

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 February 8, 2006.

Members Present:

Kimberly Grace
Douglas Brimhall
Peter Cook
Lennee Eller

Daniel Harper
John Hohmann
Ramona Tecumseh

Members Absent:

Toni Brucato-Kobet
Crista Cloutier
Andrea Soto
Laurent Teichman

Staff Present:

Gerry Fathauer
Tom Wilson
Carrie Brown

Rob Schultz
Sandy Trant
Marie Raymond

Guests Present:

Chris Brady

Kimberly Grace, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:38 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Daniel Harper made a motion, Peter Cook seconded, and all Board members present unanimously approved the January 11 minutes, and they are posted on the Web page.

Public Comments

Chris Brady, City Manager, introduced himself. Mr. Brady came to the City of Mesa as of January 1, 2006. It was Mr. Brady's idea to have the town meetings to discuss the budget and get input from citizens. After the first meeting, what stood out for Mr. Brady was that citizens want to learn and get accurate information. Mr. Brady thanked the Board for their commitment and is looking forward to working together in the future. He encouraged everyone to attend the open town meetings.

The Board told Mr. Brady that it hurts to hear the public saying, "They shouldn't have built that Arts Center," implying that the Center is creating the budget shortfall. Mr. Brady said that Vice-Mayor Claudia Walters did a good job of handling that question at the meeting. He said that the facts need to be communication to the public – the Center is built and paid for. "How to sustain the operations of this wonderful facility and programs over time is the bigger challenge," said Mr. Brady.

Mr. Brady was asked if he has couched the Center in terms of an economic development tool? Mr. Brady stated that since he has been in Mesa, he has met with two developers and their stated purpose as to why they wanted to be in downtown Mesa was because they want to be near the Mesa Arts Center.

Mr. Brady said, "restaurants follow people." Mesa is pretty dark after 9:00. Possible solutions may include concessionaire carts in the Shadow Walk for now. Mr. Brady commented – small steps could lead to bigger opportunities.

Discuss and Take Action – Consider Approval of Revised Public Art Policies – Carrie Brown

Carrie Brown has updated the Public Art Policies and Guidelines making only two significant changes: 1) an addition under "III. Objectives and Goals" item "D" was added; and 2) an addition under "VII. Conservation and Preservation of Public Art" item "C." This entire section was added. The rest of the information is current and applicable.

The question arose regarding the design team artist for the transit shelters, which triggered discussion as to ownership of the design once the project is completed, funding the project, defining objects that are mass-produced or of a standard design, limited editions, etc.

Lennee Eller stated that the artist designed, mass-produced transit shelters is an innovative idea, and those involved are to be commended for the thought and effort in taking public dollars and extending them to create something of artistic value for the community.

Kimberly Grace, Chair, tabled the vote for action on the item. Carrie Brown will research the issues and bring it back to the Board at the March 8 meeting.

Information and Discussion – Look at City Budget Issues and How They are Affecting the Arts and Cultural Division – Kimberly Grace

The Board was given a schedule of the upcoming town meetings and reminded of tonight's (February 8) meeting at Augusta Elementary School. It is the understanding of the Board that citizens are asked to rank their preferences at the meetings. City staff will review and evaluate, and the City Manager will use the information in forming the final cut list to present to Council.

A copy of the Arts and Cultural Division's Detail budget was distributed as a reference. Arts and Cultural Division includes: Arts and Cultural Administration and the Public Art Program (R.C. 248), Mesa Arts Center (R.C. 247), The Mesa Southwest Museum (R.C. 246), and the Arizona Museum for Youth (R.C. 250).

The Detail Budget plan includes: FY03-04 actual expenses, FY-04-05 adopted budget; FY05-06 adopted budget, FY06-07 proposed budget. The Responsibility Budget by Minor Object includes: FY03-04 budget amount and actuals, FY04-05 budget amount, FY 05-06 adopted budget, and FY06-07 proposed budget. The Purchased Capital Expenditure Detail was also included.

