

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 May 14, 2008.

Members Present:

Peter G. Cook
S. Vicente Fernandez
Daniel (DJ) Harper
John Hohmann

Dr. Kent Layton
Andrea Soto
Ramona Tecumseh

Members Absent:

Hector P. Benitez
Douglas Brimhall
Amanda Buscas
Lars Nielson, Jr.

Staff Present:

Rob Schultz
Tom Wilson
Sunnee Spencer
Jean Kaminski

Guests Present

Denise Currier
Aubrie Hamstra
Dave Richins
Winsome Bowen
Erin Seibel

Peter Cook, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Peter Cook, Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of March 12. There being none, Dr. Kent Layton made a motion, John Hohmann seconded, and the Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of the March 12 meeting. They have been posted to the City's Web page.

Items from Citizens Present:

Dave Richins, Executive Director of West Mesa Community Development Corporation (WMCDC), Aubrie Hamstra also from WMCDC, and Denise Currier from Currier Originals and a local artist working with WMCDC, presented a Power Point on Art Wraps for Mesa.

Currently, the light control boxes and utility boxes along Main Street in west Mesa are consistently tagged and marked with graffiti, even without graffiti, they are an eyesore. The downtown area has begun resolving the issue by painting the boxes green, which helps to hide them, makes them less noticeable to the public, and reduces tagging. WMCDC's approach is to not only make the area more impressive, but to allow the public to interact with the art and designs proposed to cover these boxes. There are successful examples of this at Mesa Riverview.

The average cost for a wrap on a large utility box is approximately \$400.

WMCDC's goal is to create a sense of place in Mesa by providing an interactive atmosphere, aiming to prevent graffiti by using the artwork to make the public more aware of and involved in their community. The hope is that other cities in the Valley will implement this strategy as well.

With Light Rail entering Mesa, the area will become more pedestrian oriented. Creating artwork from these vandalized boxes will allow people to interact with their surroundings. The artwork will create a sense of place. The wraps will aid in the prevention of vandalism and tagging, but in the event vandalism does occur, they are easy to clean. It is anticipated that the wraps will potentially create less crime in west Mesa.

Council has given WMCDC approval to begin wrapping light control boxes, and WMCDC is working with SRP to wrap their boxes in the Main Street corridor area.

Applications were sent to several artists in Mesa to participate in the project – each artist was allowed to submit up to five pieces. There were numerous submissions from five local artists. The selections were based on color, context, how the piece would render on a traffic/utility control box, and uniqueness. At least one submission was chosen from each artist and the location for each piece was selected. The five artists and their pieces selected are: Quetzal Guerrero's "Talking to the Stars," which will be at Dobson and Main; Richard Web's "Weaver's Needle," will be at the Tri-City Mall entrance and Main; Susi Lerma's "Why We Love Mesa," will be at Sycamore and Main; another of Quetzal Guerrero's "Desert Beetle," will be at Longmore and Main; Denise Currier's "Yugave-Mania," will be at Alma School and Main; Zarco Guerrero's "River Crane," will be at Extension and Main; and another of Denise Currier's "Cycles of Inclusion," will be at Country Club (or Roosevelt) and Main.

Board members were impressed and supportive of the work that WMCDC is doing. The question was asked how WMCDC is funded? Dave Richins said that they receive money from Community Development Block grant funds from Hud via the City of

Mesa, no City of Mesa general funds are used, and they receive grant funds from State Farm Insurance via local initiatives support corporation. All other funding is from private donations.

All present are looking forward to seeing the Art Wraps as they begin to appear along Main Street.

Presentation and Discussion – Update on Central Mesa High Capacity Transit Corridor Study – (Study will impact Mesa Arts Center, Arizona Museum for Youth, and Arizona Museum of Natural History)

Winsome Bowen, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner for HDR, and Erin Seibel, Public Relations Manager for Light Rail, presented a Power Point Updating the Central Mesa High Capacity Transit Corridor Study. Ms. Bowen reported that the approved 57 mile Light Rail alignment is scheduled to open this December with the northwest extension scheduled to open in 2012. She focused her report on the study on the 2.97-mile corridor in central Mesa, which is scheduled to open in 2015 and the 3-mile Mesa extension scheduled for 2030.

In conducting the study there were specific criteria that had to be met. The first step in the Federal planning process was to define the route of the studied area and define the appropriate transit technology(ies) for the studied area. There were three options for possible modes of transport: Light Rail (LRT), Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and local bus. Some features of Light Rail were: electrified overhead wiring, dedicated right-of-way, and a two – three car train, which could carry up to 525 passengers. Some features of bus rapid transit were: exclusive lanes or roadway, one bus could carry 60 – 80 passengers, traffic signal priority, special low floor design, substantial stations, special branding/identity, and frequent service. The analyses work completed to date is: City of Mesa coordination is finished (traffic study, Mesa bus rapid transit service in place); alternatives have been identified - BRT, LRT from Sycamore – Horne, and BRT from Horne – Power/Superstition Springs Center; an analysis for traffic conditions in 2003 from Sycamore – Horne is completed; stakeholder outreach continues; and engineering continues to look at utility issues along the route. Ongoing work to be completed by June 2008 is: constructions cost estimates; ridership forecasts; travel times (evaluation and comparison of BRT, LRT alignments in the Mesa Town Center; initial market assessment; screen tier 2 alternatives; and the final definition of alternatives.

