

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 April 11, 2007.

Members Present:

Crista Cloutier
Peter Cook
Daniel Harper

John Hohmann
Andrea Soto

Members Absent:

Hector Benitez
Douglas Brimhall
Amanda Buscas
Lennee Eller
Laurent Teichman
Ramona Tecumseh

Staff Present:

Rob Schultz Nancy Wolter
Sunnee Spencer
Jean Kaminski

John Hohmann, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

As there was not a quorum present, John Hohmann, Chair, tabled the approval of the minutes of March 14 until the May 9 Board meeting.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Information and Discussion – Report on Education Committee Meeting – Daniel Harper

The Education Committee met on Tuesday, May 10, with two members present, Daniel Harper and Peter Cook, as well as staff liaison, Rob Schultz. Discussion focused on the vision of the Mayor and City Council as to what the Board could do to assist them in educating the public on arts and cultural issues. Suggested strategies involved encouraging more pedestrian traffic at the Museums and Mesa Arts Center, collaborating with the Mesa Downtown Association and the Merchant's Association on downtown events such as 2nd Fridays, and alternative programming that would target diverse audiences.

The Committee also discussed the need for a new City cultural master plan and expressed an interest in having a role in the creation of such a plan.

It was the Committee's suggestion that there is no reason to give up on future cultural planning because of current budget restraints. In that vein, Cultural Impact Fees were discussed. Given the options Council is considering regarding Impact Fees, the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board members present made a statement in support of leaving the Arts and Cultural Impact Fees as a distinct category and do not want them combined with Parks and Recreation Impact Fees.

Information and Discussion – Continue to Develop Work Program and Finalize Strategies – Dr. John Hohmann and Nancy Wolter

Nancy Wolter asked the Board members present to review the top five priorities presented on the draft that was included in the Board's monthly packet of information. It was suggested to delete number three and include a new priority in its place. The revised top five priorities are:

1. Proactive/counteraction about misconceptions and negativity regarding Mesa;
2. Develop a network model for information dissemination (act as a bridge);
3. Work with Mesa Public Schools by hosting and/or presenting events at various schools (outreach at district schools informing citizens regarding arts and cultural institutions);
4. Participation in audience research projects;
5. and **blogs** electronic media, such as blogs, regarding cultural experiences in Mesa. ~~and the creation of new blogs.~~

It was also suggested that Board members continue to keep in contact with Councilmembers in their districts regarding arts and cultural issues via e-mail and/or personal visits.

Strategies for the top five priorities were tabled until the May 9 meeting.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee Spencer

- The Museum's first e-mail blast was sent on March 30 to 825 patrons, from which 75 signed up for e-mail updates. The update was followed by a survey from the Association of Children's Museums asking what people expected when visiting museums.

- A draft of the Museum's new five-tier membership program was distributed.
- There were 272 members and Friends of Arizona Museum for Youth that attended the "Underwater FantaSEA" opening on March 8.
- "Discovering Nature's Alphabet" was installed on March 26. This is an exhibit of photography of the alphabet in nature. An education area of calligraphy is being developed in conjunction with the exhibit.
- In February, the Arizona Museum for Youth, in collaboration with the Tumbleweed Center for Youth Development of Phoenix and Essential Theatre of Tempe, sponsored a pilot printmaking workshop with artist Damian Charette for at-risk youth. On April 21, "Youth at Risk: Tumbleweed Printmaking Project," which is the result of that workshop along with some of Damian Charette's artwork, opens for exhibition at the Museum. Tumbleweed Center for Youth Development serves abused, abandoned, troubled, and neglected youth from ages nine to 22 in Maricopa County.
- The Gallery has been split into distinct areas, which includes a new "Family Zone."
- The first part of improvements to the Museum's environmental control system has occurred with the installation of two humidifiers, which brings the Gallery up to national standards.
- In March, 5,607 people visited the Museum with revenue of \$22,758. The Museum has met their goal of \$20,000 for tour revenues and surpassed the attendance revenue by over \$10,000, with three months remaining in this fiscal year. The increase in admission fees is attributed with meeting and surpassing these goals.
- Staff is working on the upcoming exhibit that will focus on toys.
- Breaking news in the Museum's upcoming newsletter: "Jim Henson's Fantastic World" is coming to the Museum this December. This exhibit will document the creation of Jim Henson's work.
- The Friends Board is planning their first fundraiser that will coincide with the Henson exhibit.
- The Friends Board has a new member, Susan DeLaurier, Director of Physician Resources at Banner Desert.

Mesa Southwest Museum – Tom Wilson

- Dr. Wilson was in Washington on business. There was no one present reporting for the Mesa Southwest Museum.

Public Art Program – Rob Schultz

- The removal of Mary Consie's temporary public art project, which was to be de-installed on March 31, has been delayed. Staff plans to approach Ms. Consie to see if the project could be extended.
- Judy Stewart and foundry staff made repairs to some of the public art pieces that were damaged at Fire Station No. 201 on 1st Street some time ago.
- Staff made a proposal to City Management to allow for the existing Public Art Fund balance to be used to purchase two art projects; 1) purchase the remaining glass cocoons in Mesa Contemporary Arts atop the stair landing, and 2) use the remaining funds for a major art piece that would serve as a source for the arroyo, which would replace the concrete, grated cistern that now exists. There was an original art piece planned for that area, but was value engineered out of the project. Staff would like to put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) to artists and see what ideas might surface.