Discussion ensued regarding the talk about privatization of the Mesa Arts Center and the Museums. Gerry Fathauer reminded the Board of what Chris Brady said, making a distinction between management model and funding model. Most cities around the country using a private management model still involve a public funding "subsidy," if it is a publicly owned facility. Even if there is privatization, such as Scottsdale, typically there is still a subsidy or a contract amount that the city gives to the private entity to run the facility. Chris Brady said the City of Mesa needs to understand that there is still a support/contract amount that Council would approve to give to each of the Arts and Cultural institutions even if the management model changed such that the facility is operated by a private nonprofit versus City staff. Ms. Fathauer stated that staff and the Mesa Arts Center Foundation are exploring what some of the other management models might be. A question was asked if the City would save money if a private management model were used. Ms. Fathauer replied that it would depend on the negotiated agreement – it may, it may not.

Peter Cook reported that he attended the Council Retreat on February 3 and the town meeting on February 7. He stated that he found most people do not understand or know how the City operates. From those meetings, Mr. Cook prepared a resource of what he titled "BUMPSS." He saw the major issues as: **B**ond service, **U**tility and sales tax revenue, **M**esa Arts Center, **P**eople – City employees, **S**ervice levels, and **S**tability – revenues, services, organization (BUMPSS). In Mr. Cook's opinion, some things he has picked up over his course of studies regarding these issues are as follows: the debt service goes from \$6M to \$24M; the original bond issues had provisions for a secondary property tax, which Council has been unwilling to invoke; residents of seven square miles subsidize the other 125 square miles, is this fair; City employees are over-stressed because of having to prepare several budgets, dealing with uncertainty, etc. This is detrimental to staff delivering the services Mesa requires; Mesa has City Councilmembers who believe we should run a very spartan city organization with almost nothing being provided by the City, while others think that Scottsdale is a more appropriate model with its rich environment that encourages people to come here, move here, and bring their businesses here. Mr. Cook suggests that we need to set service levels and then find revenue sources that support those service levels.

Staff was asked how they feel regarding how the budget process is moving. Gerry Fathauer replied that it is the uncertainty of what is to come that is causing the most stress in staff.

At the Thursday morning Study Session, Council will be presented with the outcome of the electronic vote taken at the Council retreat on February 3. Ms. Fathauer explained that the City Manager's intent is to analyze what comes from the six town meetings, integrate that with the outcome of the electronic vote, from that create his own priority list, and then present his recommendations to Council for a vote on a final list. The hope is to have this completed by mid-March. As Ms. Fathauer stated, "the good news is the cut items may change, the bad news is the cut items may change," thus, the uncertainty.

The Board had strong feelings on the following:

- 1) There needs to be a better public education effort that comes from the City. Citizens have only the newspapers to form their opinions on. Hopefully the articles are positive and inform the public on the City's position; however, there doesn't seem to be any larger effort from the City toward direct information to the citizens of Mesa. One opinion expressed was that it has taken the City 30 plus years to get where we are today and it is unrealistic to expect the citizens of Mesa to understand the urgency of the situation. There appears to be a lack of education and a lack of trust in Mesa's elected officials. The Board does feel that the town meetings are one step in the right direction.
- 2) The Board wants to convey to the Mayor and City Council that the museum and cultural issues are an aspect as important, vital, and have as valuable role to a community role as police, fire, and utilities. The Board conveyed that they understand the problem facing the Mayor and Council, but that the Mayor and Council need to look at the issues as a whole, not as having certain key parts.
- 3) The Board also feels that the use of the Mesa Arts Center should/could be promoted as a catalyst to bring new revenue to Mesa, not be hindered by budget cuts. The arts and cultural venues can actually bring sales tax revenue back to Mesa. Not many other Divisions can say that. Where other Divisions can help by cutting their budgets, the Museums and Mesa Arts Center can help to generate revenue for the City; an opportunity that would bring sales to Mesa.

4) The Board has a strong preference that the City do whatever is possible to inform the people that those choices are coming very soon.

