

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on January 26, 2012.

Members Present:

Nancy Aposhian
Keiko Dilbeck
Merlin Ellis
Wesley Ringle
Dr. Robbi D. Venditti
Pamela Williams.

Members Absent:

Joe Cooper
Vincent DiBella
Natascha Karadsheh
Dr. D. Kent Layton
Lars Nielson, Jr.

Staff Present:

Cindy Ornstein Rob Schultz
Tom Wilson Sunnee O'Rork
Jean Kaminski

Merlin Ellis, Vice-Chair, chaired the meeting in Lars Nielson, Jr.'s absence. Mr. Ellis called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Merlin Ellis, Vice-Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes from September 22, 2011. A typo on page 2 under "Arizona Museum of Natural History" was mentioned; in the last bullet, the word "interpretive" was misspelled. Dr. Robbi Venditti made a motion to approve the minutes, with the typo corrected, and Keiko Dilbeck seconded, the Board Members present unanimously approved the September 22, 2011, minutes. They will be posted on the City's Website.

Public Comments: There were no citizens present.

Introduction of New Board Member Nancy Aposhian – Lars Nielson, Jr.

Nancy Aposhian's love for the arts began in fifth grade playing the clarinet; unfortunately, funds for the arts program in her school were cut. As a junior in high school she had a teacher who brought the humanities world back into her life. When her son was born 12 weeks early and weighing two pounds, she discovered, from her educational background, that music would cross the blood-brain barrier. Her love for the arts continues, and her son now plays violin and piano and sings with the Phoenix Boys Choir. She is excited and happy to be on the Board for arts and culture.

Discuss and Take Action: Review Fees and Charges for AzMNH – Tom Wilson

Rob Schultz, Assistant Arts and Culture Director, reported on the changes to Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA), Stageworks, and the Starlight Theater at Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH).

As of July 1, 2011, Mesa Contemporary Arts no longer charges an admission fee; therefore, the verbiage regarding free Thursday's no longer applies and needs to be removed from the Fees & Charges Schedule.

Mesa Arts Center's (MAC) Stageworks program is no longer being offered; therefore, the admission fees that are on the Fees & Charges Schedule need to be removed.

On the Arts and Culture Fees & Charges Schedule, under Arizona Museum of Natural History "Rentals" each category has a fee listed for "Each Additional Hour," but was mistakenly omitted under the "Starlight Theater." The fee range of \$80.00 - \$100.00 for "Each Additional Hour" needs to be added to the schedule.

Tom Wilson, Museum Administrator, reviewed the Mesa Grande portion of the report. Public visitation at Mesa Grande Cultural Park will begin in the fall of 2012. The gathering place provides space to initiate tours and host special events. Tours can be self-guided with nine interpretive stations along the trail. Museum staff and volunteers will provide guided tours for school groups. A visit to the site will take one – two hours. The purpose of the report is to establish fees that cover operating costs of the facility. A proposed fee ranges are: Adults \$3 - \$7; child (3-12) \$1 - \$4; child (0-2) free; school tours \$3 - &\$ single student and adult fee; group visits \$3 - \$7 single child and adult fee; initial entrance fee will be \$5.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children 3 – 12. A group tour would be \$4 and includes a guided tour.

There will also be a joint ticket option where a patron can purchase a ticket for the AzMNH as well as for the Mesa Grande Cultural Park. *Tickets sold at one location will be valid at the second location without a time limit. Joint tickets can be purchased at either site. The proposed fee ranges are: Adult \$11 - \$16; senior \$11 - \$16; student \$10 – 15; child (3-12) \$7 - \$9; school tours \$4 - \$8; group visits for a child \$4 - \$6, adult \$8 – 13; **initial fee for joint tickets will be \$12 for adults and seniors; \$11 for students with I.D.; \$7 for a child (3-12); \$6 for students or children on school tours or group visits; and \$10 for adults on group visits.

Dr. Wilson asked for any comments and/or suggestions. **Cindy Ornstein suggested that under "Mesa Grande-AzMNH Joint Tickets" a note be added just as under "Proposed Mesa Grande Admission Fee Ranges" that states the initial fee. It was also suggested that under the "Notes" for the above mentioned items, the word "actual" be changed to "initial." *Joe Cooper suggested that the time to use the joint ticket option be extended to one month rather than one week. **Note:** Dr. Wilson and his staff decided there doesn't need to be any time limit on the second ticket.

Dr. Wilson distributed pictures of the entrance to the site, the nine interpretive trails, and the visitor's center – see Exhibit A.

Wesley Ringle asked if it was important to be profitable or just break even. Dr. Wilson replied that they would love to be profitable, but also want to be accessible to Mesa residents, so, for now, they want to take it slow, observe how it goes, and the goal is to meet operating costs.

