

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 8, 2006.

Members Present:

Kimberly Grace
Douglas Brimhall
Peter Cook
Lennee Eller
Daniel Harper

John Hohmann
Toni Brucato-Kobet
Andrea Soto
Laurent Teichman
Ramona Tecumseh

Members Absent:

Crista Cloutier

Staff Present:

Gerry Fathauer
Tom Wilson
Jenny Akridge

Rob Schultz
Sunnee Spencer
Jean Kaminski

Guests Present:

Lisa Anderson

Kimberly Grace, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Ramona Tecumseh made a motion, Laurent Teichman seconded, and all Board members present unanimously approved the February 8 minutes, and they are posted on the Web page.

Kimberly Grace, Chair, asked if there had been any information on the City Manager's suggestion from the February meeting regarding having food carts on the Shadow Walk for Performing Live events. Gerry Fathauer responded that there are two issues: 1) having Sodexo, the concessionaire for Mesa Arts Center, continue to do that (Mesa Arts Center does get a percentage of their sales), or 2) setting a policy in place to allow others to come and do that. Time will give a clearer picture of what works and what doesn't.

Public Comments

Lisa Anderson, Mesa Historical Society, reported that the annual home tour was a huge success. Attendance had increased by 300 over last year and revenue increased by \$4,000. The Museum is looking at planning a holiday tour in the same area next fiscal year. RigaTony's has agreed to be the sole sponsor for the food at the event.

The Museum's annual BBQ is Saturday, March 25. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$6 for children. The current Quilt Show will remain open through the BBQ event.

While compiling data for their year-end report, the Museum has realized \$380,000 of in-kind donations.

The Museum continues to work in collaboration with the Mesa Southwest Museum on the "Searching for Mesa" exhibition.

Discuss and Take Action – Consider Approval of Recommendations for Arts and Cultural Community Aid Grant Requests – Rob Schultz

The Arts and Cultural Community Aid Grant Panel, which included: Dr. Dwight Walth, Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture; Jayo Rao and Mandy Tripoli Buscus, Arizona Commission on the Arts, met to review 10 applications on February 24; \$307,800 was requested. The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board's Grants Committee (Kimberly Grace, Ramona Tecumseh, and Doug Brimhall) observed the panel review. The Grant budget was the same as last year - \$233,668, with \$10,000 for Mini-Grant funding.

Criteria used in evaluating the applications was:

- Artistic quality of the Project/Activity
- Ability to serve the needs of the community
- Ability to complete the project
- Appropriateness of the budget

The panelists received the grant applications prior to the meeting for review. At the meeting, the panel discussed each grant application individually citing their strengths and weaknesses and assigning each a rating on a scale of 0 to 4, with 4 being excellent.

A matrix was created from the formula used to determine the awarded amount recommended by staff for each applicant based on the panel's rankings. The **first column** is the average of the ranking of all the panelists; the **second column** is the requested amount by the applicant; the **third column** is the percentage equivalent of the 0 – 4 ranking based on 100 percent (%); the **fourth column** is the Option 1 funding level amount (not recommended); the **fifth column** is the award given in FY05-06; the **sixth column** is the average of adding column four and column five; and the **seventh column** is the recommended, Option 2 funding amount.

To calculate the amount in column seven, staff took the total amount from column six (\$242,600) and subtracted that from the total amount of funding available in column four (\$233,668), which came to \$8,932. The \$8,932 was divided by the 10 awarded applicants equaling \$893, and that amount was subtracted from each applicant's average dollar amount in column six to reach the total dollar amount recommended in column seven, Option 2.

Daniel Harper asked if the ranking system took into account that an organization may have requested an inflated amount in order to receive more money? Gerry Fathauer stated that is why staff created, and is recommending, Option 2, which averaged last year's award with this year's request, making the awarded amount fairer for everyone. Mr. Harper was more concerned whether the panel took into consideration an inflated amount in their ranking process. Rob Schultz replied that they ranked strictly on the criteria mentioned above; however, the Grants Committee would consider whether or not to add additional wording to the criteria for next year.