Critical to following this path is public involvement, which includes: stakeholder updates (such as the presentation today to the Board); continued dialogue with downtown Mesa property owners; business forums (one schedule for June 12); construction issues (potential impacts, potential mitigation, contractor participation); and Tier 2 public meetings (one scheduled for August 2008). At the June 12 meeting, a panel of business owners who had positive and negative experiences during LRT construction along with other panelists will provide LRT education and address issues. Mesa residents are encouraged to attend. The August meeting will unveil estimated costs.

The Tier 2 alternatives included: from Sycamore to Horne/Mesa Drive – BRT Main Street with two lanes, BRT Main Street with four lanes; LRT Main Street with two lanes, LRT Main Street with four lanes, LRT on 1st Street, or LRT on 1st Ave.; and from Horne/Mesa Drive to Superstition Springs Center – skip/stop express BRT. Several slides were presented demonstrating the different alternatives. One disadvantage of running LRT on 1st Street or 1st Ave. is that the speed of the LRT would have to be reduced to make the turns, which would add time to travel.

The evaluation for Tier 2 criteria includes: rider benefits – projected number of riders; traffic issues – roadway impacts, traffic operations; land use – compatibility with existing and future land use; economic development potential; populations served – travel markets; environmental issues – consistency with FTA/NEPA process; design and constructability issues; and costs – capital and maintenance.

Evaluation for Town Center criteria includes: travel lanes and left turns; pedestrian crosswalks; bicycle lanes; on-street parking; existing curbs and sidewalks; landscape, streetscape elements and bulbouts; access to major destinations; and economic development.

The potential benefit for economic development is that mass transit enhances property values. Case studies and academic studies from Dallas, San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles, Atlanta, etc., show that residential, office, and retail benefit. The most common positive impacts occur within a quarter-mile of the stations. The effects were found in suburbs as well as central cities.

Slides covering a quarter-mile walking area were presented from Main Street, 1st Street, and 1st Ave. A Main Street route would give the best coverage to pedestrian for downtown businesses.

The question was asked, once construction begins how long does it takes to complete? Ms. Bowen replied, nine – 12 months per segment.

Rob Schultz asked if the Arts and Cultural Department could be notified of all public meetings, as we would like to have a place at the table. Ms. Bowen will happily inform the Department of public meetings and will provide updates as often as requested.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee Spencer

- The “Berenstain Bears” exhibit closed and staff opened “Sonoran Safari.” Arizona Museum for Youth partnered with the Phoenix Zoo for the new exhibit, who brought a Harris hawk, a tarantella, a scorpion, a snake, and a chuckwalla for the opening.
- Laura Matzer met with the Director of Education at the Desert Botanical Garden to discuss collaborating on the Sonoran Safari and she was introduced to their Americorps program.
- Staff met with Solid Waste to discuss collaborating in the future on the upcoming “Deja View: Recycled Materials in Art” exhibit, opening this fall.
- Beth Bartholow traveled to Denver to attend the Association of Children’s Museums conference, and Jeffery Morris traveled to Denver as well to attend the American Association of Museums Annual Meeting and Expo. Both brought back ideas and information that they have shared with staff.
- Continue to orient new Curator, Laura Matzer. Ms. Matzer has been meeting with her peers including Shari Brown, City of Mesa’s Early Children Librarian, to identify ways to strategically collaborate in the future, beginning with the “Deja View” exhibit.
- Jeffery Morris is attending the City of Mesa Supervisor’s Academy.
- Senior staff has been working with Ron Peters, Peter Knudson, Gordon Haws, along with Johann Zietsman and Rob Schultz, to discuss usage of Cultural Impact Fees to enhance and increase the capacity of ArtVille.
- Staff and Board members attended the Governor’s Arts Awards.
- The Arizona Arts Commission panel will review the Museum’s grant proposal for General Operating Support III. The Museum is hoping to receive around \$35,000.
- Completed phase I (Strategic Direction Retreat) of the two-phase project funded by Virginia G. Piper Trust. The Museum now has a three-year plan and is excited to begin implementing it.