Acting Director's Report – Robert Schultz

Mesa Arts Center received another major, national honor award from the American Society of Landscape Architects for the Shadow Walk design. The jury considered over 500 entrants and only awarded 38 projects.

Mesa Arts Center's presentation of the National Philharmonic of Russia was featured on national public radio's "Performance Today."

Johann Zietsman, new Executive Director, will begin on June 25. He and his wife Tharrie will be visiting Arizona on May 1, 2, and 3, and will be available to staff for some meetings while visiting.

Development sent out 400 renewal notices for the annual Membership drive. Revenue to date is \$151,000; annual goal is \$233,000.

Consultant Herb Paine provided the City with a final draft of his report, "Mesa Arts Center: Roadmap to Sustainability." Mr. Paine looked at other western arts centers of similar size and orientations (i.e., city owned, publicly owned, public/private partnership) in comparison to Mesa Arts Center and made suggestions on what the future of Mesa Arts Center might look five – 10 years down the road and how it might be managed, if differently from how it is managed now.

Mesa Contemporary Arts had a strong March. The Mosaic exhibition at Mesa Contemporary Arts helped to make for strong numbers in March. There was a Mosaic artist's convention in the Valley when the exhibition opened, and folks from the convention streamed to the exhibit, making attendance for March close to 3,000 visitors; well over 1,000 more visitors than March of last year.

Exhibits in Mesa Contemporary Arts at this time are: Gwyneth Scally's "Jelly;" "Mosaic Arts International 2007," which runs through April 29; and today, staff heard that Cheech Marin, Chicano Art collector/actor/comedian, has invited the Mesa Contemporary Arts curatorial staff to Los Angeles to select artworks from his collection for an exhibition in our gallery.

Stageworks school-day performances were well marketed and sold almost 3,400 seats earning \$16,405 in revenue. Stageworks' third play of the season, "Little Red Riding Hood," opens this Friday, March 13, and school-day performances are again looking strong. Next year, Stageworks will present four shows.

In March, volunteers contributed 6,798 hours for a value of \$127,542; Department-wide (which includes the two Museums) there has been an increase of 17% in volunteer hours totaling over 48,000 hours, providing a huge value to the Department and the City. The Department is third to Libraries and Parks and Recreation in volunteer hours contributed. Following the top three, volunteer hours decrease significantly in other Departments.

Mesa Arts Center is pleased to present the annual Volunteer Appreciation night on Monday, April 16, in the Piper Repertory Theater featuring food, beverages, and artist award presentations in the categories of: Above and Beyond, Congeniality, Galaxy, Shining Star, Shooting Star, 500 Lifetime Achievement (hours), Highest Number of Hours (annual and lifetime), Volunteer of the Year, and numerous door prizes.

Next "Sound In The Ground" event is scheduled for Thursday, May 17, beginning at 9:00 p.m. This will be the last in this year's series.

Mesa Arts Center is participating with downtown's 2nd Friday efforts. Mesa Contemporary Arts and The Store will remain opened until 10:00 p.m. Staff is also sending e-mail blasts to theater ticket holders that evening inviting them to participate.

It was asked if Mesa Arts Center would offer any entertainment in the Shadow Walk on 2nd Fridays. Mr. Schultz replied that because it was not planned in the budget for this fiscal year, we are not able to provide any free music; however, staff is looking at that possibility for next year. It was also suggested that next year's "Sound In The Ground" events be planned in conjunction with 2nd Fridays.

It was suggested that the Museums also stay open in conjunction with 2nd Fridays. Sunnee Spencer commented that, because of budget constraints, they are not able to remain open the additional hours; however, they would consider that in planning for next year.

The Store at Mesa Arts Center is featuring an Artist Showcase Sale on Friday, April 20. The sale will feature artworks by Mesa Arts Center temporary contract instructors and students. Also featured are a glass demo by Robert Matteo and a print demo by David Manje from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Update on Events – Board Members

Peter Cook reminded staff to have item number one on the May agenda, approval of the March 14 minutes and as item number two, approval of the April 11 minutes.

Daniel Harper expressed excitement for Stageworks' upcoming presentation of "Little Red Riding Hood." He also saw Southwest Shakespeare's production, "Two Gentlemen of Verona," and enjoyed it immensely. He thought their use of the Playhouse Theater was the best he had ever seen for a theater in the round effect. He has ordered his season tickets for both Southwest Shakespeare and Mesa Encore Theater for next year.

Nancy Wolter encouraged everyone to see Mesa Encore Theater's two-person production of "The Last Five Years," opening this Friday, March 13. Her daughter Sarah is playing one of the two leads.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Schultz, Acting Director
Arts and Cultural Department