Kimberly Grace, Chair, commented that one of the applicants is not a Mesa resident; although their request was for performances to be held at the Mesa Arts Center. The application guidelines state: "Applicant must reside in Mesa. Mesa residency is defined as having an established place of residence in a home or office building in Mesa." The guidelines further state that a "Project Grant – Project must be within Mesa City limits for direct benefit to Mesa Citizens," and a "General Operating Grant – Primary place of programs and business must be within Mesa City limits." There was a lot of discussion as to the interpretation of these statements. The applicant in question did submit a letter of intent to staff.

It was decided to table a vote at this time. The Grants Committee will meet to discuss the issue in detail, speak with the City Attorney, and bring their findings and recommendation back to the Board in April. The Board also instructed Rob Schultz to refigure the Option 2 numbers by putting back into the equation the amount that was awarded to the applicant in question and bring the new recommended, Option 2 numbers to the Board in April.

Discuss and Take Action – Consider Fee Adjustments for Stageworks – Rob Schultz

Rob Schultz turned the floor over to Jenny Akridge, Performing Arts Supervisor, who reported that staff continually monitors programs to position the Mesa Arts Center programs in competition with those in neighboring communities.

Because of the City's financial situation, Stageworks is one of the programs that could potentially be eliminated unless it can achieve a 100% direct cost recovery.

Stageworks has three primary solutions for 100% direct cost recovery: reduce program costs, utilize contributed support from the Mesa Arts Center Foundation, and increase ticket fees. The first two have been implemented, and with the ticket increase recommended, Stageworks would achieve the goal of 100% direct cost recovery.

The proposed fees are: for "Main Stage Productions," student tickets would go from \$10 to \$13, adults from \$12 to \$14; and for "Student Productions/Recitals," which include youth troupe performances, a price range of \$0 - \$10. In October 2004, the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board recommended, and Council approved, a fee range of \$0 - \$5 rather than a set fee for "Student Productions/Recitals." The range allows for more flexibility in presenting some of the less formal productions, which will remain free to the public, while allowing advanced productions to charge an appropriate fee.

Stageworks is planning to use plays that are more of a well-known commodity in order to attract a larger audience while continuing to encourage and work with students in presenting the more creative works that Stageworks has become known for. Staff continues to look for alternatives to increase revenue.

Laurent Teichman made a motion, Toni Brucato-Kobet seconded, and all members present unanimously voted to recommend Council approve the proposed fees for Stageworks. The Board commended Stageworks' staff on their proactive initiatives in implementing ways of achieving 100% cost recovery.

Information and Discussion – Improving the Environment¹ for Arts and Culture – Peter Cook

Following is a PowerPoint presentation that Peter Cook prepared on a two-day seminar produced by National Arts Strategies.

A revolutionary change has taken place in delivery mechanisms for culture and entertainment in performing arts – 150 years ago all performances were live, now, virtually all delivery of professional performances is electronic. Although these performances are technically perfect, they lack the bond between performer and audience. Arts and culture organizations have become a strong, positive impact on our quality of life and in our communities as being a major force in presenting live performances.

Non-profit arts and culture organizations can be viewed as an "industry," and as an industry, compete with other industries for people's attention, time, and money.

¹ From "Improving the Environment" seminar produced by National Arts strategies, by Edward A. Martenson and Joel M. Podolny

A diagram from the seminar showed **Arts and Culture Organizations** in the center. Surrounding the center are the **"Buyers"** or patrons; the **"Substitutes,"** things competing for our attention, time, and money such as sports, TV, reading, for-profit entertainment, etc.; the **"Supplies,"** i.e., artists, staff, vendors, etc.; and the **"New Entrants,"** the "wannabees."

The total yearly non-profit cash flow in the United States is approximately \$200 billion. Based on IRS 990 forms, approximately \$23 billion is the cut from the "pie" that is split between arts and culture non-profit organizations. Because they are non-profit, most of that money is going to the "Supplier" (artists, staff, vendors, etc.). Based on the cash flow amount, the non-profit organizations are receiving a small percentage of the "pie" in comparison to what the "Substitutes" (for-profit organizations) are receiving. Most non-profits depend on revenue sources other than ticket sales, as it is very common for program revenue to be approximately 50% of the operating costs. By managing supplier relations, such as joint buying, sharing equipment and supplies, etc., there is an opportunity to reduce costs. **Note:** It was pointed out by Lennee Eller that sharing could be problematic, as no one wants to take the responsibility of maintaining the shared equipment, supplies, etc.

