

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, 1 East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on October 10, 2007.

Members Present:

Hector P. Benitez
Douglas Brimhall
Amanda Buscas
Peter G. Cook

D. Kent Layton
Lars Nielson, Jr.
Ramona Tecumseh

Members Absent:

John Hohmann
Daniel J. Harper
Andrea Soto

Staff Present:

Johann Zietsman Rob Schultz
Jean Kaminski

Guests Present:

Lindsay Butler
Zarco and Carmen Guerrero

Peter Cook, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:39 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Peter Cook, Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of August 8. There being none, all Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of August 8 and they are posted on the City Web page.

Items from Citizens Present

Zarco and Carmen Guerrero addressed the Board regarding the rental fees at Mesa Arts Center. Because of the increased fees, smaller arts organizations can no longer afford the rental fees and have been forced to look to other cities for their programming. Xico Inc., held an event last year in the 99-seat Anita Cox Farnsworth Studio Theater. They sold 88 out of 99 seats, but because they did not fill all the seats, they lost \$300 in ticket sales; therefore, losing money meeting their expenses. When Xicanindio still existed in Mesa, they had a partnership with Mesa Arts Center as an Affiliate. Xico Inc. incorporated in Phoenix. Now that Xicanindio has gone from Mesa, Xico Inc. would like to have a presence in Mesa, but along with other smaller arts organizations cannot afford to hold events at Mesa Arts Center because of the increased rental fees. Carmen commented that the original goal of Mesa Arts Center was to provide an affordable venue for local arts organizations to present their programming. Zarco stated that the goal of Xico Inc. is to reach the underserved community, those who would never have the opportunity to see theater, arts galleries, or arts programming. Their programming is one of the few that provide Latino themes and cater to families and schools. He feels it is important for organizations such as theirs to partner with organizations like Mesa Arts Center in order to reach those goals. Right now, those opportunities no longer exist in Mesa. Xico Inc. wishes to have a presence in Mesa to present relevant, and important, programming to these communities. They asked the Board and staff to again review rental fees with consideration for the local arts organizations.

Johann Zietsman, Executive Director, stated that since Mesa Arts Center has been directed to achieve 100% cost recovery, our hands are tied due to the City's current financial situation. Mesa Arts Center empathizes with the arts organizations, but at this time, necessity is guiding the reality.

Ramona Tecumseh commented that at one time Nancy Wolter, Development Officer, was soliciting funds to offer affordable programming, where is that today? Carmen replied that Nancy has acquired some grant money for workshops that are more affordable. Last Saturday there was a workshop to make sugar skulls for the upcoming Dia de los Muertos celebration, which Carmen herself attended. She said the workshop was packed and the fee was \$2 per person. Mesa Arts Center continues to seek grants and support to offer more such programming as an outreach in the community.

Introduction of New Board Member Lars Nielson – Peter G. Cook

Lars Nielson said he was thrilled and honored to be on the Board, and looks forward to participating. He is the Vice-President of Business Development for Harbor American West. His family has lived in Mesa for many, many years. Welcome, Lars!

Hear Presentation and Take Action – Provide Recommendation to City Council on Proposed Public Art Donation – Rob Schultz

In June 2006, a proposal was presented to the Board by Kim Steadman, Senior Planner for the City of Mesa, and Natalia Cody of Arizona Partners, a development firm, to add an artistic design element to the Falcon Gateway development project on the southeast corner of Greenfield and McKellips Roads. The proposed project was for several wind-activated sculptures to be created by artist Lyman Whitaker of Sedona. One suggestion made by the Board to the development firm was for the developer to donate the artwork to the City of Mesa so that subsequent re-development of the site would not lead to removal of the sculptures.

The developer has come forward and offered to donate the artwork, titled, "Wind Forest," to the City of Mesa.

