

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 August 9, 2006.

Members Present:

John Hohmann
Douglas Brimhall
Peter Cook

Crista Cloutier
Daniel J. Harper
Andrea Soto

Members Absent:

Lennee Eller
Laurent Teichman
Ramona Tecumseh

Staff Present:

Gerry Fathauer
Tom Wilson

Rob Schultz
Sunnee Spencer
Jean Kaminski

John Hohmann, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Peter Cook made a motion, Daniel Harper seconded, and the July 12 minutes were unanimously approved and posted on the Web page.

Discuss and Provide Direction – Appoint Teams and Create Schedule to Visit with the Mayor and Councilmembers – John Hohmann

The goal in visiting with the Mayor and Councilmembers is to get to know one another, understand their views and vision for arts and culture in Mesa, and listen to their concerns. The results of the meetings will help in understanding how the Board can better serve in their capacity as an Advisory Board.

John Hohmann will move forward in assigning two Board members to a team. He will then e-mail a proposed list to the Board members for feedback. Each team will have a representative from the Councilmember's district. The Board will vote next month on accepting the teams and the schedule. Jean Kaminski will obtain information on when the Mayor and Councilmembers have scheduled office hours.

Discuss and Provide Direction – Consider One Committee, Education, and Identify Members – John Hohmann

It was decided that the Board would have two committees: Education Committee and a Liaison Committee (title may change). The Education Committee would focus on strategies where the Liaison Committee would implement action and have a presence in the community.

In the past, the Board served as a liaison to the Mesa Arts Organizations (now Affiliates). It was disbanded due to a consensus that it was the responsibility of the full Board to interact with all the Affiliates, not just a specific one, and it became a conflict of interest issue when the Board had to review grant applications. It was suggested that the Board resume a connection with the Affiliates.

Daniel Harper and Peter Cook will remain on the Education Committee. Andrea Soto and Doug Brimhall will serve on the Liaison Committee. Jean Kaminski will call the absentees to ask if they want to be on either Committee.

Note: Ramona Tecumseh will serve on the Education Committee.

Committee Report – Report on Education Committee Meeting – Daniel Harper

It was decided at the July meeting that the Education Committee would create a draft of talking points and several questions. The talking points are to be used as a tool when communicating with legislators and the citizens of Mesa. The questions will be used to assess the Mayor's and Councilmembers position and concerns on arts and culture in Mesa. When the Committee met last month, a consensus was not reached on what the talking points and questions should be. Daniel Harper distributed a preliminary draft of a format for talking points.

It was suggested that a packet of information be prepared to use when making the one-on-one visits with the Mayor and Councilmembers, which would contain the fact sheet, recent articles in support of arts and culture, a list of resources, and information on the role of the Advisory Board. Staff will work with the Committee in pulling together information and drafting questions. Once the factual information is collected and put into a talking point format, it will be the responsibility of each Board member to become knowledgeable on each point. The Board's goal is to be a bridge of communication and information for the Mayor and Councilmembers as well as the community.

John Hohmann commended the Education Committee on a good start and will continue to work on the fact sheet and bring a draft to the Board next month.

Action items for next month: consider approval of adopting two Committees (Education and Liaison); and consider approval on the Education Committee draft of talking points and questions, visitation teams, and schedule for visits to the Mayor and Councilmembers.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee Spencer

