

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 December 12, 2007.

Members Present:

Hector P. Benitez Daniel (DJ) Harper
Douglas Brimhall Lars Nielson, Jr.
Peter G. Cook Ramona Tecumseh

Members Absent:

Amanda Buscas
John Hohmann
Kent Layton
Andrea Soto

Staff Present:

Johann Zietsman Rob Schultz
Tom Wilson Jean Kaminski

Peter Cook, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Peter Cook, Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of November 29; there being none, Lars Neilson, Jr. made a motion, Hector Benitez seconded, and all Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of November 29. They will be posted on the City's Web page.

Items from Citizens Present:

There were no citizens present.

Discuss and Provide Director – Look at Future Direction of the Board – Peter Cook and Johann Zietsman

Johann Zietsman had intended to show a Power Point presentation of the City's vision for the future of arts and culture in Mesa. Mr. Zietsman was delayed due to another meeting that was running late, and he was not able to access the laptop that was being used at the other meeting. It was fruitless to discuss this agenda item without the Board seeing the presentation; therefore, the item was postponed until the February 13 meeting, as Mr. Zietsman will be attending a conference out-of-state during the week of the January meeting. Peter Cook, Chair, advised the Board members to give some thought to what they would like to see the Board accomplish for future discussion.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Rob Schultz reported for Sunnee Spencer

- The Arizona Museum for Youth Friends Board will host the first fund raising gala, "An AMYable Affair," on Friday, December 14, 6:30 – 10:30. Tickets are \$125/person with proceeds supporting the Henson exhibition and programs. To-date, approximately 200 tickets have been sold. Guests will be the first to view the Henson exhibit before it opens to the public on Saturday, December 15. This exhibit was made possible by a budget contingency through the City Manager's Office. Michelle Balani has been doing an excellent job of promoting the exhibit.
- Sunnee Spencer and the Arizona Museum for Youth Friends Board are in the process of adopting a Strategic Plan. They received a grant through the Piper Trust Foundation to develop the Plan. Arts consultant, Jim Copenhaver, has been working with them since last spring to develop a five-year plan that includes a new mission statement. It is expected that the Strategic Plan will be adopted this spring.
- Revenue and attendance is up over last year; this is a crucial time for the Museum in moving forward. They are progressing well.

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- The Museum uses four measures for MesaStat (a new City performance measure system described below). They are:
 1. Tracking revenue: Baseline (rounded off to the nearest thousand) is \$133,000 – target, 5% over baseline – actual (first five months of the this year) is \$184,000 (40% over baseline);
 2. Attendance: Baseline is 30,000 visitors – target, 5% over baseline – actual (first five months of this year) 46,000 (50% over baseline);
 3. Dollars saved by using volunteers: baseline is \$78,000 – target, 5% over baseline – actual (first five months of this year) \$113,000 (46% over baseline); and
 4. Memberships: Baseline 583 average memberships per month – target, 10% over baseline – actual (first five months of this year) 882 per month (51% over baseline).
- Museum challenges lie in cuts in staff and budget from over a year ago that continues to impact all areas of Museum operations, particularly the three main areas: exhibitions, education, and collections management.

Peter Cook, Chair, commented that he has had dialogues with three of the primary candidates for Mayor. He stressed to each candidate that it is dangerous to make an assumption that the Museum is getting by with these staff and budget cuts. On the surface, in terms of programmatic areas, it looks like they are staying on course; however, as a

person who has given many volunteer hours in the collections area that activity is atrophying. This is a core activity of any museum and is not being maintained adequately due to lack of staff and budget. He sees this as a very serious problem for the future of the Museum.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- This is the final weekend for Stageworks' "Cinderella." Ticket sales have been strong.
- The Holiday Art and Music Festival on November 17 went well. Feedback is welcomed from anyone who attended. Please contact Rob Schultz with any comments prior to the wrap-up meeting scheduled for Thursday, December 13.
- Out to Lunch Free Concerts completed this series last Thursday, with strong attendance. The series will pick-up again in February.
- Walter Morlock, Marketing Coordinator, resigned as of November 16. The position is being advertised and will remain open for four weeks, ending January 4. For anyone interested, go to the City's Website and click on the "jobs" tab to view the job description.
- The Arts and Cultural Department will begin working on the FY08-09 budget, which includes looking at fees and charges and any changes that may be needed as well as any BARS (budget adjustment requests) needed. Work begins early January and will continue in earnest through mid-February.
- All City Departments are required to provide, on a quarterly basis, a MesaStat forum to City Management. The City has gone to using a new computerized performance measure system to help each Department's areas track selected performance measures. The Departments update the measures on a monthly basis, with a formal presentation to City Management on a quarterly basis. The presentations are formal with heavy emphasis on data. The Arts and Cultural Department staff went through a practice run earlier today with the Department's Deputy City Manager Kari Kent. December 18 will be the first presentation for the Arts and Cultural Department. The goal is to have these measures available to the public to see how the City is doing in these areas.

Director's Report – Johann Zietsman

Johann Zietsman commented that the MesaStat measures serve a valuable purpose to the City, but the challenge for the Arts and Cultural Department lies in the core of who we are (the value of the experience) – how do you measure a performance/exhibit/program's impact on a person or how it impacted the life of a child? Whether 50 or 500 people attended a performance or exhibit, and whether that performance or exhibit was a success or not to an arts and culture venue, cannot be measured by attendance and revenue figures alone.

Discuss and Provide Direction – Look at Future Meeting Dates to Identify Dates When Members May Not Be Present – Peter Cook

Peter Cook, Chair, asked the Board members present to look at their calendars to identify any meetings that they are aware of when they would not be able to attend. The only meeting dates mentioned were the April 9, 2008, meeting, Peter Cook will not be available, Daniel (DJ) Harper, Vice-Chair, will be available to conduct the meeting; and the other is June 11, 2008, Peter Cook may not be able to attend.

Report on Conferences and/or Meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information Only

Daniel Harper reported that he attended the following: Stageworks' "Cinderella." He found it uplifting and cute, just right for the little ones; and "Sound In The Ground," which he said was fun. He especially liked the bands at this event.

Mr. Harper said he did additional shopping at The Store at Mesa Arts Center's holiday sale on December 8. He took advantage of the special offer of discounts to members of any one of the Arts and Cultural facilities at all three stores on this day and found the store at the Arizona Museum of Natural History to be the "coolest" place for shopping for the kids on his list. He encouraged other Board members to purchase tickets for the two remaining Stageworks play as Christmas gifts and to also stop and check out the store at the Museums.

Johann Zietsman also attended "Cinderella" and said it was everything you would want in that type of show. He also said that the crew made full use of the venue by using all the tools available to them in the theater. It was a spectacular, multicultural, educational performance. Mr. Zietsman and Mr. Harper found the Native American Cinderella most interesting, as they had never heard that version before.

Mr. Zietsman also attended Ballet Etudes' "Nutcracker." It was wonderful to see them use a full, live orchestra this year to elevate and enhance the performance and to see this level of collaboration between affiliates.

Ramona Tecumseh reported that she attended "Cinderella" as well. She also attended the Sonoran Desert Choral's performance at a church. With the City's budget cuts and no funding for Arts and Cultural Grants, the Choral has been forced

to go back to performing in churches and schools rather than Mesa Arts Center, where they had hoped to find a home, due to the raise in rental fees. She said the performance was excellent.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Johann Zietsman, Director
Arts and Cultural Department