Donations of public artwork follow the guidelines in Mesa Management Policy #209. In that policy, it states that the "Public Artwork Gifts and Loans Guidelines" are to be followed as well. In the "Public Artwork Gifts and Loan Guidelines," a panel of three from the Arts and Cultural Department are empowered to make a recommendation to the Board, who then make a recommendation to City Council for final approval. The panel of three consisted of Rob Schultz from Mesa Arts Center, Jeffery Morris from Arizona Museum of Youth, and Dr. Tom Wilson from the Arizona Museum of Natural History.

In reviewing the proposal, the panel considered the aesthetic value of the artwork, its condition and location, and maintenance issues. The panel found the sculptures to be attractive, dynamic, kinetic, and impressive. No visible problems were found. The location is on a highly visible and busy corner, yet set back from the roadway, and well protected. The movement on the base poles is controlled by sealed, permanent ball bearings that will provide for a long and active life. The sculptures are made of copper and covered with a protective patina. There are no anticipated annual maintenance costs involved with the artwork unless vandalism or other unforeseen damage occurs. Concurrent with this donation is a separate parallel process through another Department to donate the land, on which the sculptures sit, to the City as well.

Mr. Schultz hopes to take the proposal to Council as soon as possible and looks for it to be considered sometime within the next two months.

Peter Cook, Chair, commented that he has seen similar pieces in Sedona that have been there for a number of years and they are attractive.

Dr. Kent Layton made a motion, Douglas Brimhall seconded, and all Board members present unanimously voted to recommend that Council accept the public artwork piece titled, "Wind Forest."

Hear Presentation, Discuss, and Provide Direction – Draft a Letter to the Mayor and City Council Regarding City Budget Items – Peter Cook

Peter Cook, Chair, distributed a draft of a letter he composed to the Mayor and City Council on behalf of the Board requesting that a line item be retained in the FY08-09 City budget for Arts and Cultural Community Aid Grants and the Public Art Program. After the Board discussed the document, and provided input, they unanimously agreed to submit the letter (as amended) to the Mayor and City Council as soon as possible.

Special Note: It was decided several days later to wait before submitting and bring the amended document back to the Board for a final review. It will be an action item that will require Board approval.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Robert Schultz for Sunnee Spencer

- Tom Wilson and Sunnee Spencer were attending a kick-off, orientation meeting with Piper Trust regarding a two-year grant that the Arts and Cultural Department has received.
- The next exhibit, "Outside the Book," will have an opening reception on Friday, October 19, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. The Board is invited.
- Several staff will celebrate an anniversary in October: Mark Fromeyer, Youth Museum Specialist, will celebrate 22 years; Beth Bartholow, Administrative Coordinator will celebrate 20 years; and Veronica Ochoa, Store Manager, Michelle Balani, Community Arts Coordinator, and Jeffery Morris, Youth Museum Specialist, will celebrate their first year with the Museum.
- Karen Falk, archivist and curator of the Henson Legacy Foundation, will be in Arizona over the holiday season and has offered her services free to the Museum for the following events on December 28: tour for staff from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.; special viewing of the original version of Emmett Otter's Jug Band Christmas at Mesa Arts Center; and a VIP tour with refreshments at 4:00 p.m. The Museum can use the tour as a small fund-raiser for the Arizona Museum for Youth Friends.
- The Maricopa County Library received a grant from Target towards the Museum's collaboration for the Henson programming, which will allow the Museum to bring in Fran Brill, a muppeteer and the voice of muppet, Zoë, in addition to Dave Goelez, another muppeteer, in January and February.
- On December 14, the Museum for Youth and the Arizona Museum for Youth Friends will have their first major fund-raiser that will include an auction, dinner, etc. prior to the opening of the Henson exhibit on December 15.
- The current exhibit, "TOYS," is open through November 25.

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Johann Zietsman for Tom Wilson

- The Museum is now officially Arizona Museum of Natural History, which better describes what they do. Along with that came the process of getting a new logo in place, which was unveiled Saturday, October 6. The logo was done pro-bono from an organization that assisted through the process, and who also contributed new stationary to the Museum to get them started.