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- Having a good spring – well above numbers from last year, even though last year produced good revenue and attendance numbers as well.
- The “Croc” exhibit will be taken down this coming Monday and installation of the next exhibit, “PSI – Poop Scene Investigation,” which is an investigation of “scat” is underway; also working on the “Mars” exhibit that will open in the fall – a collaboration with Arizona State University and University of Arizona.
- Archeology will begin around June/July on Riverview Park (Waveyard Project), searching for canals and other prehistoric remnants of the Hohokam civilization.
- Dr. Bob McCord and his team continue to work on the southeastern Arizona location this is estimated to be a 97 million year old site. Recently a large bone has been discovered – probably from a dinosaur.
- Dr. Bob McCord has been elected President of the Arizona/Nevada Academy of Sciences.
- Dr. Tom Wilson has just completed a two-year term as President of the Museum Association of Arizona.

Daniel (DJ) Harper commented that the Capital Museum has a traveling Mars exhibition that might fit in the Museum with the fall exhibit. Dr. Wilson responded that the Museum has looked at that exhibit.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- Stageworks completed “Ferdinand The Bull,” their final play of the season, which sold over 3,500 school day tickets. School day shows are proving to be extremely popular with schools coming from as far away as Eloy and Wickenburg.
- Stageworks is looking to take at least one of their shows on the road next fiscal year. Negotiations are underway with the Herberger Theater in Phoenix.
- Staff went to Council to report on the 100% cost recovery numbers for adult classes. Unfortunately, we had to report that we are at less than 100%. One or two Councilmembers had concerns with that, and staff had to go back to Council for further clarification and for new direction. Council’s new direction was that it does not have to be 100% cost recovery for this year or next fiscal year taking a large weight off the shoulders of staff for that program. Of course, the intent remains to grow and move toward 100% cost recovery.
- Last month, the Volunteer Program had 405 volunteers contributing 1,605 in services totaling 5,902 hours for a value of \$99,351.
- Summer registration began April 25. Compared to registration numbers in 2007, we are up by 50% in registrants and approximately 25% in revenue. History has shown that when economy is down, class enrollment is up, partially due to

the fact that people don't always take vacations out of town when the economy is down. Classes give the kids something to do locally.

Director's Report – Rob Schultz reported for Johann Zietsman

- Council approved the replacement of the stage floor in the Ikeda Theater with hardwood. Originally the hardwood flooring was valued out and replaced with a masonite floor for cost reasons. The masonite floor, with a three – four year life span, has worn out after three years of hard use. The life of a hardwood floor is expected to be 15 – 20 years.
- The marquee for Mesa Arts Center is on track. Installation is scheduled for September. The marquee is similar to the one by Centennial Center and is approximately 10 feet off the ground and will be placed just east of the terminus of the Shadow Walk. A secondary screen will be placed on the face of the large planter that is just north of Mesa Contemporary Arts sitting close to the corner of Center Street and Main Street. That screen will have a rolling door that will lock and cover the screen at night.
- Just east of the marquee, there will be an artist designed transit station; installation of the station is targeted for December.

Update of Events – Board Members – Information Only

Peter Cook, Chair, reported that he attended a talk given by Dr. Bob McCord on the site and said it was phenomenal! Dr. McCord described the find as a major insight into a time that was not known before. Mr. Cook encouraged everyone to hear him if they have the opportunity.

Mr. Cook was in Spain and had two exciting experiences: 1) The Guggenheim Museum in Balboa – he said it architecturally blows your mind and is loaded with wonderful items. He highly recommends it. He also said that the area around the Guggenheim was an old shipyard-industrial area and the town converted what used to be an old dock area into a pedestrian walkway with hotels, shops, restaurants, and playgrounds – a marvelous example of revitalization; 2) Salvador Dali Museum in Spain, another mind boggling experience. They took a tour that explained what he was trying to convey in his paintings - great insight into the man and how he encouraged out-of-the-box thinking. Mr. Cook suggested that explaining what the artist is thinking when the painting is being developed is something we may want to consider in our galleries.

Dr. Kent Layton reported that he was backstage watching Ballet Etudes rehearse flying five people in the upcoming performance of "Peter Pan" this Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. He said it is an amazing, beautiful show and invited everyone to come and see as the windows of the Darling bedroom open and watch the Darling children, Tinkerbell, and Peter Pan fly to never-never land.

Daniel (DJ) Harper reported that he attended Southwest Shakespeare's "Pygmalion;" Stageworks' "Ferdinand the Bull;" and "Little Shop of Horrors." He also saw "Urinetown" at ASU, and "Assassins" at Theater Works in Peoria, which he thought was the single weirdest show he had ever seen until he saw "Urinetown." However, he loved them both.

DJ saw "Piano Man" at the Phoenix Symphony as well. They took the music of artists Billy Joel and Elton John, which a band played with the symphony orchestra playing behind them. He commented that it was a wonderful, exciting show that included a sing-a-long portion of old, bad TV theme songs.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Johann Zietsman, Director
Arts and Cultural Department