Pamela Williams made a motion to accept the report with the above mentioned changes, Dr. Robbi Venditti seconded, and the Board members present unanimously approved the report to move forward.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee O'Rork

- Held a training workshop for the Gallery Educators that featured a presentation from Sharon Shaffer, Ph.D., Ex. Director and founder of the Early Childhood Enrichment Center at the Smithsonian in Washington D.C. She presented on "Engaging Young Children in Museums" providing staff with information and strategies for school groups and guided tours.
- As part of the Piper Fellowship, Sunnee O'Rork, administrator, and Latonya Smith, AMY marketing/pr, traveled to San Jose and San Francisco to visit the San Jose Children's Discovery Museum, the Tech Museum, San Jose Museum of Art, Children's Creativity Museum, Exploratorium, and the Bay Area Discovery Museum to research their traveling exhibition business, as well as their approach to interactive exhibits.
- Vision and mission statements were created for the Friends Board at the Strategic Planning retreat in November.
Mission: Provide sustainable resources to fulfill Arizona Museum for Youth's mission through fundraising, advocacy, and partnerships. **Vision:** Create infinite possibilities for Arizona Museum for Youth.
- The Museum has two positions open at this time – interviews will take place soon.
- De-installed the Warner Bros. exhibit – on its way to Houston and on to Italy.
- Preparing for new exhibit "Wing It! Things that Fly." The Board was invited to the opening on Thursday, February 9, from 5 – 7 p.m. The exhibit has over 50 pieces of artwork and over 20 inter-actives.
- Upgraded the ArtVille gallery space with new touchable artwork and related activities; updated the Cranes exhibit; and eight new iPod artworks in ArtZone.
- The Museum held a retreat with the Strategic Planning Board, Museum staff, and AMY Friends Board of trustees to look at 2012-2015. Karen Ramsey, CEO of Lead for Good served as facilitator.
- The Friends Board completed their financial review for FY10-11, which was better than the previous year.
- November was the best revenue month to-date for admissions due to the success of the new Groupon Coupon and the Warner Bros. exhibit.
- A public thank you to Councilmember Chris Glover who assisted in hosting the National League of Cities and Institute for Youth Education and Families workshop and tour; 50 people represented cities across the country.
- October through December has seen a 19 percent (%) increase over 2010; membership has seen a 24% increase over 2010. 924% increase in workshops due to the fact that there is now a person who handles the workshops (33 last year vs. 305 this year).
- The Museum is part of the SciTech Festival with their "Tot Hub" as part of the Mesa Takes Flight Festival on February 11 – 12 from 10 – 4 p.m.
- The Board was invited to the "We Love Our Members Event" on February 14 from 8 a.m. to noon. A helicopter will be landing in the parking lot that day – a day of fun and festivities.

Merlin Ellis asked why the Groupon Coupon is better than the Cultural Pass (AMY no longer participates in the Cultural Pass program). Ms. O'Rork stated that the Groupon was a one-time, one-shot only promotion and the Museum receives some cash for that; with the Cultural Pass, the Museum receives no cash. The Museum participates in the Target 3 For Free Sundays and after analyzing the Cultural Pass over a period of time, the Museum gave an equivalent of \$26,000 away. The Museum could no longer afford to continue doing that. The Museum does plan to offer more Groupons, but are in the process of analyzing how often to offer a Groupon and remain sustainable in the future. The existing Groupon expires in April.

Keiko Dilbeck asked if a Groupon was offered for membership as well as admission. Ms. O'Rork replied that it was. In the past, a letter was sent out when it was time to renew membership, but this year, staff is making a personal call to see why they have not renewed and if there is something they could be doing better. Ms. Dilbeck commented that if she received a call or something via e-mail or text, she would be more likely to respond than to a letter. Ms. O'Rork said that she would pass that information along to her staff.

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- The Board was invited to the opening of the new exhibit "Rulers of the Prehistoric Skies" on Friday, February 4, 5:30 – 7 p.m. A tremendous show – Tom Wilson described it as prehistoric eye candy!