- The Arizona Museum for Youth Friends sponsored a new look for the Museum's newsletter. The image was designed by Benjamin Galloway of Q & L Designs and printed by Mark Smith of Smith Printing.
- Staff is working with ISD to create new item efficiencies – one being a new volunteer database. This month, volunteer hours have increased from 10 hours last year at this time to 76.
- Staff is preparing for the next upcoming show "Art on a Roll: Art on Wheels." The Museum will have a futuristic car, an Indy car and go-cart from Bondurant School of Racing, and Chester's Harley Davidson is going to lend their V-Rod Racing Motorcycle with a Porsche engine.
- Jeffory Morris, a former curator with Mesa Arts Center, will work as a guest curator for six months at the Museum.
- Corey Bowman, Exhibit Preparator for the Children's Museum in Salt Lake City, UT, visited the Museum and met with Mark Fromeyer, who has been mentoring with him.
- Sunnee Spencer and two Board members met with Carol Kratz of the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust to seek a grant to support a two year Strategic Plan that would include fundraising and board development.
- The Museum has replaced the outdated, inefficient lighting system with new Solux 175 MR-16 halogen bulbs and fixtures.
- Staff has been working with Tom Verploegen and Gabe Mendez of the Downtown Mesa Association to place signs that will correct parking violators in the Museum's parking lot.
- A new program that allows for the sale of artwork from exhibits has been implemented at the Museum. The first sale was Joanne West's photograph "Dying for Sushi."
- Numbers have decreased from the previous year: FY04-05 had 85,684 visitors with revenue of \$199,882; FY05-06 had 70,546 with revenue of \$182,008. Several factors have contributed to this decrease, one being the change in hours of operations due to the failure of the property tax measure in May. Even so, as of the beginning of this fiscal year, the Museum is ahead by 13 visitors per hour and \$3,109 in revenue due to the popularity of the "Cats" exhibit and the increase in admission. Staff has been looking at ways to increase revenue by offering more popular, mainstream themes, less down time by splitting the galleries so one will be open year-round, and considering a Kids' Advisory Council.
- Staff is looking at ways to involve Mesa Public Schools and their art teachers in Museum programming.

Mesa Southwest Museum – Tom Wilson

- An article in the arts section of the *New York Times* reported that the Cultural Affairs Department of New York City is investing \$865M over the next three years in the cultural infrastructure precisely because they understand that arts and culture is what builds economy, makes neighborhoods healthy, and contributes to the rise of the creative class.
- In July, the boards of Mesa's three museums met to brainstorm and look at common ways they can work together more efficiently in areas of marketing, programs, development, ticketing, memberships, discounts, etc.
- The exhibition being installed at Banner Mesa Medical Center in regard to Mesa Grande is close to completion.
- The Museum is participating in a project in conjunction with Alliance for Audience and ShowUp.com to develop an online ticketing service specifically targeted toward museums.
- In conjunction with the "Searching for Mesa" exhibit, Ron Peters and Victor Linoff will give a presentation on Saturday, August 12, at 2:00 p.m. on historic preservation in Mesa. The presentation is free with Museum admission.
- The Museum is working on a major exhibition by a number of famous artists for the fall.
- The new Volunteer Coordinator, funded by the Southwest Museum Guild, has been hired.
- The grant request to the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community has advanced to the Salt River group. The grant is to support the implementation of the interpretive trails and further planning for a visitor's center at Mesa Grande.
- Visits to the Mesa Southwest Museum continued strong through July earning \$53,000 in revenue.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- Representatives from the Museums and Mesa Arts Center's programming areas have formed a Division Collaborative Programming Team to look at mid-term and long-term opportunities for collaborations. The team will choose several events to focus on and look at how they can be strengthened by each area of the Division offering added support to the event.
- Almost 600 tickets have been sold to date for Stageworks' new season realizing approximately \$5,600 in revenue. Having marketing and box office support has made a difference for Stageworks. Their first play of the season "There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom" opens September 29. Auditions are taking place August 9 and August 10.

- In July, even though it was a quiet month for Studios and the theaters, the volunteer program had 105 volunteers contribute approximately 1,000 hours for a value of just under \$18,000.
- The Artist Fair (formerly MACStravaganza) had a successful opening on the Shadow Walk last year. This year's event will be larger and sponsored by KYOT radio. The event will be marketed as the Mesa Arts Center & KYOT Holiday Art and Music Fair. That evening, A Peter White Christmas will be featured in the Ikeda Theater. Staff is hopeful that the artist fair will segue into the evening event. In the past, the fair was opened only to instructors and students. This year it is open to other artists who will pay a higher table rental fee to be a part of the event.
- Mesa Contemporary Arts and the Mesa Arts Center Store are closed for the month of August. Both will re-open September 5. A panel is interviewing store manager candidates on the next two Saturdays.
- On September 15, Mesa Contemporary Arts will have the first major opening reception for three new exhibitions: Joseph Ostraff is presenting an audio installation in the Project Room; James A. Cook is presenting an audio and kinetic installation in the North Gallery; and Sandow Birk will have an exhibition of prints and paintings in the main gallery. Prior to the opening, all three artists will be addressing the docents to familiarize them with their work.
- There is concern regarding a leak in the permanent collection storage area, which is still under warranty. The area has been worked on, and Operations is hopeful the problem has been corrected.