- The new exhibit, "Hohokam: Ancient Monuments of the Salt River," is one of the biggest if not the biggest exhibits on the Hohokam, done by one of the international experts on the subject, Dr. Jerry Howard the Museum's Curator of Anthropology. Additions will continue to be added to the exhibit over time to keep it renewed as it continues to have life at the Museum.
- Museum staff will be involved in exploratory work over the next few weeks at the proposed Waveyard site to ensure there are no artifacts that might be damaged during that development.

Peter Cook, Chair, commented, as a member of the Museum's Foundation Board, that the name change has brought revitalization to the staff. Also, as reported in the newspaper this morning, Mesa Grande has received a grant. Johann Zietsman, Arts and Cultural Director, said, yes, the Museum received \$150,000 grant from the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community to begin development of the Mesa Grande site. The grant will go before Council on Monday, October 15, for formal acceptance.

Mesa Arts Center (MAC)/Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) – Rob Schultz

- The four current exhibits at Mesa Contemporary Arts continue: "Papel Chicano" through January 6; "Beyond the Cel" through February 10; "Cel Mates" through January 6; and "Mark of the Crow: through December 23.
- Cheech Marin opened Mesa Contemporary Arts's (MCA) season with "A Conversation with Cheech Marin" in the theaters on September 13; a great introduction to the opening reception of the four exhibits on September 14. Approximately 2,100 came through the galleries with another 1,000 or so on the Shadow Walk. For the first time, people were lined up outside the galleries waiting to get in.
- Four MCA staff members will be traveling to Brigham Young University (BYU) to complete a collaborative art exchange. About a year ago, a BYU professor had his artwork on exhibit at MCA. He was impressed with MCA staff as artists in their own right, and invited them to BYU to exhibit their artwork and provide lectures as guest artists for a long weekend.
- Stageworks' "La Ofrenda" opened the weekend of October 5 and continues through the weekend of October 21. Their next play is "Cinderella," which will open the weekend of November 30 and run through the weekend of December 16.
- Off the Cuff, one of Mesa Arts Center's Stageworks' troupes for students 16 years and older, performs Friday, October 12, at 7:30 in the Nesbitt/Elliott Playhouse Theater. Tickets are \$10.
- Arts classes are underway for Mesa Community College (MCC) classes and Arts Education classes; all are going well.
- Staff is in negotiations with Gateway Community College to offer classes at MAC in the same manner as MCC in the spring. Staff is also speaking with Chandler/Gilbert Community College, who is also interested in offering classes at MAC next fall.
- Johann Zietsman, Executive Director, noted the new updated brochure, which not only covers Performing Live events, but has now integrated workshops at MAC, Sound in the Ground, as well as exhibits at Arizona Museum of Natural History and the Arizona Museum for Youth.
- This Friday marks another Second Friday Out night with Ricky Skaggs and Bruce Hornsby performing in the Ikeda Theater and music on the Shadow Walk to link with Main Street activities. The MCA galleries will be opened late as well as The Store.

Kent Layton asked if anyone had approached Banner Health regarding the development of the Mesa Grande site? Peter Cook, Chair, commented that Arizona Museum of Natural History installed an exhibit on the eighth floor of the Banner building a few years ago. Several Board members felt it would be a natural partnership for the City and/or the Museum in developing that area. Mr. Zietsman commented that he wasn't aware of any conversations with Banner, but will take the idea to Dr. Wilson and the City.

Director's Report – Johann Zietsman

Johann Zietsman briefly covered some of the high points of a Power Point presentation he was going to present at the September meeting, which was cancelled. Because of the drastic budget cuts to the Arizona Museum for Youth and the Mesa Southwest Museum in FY06-07 (half their budget, losing half their staff), as well as cuts to Mesa Arts Center, the future financial situation at the Arts and Cultural institutions looked grim a year ago. However, having a quality staff to rise to the occasion, a year later the budget for the Arts and Cultural Department was surprising. Attendance at the three facilities dropped – Mesa Arts Center dropped by 2½% - Arizona Museum for Youth by 7%, Mesa Southwest Museum (now Arizona Museum of Natural History) by 18%. Everyone expected those numbers to be much higher.

