

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 March 12, 2008.

Members Present:

Douglas Brimhall
Amanda Buscas
Peter G. Cook
S. Vicente Fernandez
Daniel (DJ) Harper

Members Absent:

Hector Benitez
Lars Nielson, Jr.

Staff Present:

Johann Zietsman
Tom Wilson
Ruth Rappaport

Rob Schultz
Sunnee Spencer
Jean Kaminski

Peter Cook, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Peter Cook, Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of February 13. There were a few minor changes and one misspelled name mentioned: on page 4, "Discuss and Provide Direction . . ." Amanda Buscas' name was misspelled in the second paragraph; page 3, third paragraph – ". . . and 2) he took offense . . ." changed to ". . . and 2) he was disappointed when . . .;" page 5, fourth paragraph – ". . . but, Wade Davis opened his eyes to the fact that it does not." changed to ". . . but, Wade Davis opened his eyes to new ideas related to technology and culture." With those changes noted, Daniel (DJ) Harper made a motion, Dr. Kent Layton seconded, and all those present unanimously approved the minutes of February 13. The minutes, with changes, will be posted to the City's Web page.

Items from Citizens Present:

There were no citizens present.

Peter Cook, Chair, used the opportunity to introduce new Board member, Samuel Vicente Fernandez. Mr. Fernandez goes by Vicente or Vinney; born and raised in Mesa; owns his own company, Xaris Studio, Inc., which is a small graphic design and photography firm, with his wife where he freelances as a creative director for small companies. They also do projects in corporate and commercial photography. He is on the Board of Directors for Mariachi Viva, which gives scholarships and promotes higher education among under privileged and at risk kids. Mariachi Viva has a concert at Mesa Arts Center in the Ikeda Theater this coming Friday, March 14.

Rob Schultz also introduced Ruth Rappaport, new Marketing/Communications Coordinator for the Mesa Arts Center and the Arts and Cultural Department. Ruth began on Monday, March 10.

Discussion and Information – Letter Sent to the Mayor and City Council – Peter Cook

Peter Cook, Chair, asked if anyone present had heard from the Mayor or a Councilmember regarding the letter sent from the Board requesting an amount (\$10,000) be retained in the City's budget for Public Art and Arts and Cultural Community Aid Grants until such time as the economy recovers and the accounts could be restored to their former amounts. Dr. Kent Layton responded that he mentioned the letter to two incumbents at a Mayoral Forum. He did not receive a verbal response from either one. No one else present had heard a word from the Mayor or Council.

Discussion – Arts and Cultural Vision and Advocacy – Peter Cook

After last month's discussion on retaining arts and culture as an important part of the City's scene, Peter Cook asked if anyone had anything further to add. Johann Zietsman, Arts and Cultural Director, shared various ways the Department is tracking how arts and culture measures itself. One matrix he distributed compares FY05-06 in several areas for all three facilities.

For **Expenditure per service (total City of Mesa contribution divided by participants)**, it cost Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) \$15.34 in FY05-06 compared to \$11.60 in FY06-07; it cost Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY) \$20.47 in FY05-06 compared to \$15.40 in FY06-07; and for Mesa Arts Center (MAC) there was no data for FY05-06, as it was not a complete year, but it cost MAC \$33.77 per service in FY06-07.

For **Earned revenue per service (total earned revenue divided by participants)**, AzMNH earned \$2.60 per service in FY05-06 compared to \$3.98 in FY06-07; AMY earned \$2.57 in FY05-06 compared to \$3.26 in FY06-07; and MAC earned \$16.30 in FY05-06 compared to \$16.83 in FY06-07.

For **Subsidy per service (expenditure minus revenue)**, AzMNH was subsidized \$12.74 in FY05-06 compared to \$7.71 in FY06-07; AMY was subsidized \$17.90 in FY05-06 compared to \$12.14 in FY06-07; and MAC had no data for FY05-06, but was subsidized \$16.95 in FY06-07.

For **Gross revenue per service (earned income plus contributed income divided by participants)**, AzMNH had \$4.10 in gross revenue in FY05-06 compared to \$4.01 in FY06-07; AMY had \$2.58 in gross revenue in FY05-06 compared to \$6.47 in FY06-07; and MAC had no data for FY05-06, but had gross revenue of \$18.81 in FY06-07.

