

# Economic Success in the Making

## Devour! Studios Town of Wolfville

NSFM Spring Conference

### Success Stories

Michael Howell – Executive Director, Devour!

Lia Rinaldo – Managing Director, Devour!

Mayor Wendy Donovan – Town of Wolfville



# Introductions & Intro



- **Michael Howell**, Executive Director of Devour!
- **Lia Rinaldo**, Managing Director of Devour!
- **Wolfville Context**
  - Small but growing town at the east end of the Annapolis Valley
  - Permanent population of approx. 5,000 plus approx. 3,500 Acadia students, faculty & admin
  - Limited commercial assessment due in part to limited commercial space, past council decisions that pushed commercial development out of town boundaries
  - Growing tourism opportunities due to the regional economy (wine, craft beer, local food), scenic location, Acadia, entrepreneurial investors



# The Festival



- Devour! The Food Film Fest is the world's largest film festival dedicated to all things culinary, bringing together cinematic art and fine cuisine in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, and at 15+ satellite events around the world.
- 10 years of festival growth from 1,000 visitors in 2009 to almost 15,000 visitors in 2019 from across Canada and around the world
- Celebrity participants have included Anthony Bourdain, Lidia Bastianich, Phil Rosenthal, Jacques Pépin, actors Jason Priestley, Bill Pullman, and Canadian icon Gordon Pinsent





- In 2019, the week-long flagship festival mounted 100+ unique events celebrating film, culture & community, education and rural economic growth – supporting \$1.9 million in economic activity in Nova Scotia with \$1.6 million in economic activity taking place in Wolfville
- Since 2013 alone, Devour! has welcomed almost 70,000 attendees to its events, experienced five-fold growth in gate revenue, and generated nearly \$14 million in economic activity in the Province
- Devour! never stopped producing events during the pandemic, albeit smaller hybrid versions with in-person and live-streamed events, and was one of the few known events to take place in North America in 2020



# Devour! Studios



- Devour! Studios will be a permanent home for the Festival and a number of cross-sector organizations that will establish the Studios as one of the most vital cultural, culinary, and community facilities in the heart of downtown Wolfville.
- The building that will house the Devour! Studios is a Wolfville landmark, part of the town's fabric for over 175 years. Originally an apple warehouse, the building's history, character, and charm will be maintained as it undergoes a complete \$7.5M transformation.





# Devour! Studios



- As a unique, multipurpose space, the Studios will house a state-of-the-art teaching kitchen, an event hall, a performance venue, film and recording studios, a social enterprise café, a community deck in partnership with the Town, and so much more.
- As an innovative educational and programming space, it will be an important breeding ground for our next generation of chefs, farmers, artists, musicians, and filmmakers. As a gathering space, it will bring the region, country, and world to our doorstep to celebrate, grow, and invest in Wolfville and Nova Scotia's glorious bounty.



# Success for Wolfville



- Leveraged site development for Town's needs - \$ for accessible washrooms downtown and public access deck to Wolfville's waterfront park
- Location at North East side of main town intersection along with new Town Hall and library on the South East side is a tremendous boost to redeveloping Wolfville's downtown



- Fits perfectly with Wolfville's economic task force focusing on attracting footloose entrepreneurs
- Profiles the agricultural and creative wealth of our region and the Province

# Thank You & Questions



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