Public Art Program – Carrie Brown

- The third call to artists was released for temporary, site-specific artwork at the Mesa Arts Center. Submission deadline is August 29. The artist selection panel will meet September 1, and the review panel will meet October 3. Carrie Brown would like to have a Board member sit on the panels. If interested, please contact Ms. Brown.
- Ms. Brown will meet with Deanna Nueva-Saucedo and Bernie Ronan next week regarding the possibility of incorporating public art in their downtown campus plans.
- Ms. Brown has submitted the three public art projects at Mesa Arts Center campus for a Valley Forward Award in the Art in Public Places category.

Director's Report – Gerry Fathauer

"Sound in the Ground," a new event, was conceptualized by some younger members of the staff who researched, planned, and presented the idea to senior staff, who accepted the idea wholeheartedly. "Sound in the Ground," will be held on Thursday evenings in the Mesa Contemporary Arts Courtyard from 9:00 p.m. – midnight targeting the 21 – 35-year-old audience. The music will be linked to the exhibits and provided by local bands that do a variety of unique music: October 12 – experimental and electronic music and circuit bending; November 9 – hot music with flaming art demos, fire sculpture, and fire spinners; February 1 – spicy dancing and muy caliente live salsa bands, and much more. There will be an admission fee (\$6 in advance, \$8 at the door), which includes entry to the exhibits. This is an underserved audience in Mesa, and their presence would bring vibrancy to the Center. Marketing is developing printed pieces to advertise with *Java* magazine and other venues that cater to this demographic.

13th month budget and revenue reports have arrived with year-end final numbers. Good news – Mesa Arts Center came out \$1.3M in the black due to under-spending. Revenue projections came in very close; contributed income came in short – actual was \$400,098; earned income, which was revised in March/April due to the cancellation of the London Philharmonic, came in a little below target at \$4.369M. Mesa Arts Center will be given credit for the \$1.3M in the FY06-07 budget.

Michael Bolton and Pat Metheny and Brad Mehldau have been added to the Performing Live season. Randy Vogel continues to add more pop artists throughout the year.

Ticket sales continue to go well at the Box Office. Customer Service has been improved and there is a shorter wait time to speak with a representative. Compared to last year, ticket sales are already at 20% of last year's total sales of \$5M, which included rentals, etc.

Mesa Contemporary Arts galleries and the theaters are undergoing maintenance during the month of August.

The first show in the Ikeda Theater for FY06-07 will be "Jungle Jack Hanna" on Tuesday, September 19. In conjunction, there will be activities on the Shadow Walk for the whole family beginning at 6:30 p.m. Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

Francie Cohen has joined the staff as the Operations Supervisor. She will assume responsibility for all campus buildings and their operations. Francie comes with 20 years of experience in her field.

The Maricopa Partnership for Arts and Culture (MPAC) will be making a presentation to the Board in the near future on "CLICK," which deals with childhood education. MPAC will be funding \$50,000 per year over the next three years for what they are calling "Creative Learning: Community on Audience." The major arts and cultural organizations in the Valley have

committed to this program and will be matching MPAC's \$50,000 with \$10,000. Mesa Arts Center, Arizona Museum for Youth, and the Mesa Southwest Museum will take part. As a participant, we will be collaborating with other organizations in learning more about our audience behaviors and sharing databases for analysis. MPAC is releasing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify a marketing consultant to lead the effort, and they are working closely with Matt Lehrman, Executive Director for Alliance for Audience. Four individuals have been chosen from the Arts/Science Leadership group, which Sunnee Spencer, Dr. Tom Wilson, and Gerry Fathauer are a part of, to form a Steering Committee.

Gerry Fathauer announced her retirement effective in approximately six months. She has been asked to participate in finding a replacement.

Update Events – Board Members

Peter Cook reported that he and Kathy Eastman, Mesa Southwest Museum, attended a briefing on the Arizona Humanities Council, who is providing funding for the speaker series at the Mesa Southwest Museum. He found it very interesting to learn how Federal funding is stretched and doled out.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerry Fathauer, Director
Arts and Cultural Division