Mr. Zietsman did a cost-per-service analysis by taking the total cost of the City to each institution, divided that by the total number of people who benefited from that cost, and arrived at the cost-per-service figure. In all three cases, that figure dramatically decreased when comparing FY05-06 to FY06-07 (pre budget cuts vs. post budget cuts). For example, Arizona Museum of Natural History went from \$12 per person served to \$7.70 per person served, and the numbers at the other two institutions were similar. Some has to do with reduction of cost and increased fees, but the bottom line is, staff did more with

less. Of course, this has also produced other challenges such as becoming exclusive and limited in outreach programs, such as no Free Sunday's at the Museums, etc.

On the up side, the Arts and Cultural Department has proved that they have the ability, passion, and dedication to make it work under difficult challenges. Mr. Zietsman said, by earning trust, we earn the right to ask for support.

There was a concern that Mesa Arts Center would end the year in the red; however, the end result was \$298,000 in the black. Arizona Museum for Youth performed \$150,000 better than budget, and Arizona Museum of Natural History was almost \$500,000 better than budget. Even though this may present a picture of having too much allocated in the budget, the reality is all three institutions performed better than anyone thought they would. Again, staff doing more with less, which again speaks of the quality, dedication, and passion of the staff.

Going into this year, Mr. Zietsman has articulated to staff a set of priorities that have been clearly outlined. Priority 1 is social capital; number 2, leadership; and 3, impact. We need to have a language and understand that language in order to educate the public on who we are, what we do, and our role as the Arts and Cultural Department. As leaders, we not only exercise, we accept, the role we have been given as an Arts and Cultural Department in the City. We need to look at the impact we have in the community by learning to manage relationships, budgets, programs, etc. Action items have been put in place for these priorities and assignments given with deadlines.

The next step was to develop a cohesive, Department vision that defines our role and articulates who we are – Statement of Purpose. Senior staff has done just that. It is being reviewed by all staff within the Department and will be ready to roll out in the next few weeks. Once finalized, staff will set a meeting and invite the media and City leaders to share with them our vision - Statement of Purpose.

Ramona Tecumseh commented that she has noticed a difference in little things like food at receptions, etc., and can see that things have been cut back. Mr. Zietsman replied that staff had to make adjustments wherever possible, and at the same time continue to find the balance between quality and financial resources.

Kent Layton commented that he felt the Board could assist with the "social capital" priority by helping the citizens of Mesa to understand the vital importance of arts in the community. Mr. Zietsman said, building social capital is important, but has to be built on the back of performance and earned trust. He continued to say that it is a time to be proud and shout about the good that is happening in Mesa. The goal is to have the public realize that arts and culture is something needed for a vital community. Mr. Layton replied, it's the old saying, "we don't know what we have until its gone!"

Update on Roadmap to Sustainability by Herb Paine: Herb Paine was asked to advise the Mesa Arts Center Foundation and the City regarding potential future operating models for the Mesa Arts Center; he was not asked to provide a recommendation. The current model is a publicly owned, publicly operated organization. His study weighs the pros and cons of other models. The study is now at the point where the Foundation and staff will begin analyzing the variety of models. It is expected that this process will take a year or two to complete.

Endowment: The chairs/presidents of the of Mesa Arts Center Foundation, Mesa Arts Alliance, Arizona Museum for Youth Friends, Incorporated, and the Mesa Southwest Foundation want to form a single arts and culture endowment fund rather than each organization collecting on their own. Rules and policies will be developed to ensure that restrictive funding goes into the endowment and is distributed for what it is intended. The process could take the better part of a year before it will be in place.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Johann Zietsman, Director
Arts and Cultural Department