5) Another opinion expressed was that there is a lot of misinformation among citizens. There is a notion that the reason the City is in trouble is because they built the Arts Center. The public does not understand that the Arts Center is paid for and the money did not come from the general fund, but from the qualify-of-life sales tax that was voter approved in 1998 and from private donations. This misinformation needs to be conveyed to the public.

Information and Discussion – Set Dates and Times for Sub-Committees – Kimberly Grace

It was decided that the Board Committees would meet an hour prior to the regular Board meeting each month beginning with the Financial Stability Committee meeting at 2:30 on March 8. The meetings will take place in the north Studios conference room each month. The Education Committee and the Financial Stability Committee will alternate, and Jean Kaminski will create a rotating schedule. As the Grants Committee only meets twice a year and is dependent on application deadlines, they will not be in the rotating mix. Both Committees will elect a chair at their first meeting.

Daniel Harper had originally stated that he would be on both the Education Committee and the Financial Stability Committee. He has decided to drop from the Financial Stability Committee.

John Hohmann will take on the responsibility to create an agenda for the first Financial Stability Committee meeting, March 8. Daniel Harper will take on the responsibility to create an agenda for the first Education Committee meeting, April 12.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Marie Raymond for Sunnee Spencer

- The reception for the "Inuit Art and Artifact" exhibition was a success. Approximately 300 people attended.
- ArtVille has had some changes to reflect the Inuit exhibition. The Museum has received positive feedback on the changes.
- Positive articles appeared in the *Arizona Republic* and the *East Valley Tribune* on the Inuit exhibition.
- The Museum is conducting a survey to assess current membership in regard to membership benefits and best times for future events. Response has been good. Staff is compiling results.
- On February 14, the Museum is doing a "We Love Our Members" event to honor current members and attract possible new members. Membership is \$50 for four individuals for one year.
- The Museum is beginning an ad campaign with PBS Channel 8 for the Inuit exhibition. The campaign will be shown in conjunction with children's programming and will appear in March.
- TV coverage of the Inuit exhibition will be coordinated with Mesa Public Schools Spring Break.

Mesa Southwest Museum – Tom Wilson

- Areas affected by a 50% budget cut are as follows: **Administration** – would seriously curtail development and public relations marketing activities. The result would be less ability to partner with the outside world and bring visitors to the Museum. **Collections Management** – much less able to care for collections and document collections. Currently the Museum is holding in trust over 60,000 objects and images: storage space is not adequate; interfacing with the public would be curtailed almost completely (this would include the photo archives, which is where a lot of interaction and use by the public comes from); and the Museum would no longer be able to reach the standards that are suggested by the national museum community in regard to collections care. **Exhibitions** – would be gutted. The three temporary exhibition areas would close and the Museum would become boring and stale. The temporary exhibitions are what bring people back again and again. Attendance and revenue would suffer. The Museum would essentially go into a maintenance mode. **Education** – Currently over 40,000 kids come through the Museum a year. School programs, adult programs, lecture series, facility use, etc. would be curtailed.
- Staff attended the Southwest Arts Conference featuring an advocacy panel, which included the Chair of the Arts Commission and the Mayor of Winslow.
- On Monday, February 6, staff attended the Arizona Arts Congress to ask legislators to support the arts in Arizona.
- Dr. Wilson has been recently involved with planning for the American Association of State and Local History's major international meeting to be held in Phoenix on September 13 through September 16. Dr. Wilson wants to bring members of the convention to the Museum and the Sistine House.
- On February 14, Dr. Wilson will be participating in "Museums on the Mall" from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. This is an advocacy program jointly sponsored by the Museum Association of Arizona and the Arizona Humanities Council.
- Dr. Wilson has been asked to emcee the Statehood Day program where he will introduce the Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court, the Governor of Arizona, and the Speaker of the House.
- Dr. Wilson has been asked to serve as the outside scholar at the Arizona Humanities Council meeting in Prescott on

February 10 – 12.

