013 Council Meeting," says Mayor Paul Dyster. "The City Council needs to go on record with this decision, whether they reverse their choice or not."

"The John R. Oishei Foundation has donated \$10 million to Niagara Falls organizations since 2006," says Dyster. "These private dollars support services that Niagara Falls residents use everyday. If you have relied on places like Complete Senior Care, Inc., Niagara University, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, Family and Children's Services of Niagara, Inc., and many others, you have seen the Oishei Foundation's

investment at work. This foundation is more than just a city partner; it provides life blood to this community."

The Oishei grant offer was a direct response to the Niagara Falls City Council's elimination of the NACC's \$30,000 allocation even after it was passed in the 2013 Annual Budget. Concerned citizens have flooded the last two council meetings speaking in support of the NACC and against the elimination of budgeted funding.

"This issue is about more than just emergency fundraising for one organization," says Dyster. "This is about the City Council disregarding its own approved budget and consciously turning down private funds. The NACC is being forced to adjust to an unscheduled gap in its 2013 budget and closure is needed on this issue."

<http://www.buffalorising.com/2013/02/culturals-under-attack-in-niagara-falls.html>