

Thursday, April 14, 2016

Mayor Frank Campion

RE: Calling All Artists: Design the next City of Welland Logo

The Corporation of The City of Welland

60 East Main Street, Welland, Ontario L3B 3X4

Dear Mayor Campion,

I am writing to you from the Association of Registered Graphic Designers (RGD) in response to Members who live and work in the Niagara Region who informed us of the Call for Artists to design the next City of Welland logo.

RGD was created by the Ontario Legislature to govern its members and award the professional designation RGD to designers based on their education, experience and competence. Our Rules of Professional Conduct prohibit our 3,000 members to participate, as entrants or judges, in competitions of the sort you are organizing.

Design contests are condemned by design organizations around the world, including the International Council of Design Associations (Ico-D), Graphic Artists Guild (GAG) and AIGA, as an unethical business practice that is harmful to designers and clients alike. Most importantly, it is unlikely that this sort of contest will result in a logo that effectively meets your marketing and communication objectives. Worse, a poor logo will hamper your efforts to move forward, and a plagiarized logo could easily cause legal troubles and embarrassing publicity.

Also, as you may be aware, Niagara College currently offers a three-year advanced diploma in graphic design to assist those in your community to learn the skills necessary to earn a living as professional graphic designers, offering just these sorts of services. What message are you sending to them and your community when this contest makes clear that these professional skills are not needed or valued for the design of something as important as their community's visual identity?

Design is a process involving research, creativity, strategy and client participation. Without going through this process a logo is unlikely to adequately reflect the unique qualities of your city. Just as you wouldn't have a lawyer represent you without them first understanding the fundamentals of your case, a professional designer must also be well acquainted with your organization and goals if they are to create something that will embody it, foster recognition from among your community, and generate excitement about your city.

If, as stated in the contest details, the new logo is to truly "reflect Welland as a diverse city with a rich past and a promising future" then we encourage you to reconsider holding this competition, stop wasting tax-payers money on the cost that is involved in promoting and administering the competition, and instead issue a Request for Proposals from qualified design professionals. We would be pleased to assist you to ensure a fair process that respects your community and ensures you identify qualified design firms and designers to take on this project.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly at [1 888 274 3668 x 23](tel:18882743668) or by email at [hilary@rgd.ca](mailto:hilary@rgd.ca).

Sincerely,

Hilary Ashworth  
Executive Director