- Staff is working to consolidate storage spaces (seven off-site, four at the Museum) looking to save \$9,000 in off-site rental space.
- In the area of archeology, the Museum is focusing on consolidation of Mesa Grande over the next year rather than on excavations. The Mesa Southwest Guild has given the Museum/City a trailer for archeology work. The trailer is a beauty – set up with archeology equipment secured on the walls and ready to go in the field.
- The Museum is taking their refurbished mastodon to Tucson for the weekend to be in a gem and mineral show, which will draw over 100,000 visitors.
- In collaboration with the Mesa Arts Center, the Mesa Southwest Museum provided most of the props for Michael Feldman's "Whad'Ya Know?" live broadcast from the Ikeda Theater, Friday, February 3.
- Council will consider approval of the fees and charges that were recommended by the Board in January at the Study Session on Thursday, February 9.

As a note: If the Museum has to implement the 50% budget cuts, that would almost certainly entail a reduction in hours of operation to the public and closure of the Sistine House.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- The Museums will go before City Council regarding a change in fees and charges Thursday, February 9*. The Board will be kept informed on the results. *Following the Board meeting the date of February 9 was changed to March 2.
- Rob Schultz and Gerry Fathauer have been meeting with representatives of Mesa Community College (MCC) on a bi-weekly basis to discuss a potential partnership that would have MCC's and the Mesa Arts Center's classes merging. There are a lot of details to work out. The talks have been positive and everyone is working toward a win-win for all concerned.
- The National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts will be holding their conference in Phoenix at the Wyndham Hotel next year. Rob Schultz and Cathy Fletcher, ASU Community School of the Arts, are helping to coordinate the conference. Next week, the management team from the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts will be in town, and Mr. Schultz will participate as part of the conference planning committee.
- The reception at Mesa Contemporary Arts on January 27 had a good response. Staff has the FY06-07 season planned and are working on the FY07-08 and FY08-09 seasons; looking to extend their horizon in advance.
- Stageworks will open their second play, "The Dreamcatcher," on February 24. Tickets are reasonably priced.

Public Art Program – Carrie Brown

- Mary Lucking, Design Team Artist for the Transit Shelters, has begun working on her shelter design. The design will be brought before the Board at the April 12 meeting.
- The Public Art plaques have been installed on Mesa Arts Center campus at the transit shelter, in the lobby of the theaters, and on the third floor of the north Studios building.
- An updated Projects Status Report was distributed.

Director's Report – Gerry Fathauer

Tom Wilson and Gerry Fathauer are part of the Arts and Science Leadership Group who are looking at the value of doing Valley-wide research on marketing. Maricopa Partnership for Arts and Culture (MPAC) is helping to fund Alliance for Audience in pursuing the marketing discussion.

National Arts Strategies is presenting a seminar, "Improving the Environment – Working Together to Strengthen Arts and Culture," February 10 and 11 in Phoenix. Ms. Fathauer and several staff members will be participating. Faculty from Yale and Harvard will be presenting, and discussion will cover the arts and cultural environments and how those impact an organization's sustainability.

The Governor's Arts Awards will be held on April 18. Tickets are \$200. Anyone interested in attending needs to let Ms. Fathauer know as soon as possible. There have been some nominations relating to the Mesa Arts Center.

Mesa Arts Center received an award from Arizona Real Estate Magazine. This was their first annual award ceremony. Mesa Arts Center won in the category of Most Innovative Project. Ms. Fathauer was present to receive the statue. The Mesa Arts Center was the only public project recognized.

An article from "Urban Land" was distributed in the Board packets, written in part by Mesa Arts Center architects from Portland. The article showcases Mesa Arts Center and writes of why these facilities are being built in the "burbs" rather than metropolitan areas.

Reporting for Randy Vogel – Theaters and Operations:

- In February: Sinbad – February 10; Jim Brickman – February 14 and 15; Engelbert Humperdinck – February 12; Aspen Santa Fe Ballet – February 17, and much more. The Ikeda Theater has been selling out more since the second weekend of December.
- Performing Live, including what Mesa Arts Center presents and rentals, has sold just shy of \$3.5M in tickets for City and user groups, which is approximately 75% of the projected sales for the year.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerry Fathauer, Director
Arts and Cultural Division