For **Net cost per service (expenditure minus gross revenue)**, AzMNH had \$11.24 in net cost in FY05-06 compared to \$7.68 in FY06-07; AMY had \$17.90 in net cost in FY05-06 compared to \$8.93 in FY06-07; and MAC had no data for FY05-06, but had a net cost of \$14.96 in FY06-07.

The second matrix distributed showed various revenue sources for the FY07-08 budget and will be developed to show trends and ratios of contributions to measure our reliance on public funding.

Mr. Zietsman commented that it is difficult to measure a personal experience in figures, but the Department is also tracking as best we can customer experience, which reveals the true picture of how well an arts and cultural facility is doing. There is nothing available at this time to see how well our performance measures compare to other facilities, but there is a benchmarking underway to gather that data from other cities.

Mr. Zietsman shared that the point of the document is to begin to develop a sense that for every dollar the City spends, there is a partnership between City money and earned and contributed money from the facilities that make it work.

It was suggested that the Board meet with the newly elected City officials as soon as possible, once they take office, to discuss their vision for the future of arts and culture in Mesa.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee Spencer

- "Table Manners" is the next exhibit at Arizona Museum for Youth. It opens March 28.
- Kermit the frog is packed and shipping out to Baton Rouge, LA. The Henson exhibit brought over 30,000 attendees, breaking all records for attendance at the Museum.
- The Museum hosted a Smithsonian Institution Exhibition Service (SITES) "Grandparent's Day," with 55 in attendance. The event was funded by a SITES Board member and will serve as a model for other Henson venues. SITES was so thrilled with the Museum's activities developed in conjunction with the Henson exhibit that they are sending a separate truck for the activities to be taken to their D.C. venue. Arizona Museum for Youth will be credited as the creator of the activities providing outstanding exposure for the City of Mesa and the Museum. SITES is also talking to staff about creating activities for some of their other traveling exhibitions.
- Staff collaborated with KAET, who is starting a program titled "generation 8," a program for families, on March 1. They expected 150 families that morning, but had 270 show up. In return for the collaboration, the Museum will receive \$15,000 in marketing spots with the Museum's logo on KAET.
- Thank you to Dr. Tom Wilson, Rob Schultz, and Johann Zietsman, who provided tours of their facilities to eight directors who were attending a Director's Roundtable last week. The directors were extremely impressed with the City of Mesa's art scene.
- Attended the American Association of Museum's seminar on the role of the CEO in Building a Better Board. There were 35 participants from the continental U.S., Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.
- The Arizona Museum for Youth Friends Board just voted in a new member, Charaqa Shaw.
- It was reported last month that the new Curator of Education, Laura Matzer, would begin on March 17, but she will not begin until March 24 allowing her more time for relocation.
- The Gallery Shop has a new interim manager, Marie Morris, who began March 1. The previous manager, Veronica Ochoa left for another position.

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- "Feathered Dinosaur's and the Origin of Flight" opened with dual openings on February 28 and 29, which included dignitaries from China that accompanied the exhibition from Liaoning Province where the incredible fossils are from. The exhibit is doing very well with over \$2,600 in revenue from yesterday, Tuesday. A good weekday normally brings in approximately \$1,500 in revenue.
- Today, Wednesday, March 13, a new fossil was found in Gilbert. A City of Gilbert crew found what they thought was a bone and called the Museum. The fossil looks to be either from a camel or a horse and appears to be over 12,000 years old.