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- Last year was the best year ever for arts classes and we are exceeding those figures this year. Winter registration is up by 15 percent (%) with a 34% increase in revenue over last year.
- The break camps are strong – fall break and holiday break camps did extremely well. There will be a spring break camp, as well as summer camp.
- Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) has an opening this Friday, January 27, with four new exhibits: Best of Arizona Watercolor Association; 33rd Annual Contemporary Crafts; Shadow Kansas by Jeff Falk; and Unexpired Time by Barbara Smith. Barbara Smith was the winner of the 32nd Annual Contemporary Crafts exhibit last year and won the opportunity to exhibit in the Project Room. VIP/Members reception is from 5 – 6 with public reception from 6 – 8 p.m.
- The Creative Aging Program kicked-off this fall with a warm reception; the program seeks to engage seniors in the arts at Mesa facilities that cater to seniors. MAC will display an exhibition from the visual arts component of the program done by the Serrine Adult Day Care Center residents afflicted with dementia who created abstract sculptural pieces that relate to the homes they grew up in. The residents worked with resident artist Tessa Wendt. The director of the Center was elated with the difference he saw in these residents who previously sat alone, were isolated, didn't participate, but now are engaged, alert, and talking. He would love to see the program continued as an on-going program. The exhibit will be shown in Mesa Contemporary Arts gallery during the Mesa Creativity Festival from March 9 – 18.
- Mesa Takes Flight Festival is February 10 – 12 with activities related to flight - literal flight, flight of fancy, flight of experience, and all things that relate to flight.
- Mesa Festival of Creativity takes place from March 9 through March 18 (during Mesa Public School's spring break); a weeklong event full of family activity, entertainment, community events, as well as MIRAZOZO – the same architect who presented AMOCOCO last year. Staff is working with several individual artists to create things for the Festival that relate to exploration and discovery and will engage the public, such as Mass Ensemble and their Earth Harp, which was here for the grand opening of the Center in 2005.

Director's Report – Cindy Ornstein

Report on Mesa Arts Center Programs

- Mesa Takes Flight will be a signature event of the Arizona SciTech Festival – out of hundreds of events connected with the SciTech Festival, MAC is proud to be chosen as one of the signature events.
- Budget for the first six months have gone well – over budget on income and under on expenses. At this point we are approximately \$160,000 over the year-to-date projections for the end of December. Performing Live has met its ticket revenue goals for the year – projecting, at this point, to be several hundred-thousand dollars over the revenue target for the year.
- Performing Live has had excellent response to programming, as well as strong and growing partnerships with local producers (such as Live Nation and Danny Zelisko) that are doing co-pro's or renting and bringing in great acts. This gives us greater exposure to new audiences and is low risk to MAC.
- Rentals are heavily responsible for the high attendance numbers, which include the co-pros, as well as the outside renters.
- Mesa Arts Center was named by *New Times* as "Best Place in the Valley to see National Acts."
- We are proud of the enhanced marketing MAC is doing – we are in two partnerships with TV stations for the first time; have a "donut" ad that talks about MAC in general and part of it promotes a special program occurring at that time; we have strengthened our collateral materials; and are using more consistent branding of all marketing pieces.
- Ms. Ornstein encouraged the Board to take a look at the new Education Outreach brochure that, for the first time, lays out the full range of outreach activity at MAC.
- MAC was awarded a highly competitive \$50,000 grant from the Flinn Foundation that will enable a partnership with PBS who will produce four mini documentaries on the outreach and accessibility programs. The documentaries will air on PBS individually, as well as packaged to a full 30 minutes program on PBS. The documentaries will be posted on PBS's website, on our website, and staff will be able to use short segments for You Tube pieces and in presentations. The

four mini-documentaries will be about: Creative Aging Program; Mesa Takes Flight Festival, specifically on a commissioned dance piece; Mesa Creativity Festival and commissioned art and technology projects; and the Jazz A – Z Education Program.

- The Store has transitioned to an Artist Cooperative Gallery still under the Mesa Arts Center Foundation (MACF), which is doing well. Currently there is a committee working on a recommendation to transition away from the MACF. Several options are being explored. The current recommendation, which MAC endorses, is to have the Store, as an Artist Cooperative Galley, become a part of Mesa Arts Center. If that does happen, MAC foresees a role for the Arts and Cultural Advisory Board assisting in the process to selecting artists for the Cooperative.
- By the next meeting on March 22, possibly even before via e-mail, staff will share the next steps for the Creative Economy Fund. MAC is recommending that we continue the program and believes there will be support from City management. The principal change will more than likely be to move the process to occur sooner. Staff hopes to have the new guidelines ready by mid-March.

Arts and Culture Activity

The three Mesa Arts and Culture facilities are participating in the Mesa Takes Flight celebration. Marketing is working on promotional materials that will have MAC on the cover, as well as the two Museums and the exhibits connected to the theme of flight (AMY – Wing It: Things that Fly and at AzMNH – Rulers of the Prehistoric Skies). There will be an information booth at MAC shared by the two Museums; AzMNH will offer a discount coupon for admission to their Museum on that weekend and AMY will offer a coupon for a week or two after the Festival – difficult to take it all in on one weekend.

At the Mayor's annual breakfast this morning, he laid out his priorities for 2012; one of those priorities is to build a cultural economy in Mesa. This is exciting for the Arts and Culture Department and also speaks to the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board as having an opportunity for the Department to work with the Board as we begin identifying where the priorities lie, what will have the most impact, and what are things that will create a foundation for a cultural economy in Mesa. Hearing that Mesa values the role of arts and culture in creating a sustainable economy is good to hear. It is an opportunity to work together to create a plan to share with City Management and for Council to bring to fruition.