- Dr. Bob McCord will go back to the field in southeast Arizona to the dinosaur location mentioned at last month's meeting. It appears to be a fertile field of fossils and the fossils are estimated to be in the 97 million-year-old range.
- The Museum was featured in the annual report of *Bureau of Land Management's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2007*. A picture of the AzMNH team preparing to remove the rhychotherium skull from the land is included in the article.
- The Arts and Cultural Department is participating in a diversity project titled the "Ubuntu Project," which was funded by the Virginia G. Piper Trust and the National Council on Aging. We are one of nine who received a grant for a project geared toward baby boomers.
- Dr. Wilson had the opportunity to attend a two-day seminar called "The Medici Summit" in Scottsdale. People from all over the world (85 – 90 participants) attended. The theme of the Summit was Diversity and Innovation and how they interlink. Dr. Wilson was the only AZ attendee, and approximately one-third were from outside the U.S. coming from places such as Germany, Switzerland, and Singapore, as well as representation from large corporations such as Disney, Nike, ESPN, and digital communications companies. Dr. Wilson will take what he learned from the Summit to the Ubuntu Project committee.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- Out To Lunch free concert series on Thursdays from 12:30 – 1:30 are going well – attendance has doubled since last year. We have had up to 500 people attending.
- Staff developed a drop-in tour program to follow the Out To Lunch concerts. It was mentioned in a meeting three weeks ago. MAC tour guides and staff member Courtney Tjaden, Volunteer Coordinator, took the reins and got it organized and ready for the following week.
- In February, approximately 400 volunteers contributed over 1,800 services and 6,000 hours for approximately \$115,000 in value to the City.
- Mesa Arts Center's Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event will take place on Monday, March 24. Volunteers will be honored and recognized with a formal program that includes entertainment and awards. Last year, volunteers contributed approximately \$1M in value to Mesa Arts Center and the City of Mesa. There are approximately 500 volunteers in our database at this time.
- Marketing is working with Hohokam Stadium to promote the Museums and the Mesa Arts Center at Cubs games this spring; mentioned on the scoreboard, have information available at tables, etc. This is a great outreach opportunity for the Arts and Cultural Department.
- The Arts and Cultural Department education staff are working in collaboration to develop a spring break camp for kids that incorporates all three facilities.
- Mesa Contemporary Arts will host a reception on Friday, March 28, that includes an interview with Jeffrey Gold at 6:00 p.m., artist talk by Johan Dawson at 6:30 p.m. and a free reception open to the public from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Walt Richards & the Peaceful Warriors will provide the music. The reception will open three new exhibits: John Dawson, a painter who is a long time Mesa resident; Britta Hallin, "We Are Here," an experimental installation; and Jeffery Gold, a photo realist painter who deals with images and objects from his childhood.

Director's Report – Johann Zietsman

Staff will be making a presentation to Council (current and new Councilmembers), at the regular Study Session on March 27, on the status of the Department's FY07-08 budget and FY08-09 budget solutions to the various adjustments that were imposed. The Study Session begins at 7:30 a.m. The Board is welcome and encouraged to attend the Study Session.

That same day, Mr. Zietsman will also make a presentation to the Audit and Finance Sub-Committee with more detail on budget, fees and charges, etc.

Dr. Kent Layton stated that it is a compliment to staff and the way the Department is being run that we are now perceived as a positive in the City's big picture. Mr. Zietsman commented that it shouldn't be taken for granted, and we need to continue our work to earn it.

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

Amanda Buscas announced that the National Endowment for the Arts would be in town on Thursday, March 14, at Tempe Center for the Arts conducting a workshop at 4:00.

Ramona Tecumseh reported that she attended the Desert Sonoran Chorale's "Songs of Love" and enjoyed it very much. She also plans to see Southwest Shakespeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor" this coming Saturday.

Dr. Kent Layton reported that Ballet Etudes' "Nutcracker" collaborated with the Symphony of the Southwest. This was the first time Ballet Etudes performed with a live orchestra. It was a great performance. In May, Ballet Etudes will present "Peter Pan." At least four of the performers will be "flown" during the performance.

Johann Zietsman stated the importance of supporting our Affiliate arts organizations in every way we can. Since his arrival last June, he has seen all there is to see offered by the Affiliates and has been impressed with the standard of their presentations. He pointed out that they won't survive by themselves, and sometimes the only support they need is for us to buy a ticket. To him, the Affiliates represent the real arts in the community. Without them the Mesa Arts Center is merely a venue.

DJ Harper had to leave, but asked that the following be added to the minutes: He attended Stageworks' "Holes" and was happy with the new venue and reported it was a great show; attended Southwest Shakespeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor" and found the acting fantastic; went to see the No Festival Required film "The Collector;" and attended the opening reception for the Arizona Museum of Natural History's "Feathered Dinosaur's" – they are great!

Dr. Layton stated he was pleased to hear that Randy Vogel and Johann Zietsman are planning a showcase of the Affiliates for September 12. This will be a gift to the community, free and open to the public.

Dr. Layton further said that Mesa Arts Center is still young; look at the numbers for just the Out To Lunch concert series, which has grown by 100% in just one year; think of what it could be like in five years; soon people will become accustomed to the excellence in programming and offerings at Mesa Arts Center; they won't be able to imagine a City without it; it takes time to build that!

Identify Items for Future Agendas

There were no items identified for April.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Johann Zietsman, Director
Arts and Cultural Department