Merlin Ellis commented that it was great to see the Mayor at the Arizona Museum for Youth's farewell to the Warner Bros. exhibit and dedication and naming of the changing art gallery to the Whiteman Family Gallery (named after the founder of the Arizona Museum for Youth, John Whiteman). The Mayor made a comment stating that arts and culture are the soul of our community.

Report on Conferences and/or meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only

Keiko Dilbeck reported that she attended the Dia de Los Muertos celebration in October, and she and her father attended the Rat Pack performance and thoroughly enjoyed the evening. She also brought her freshman students to the Southwest Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet school performance. She showed them around the campus and they loved it; most had never been here.

Pamela Williams shared that she thought Forever Tango was a great performance.

Merlin Ellis said that his family visited the Experience Music Project in Seattle and were impressed.

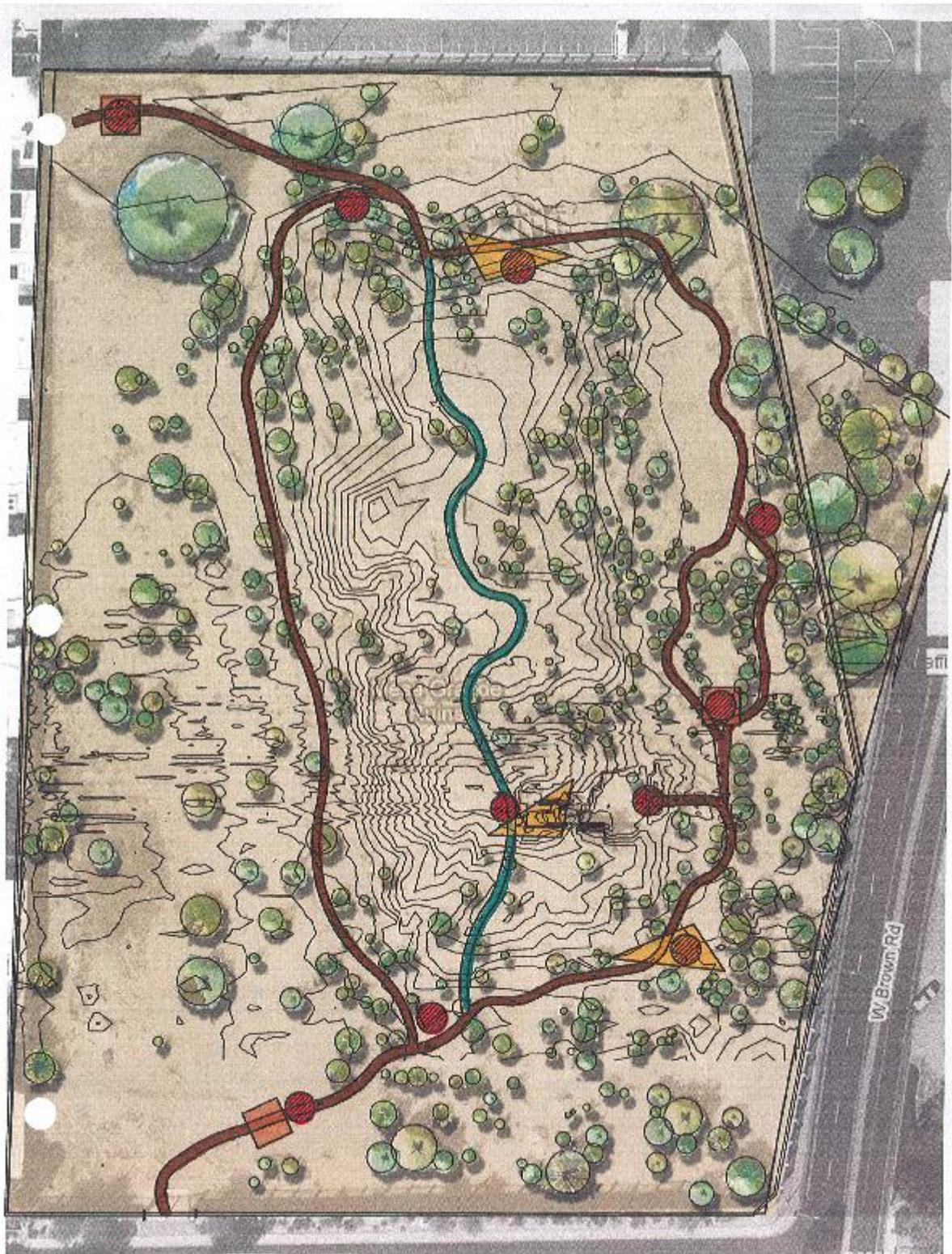
There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Ornstein, Director
Arts and Culture Department

**Exhibit A
Entrance to Site**

Nine Interpretive Trails



Visitor's Center