Arts and culture organizations need to devise interaction strategies, not just drift into competitive or collaborative relationships. Rather than offering programming on the same night at similar times, an opportunity exists to cooperate and share resources. Common fundraising was also discussed, but it is difficult to run successfully.

Organizations need to develop a local marketing position and address the question of whether they want to be a strong, specific domain, a niche, or cover a broad range at the risk of wasteful competitions. Some arts and culture organizations have a well-defined focus or niche, such as Southwest Shakespeare. Shared marketing was discussed, but organizations are finding it difficult to share successfully.

Initially, most arts and culture organizations begin small with volunteer labor, no paid staff, etc., and grow into mid-size organizations. There are approximately 180 large economic units in the United States, such as the Metropolitan Museum in NY, and approximately 200,000 small organizations. Mid-size organizations are problematic for the following reasons: they begin to pick-up the cost of programs and staff development; grants for start-up organizations sometimes disappear when they become mid-size; and they have a high risk factor. Mid-size organizations need to plan mitigation for potential problems, carefully decide on a growth vs. "niche" strategy, and pursue stable funding.

New entrants bring fresh ideas and vitality and are encouraged by foundations. However, a potential problem with new organizations is that they do not expand the pie as much as they consume a share of it, and that dilutes funding for others. A new entrant approach is needed, such as accreditation, foundations adopting a policy that withdraws start-up funding as the organization becomes successful, or local Arts Councils that could be used to establish legitimacy by having requirements that must be met to join.

Mr. Cook found the seminar enlightening and closed by saying that the Mesa Arts Center has a tremendous opportunity to be instrumental in helping local arts and cultural organizations by offering an affordable venue for them to present, allowing them to concentrate on the artistic side of their organizations.

Information – Update on Public Art Policies – Gerry Fathauer

Gerry Fathauer reported on behalf of Carrie Brown who was unavailable. Last month, Carrie Brown presented the Public Art Policies to the Board. Discussion ensued around the wording of what public art **may not** fund. There was concern regarding the transit shelters that will be mass-produced in the sense that the art elements are interchangeable. The changes Ms. Brown is proposing are: 1) Section "II. Funding," add the word "not" so the sentence reads, "Monies designated for public art may **not** be used for the following;" 2) Under item "D," change the wording to state "Art objects which are **not designed by an artist that** are mass-produced . . .;" and 3) Section "III. Objectives and Goals," item "D" has been moved to item "E" and a new sentence has been added for item "D," which now reads, "Provide opportunities for artists to participate in the design of various civic amenities." Ms. Brown will bring the revised Policies to the Board in April for review and approval.

Information and Discussion – Report on Financial Stability Committee Meeting – John Hohmann

John Hohmann reported that he was the only member present, so a meeting was not possible. It was decided to change the meeting day and time. See the "Director's Report" below for the reasons to move the meeting day and time. Jean Kaminski will communicate with the Board and find a new day and time for the sub-committees to meet.

Rob Schultz, staff liaison, presented an update on the City's budget status and the town hall meetings. His perception from the town hall meetings showed a more positive change toward finding alternative funding sources from the initial 40 – 60 percent (%) ratio that was reported on an early survey. One mandate suggested by Mr. Schultz for the Financial Stability Committee was the arts and cultural tourism aspect and how the Committee and Board can help to facilitate those alternative funding sources. He also reminded those present that the sub-committees are under the same burden as the Board regarding advocacy and need to find the appropriate platforms to voice their opinions.

Kimberly Grace reported that she received a phone call from Heidi Gast, Assistant to the Mayor, reminding the Board that they need to pay attention to how information is presented to the public. As a Board member, individuals cannot advocate or influence the public for a particular outcome of the election; however, each individual is allowed to speak as a private citizen.

Debbie Spinner, City Attorney, will be invited to the April meeting to clarify the following questions in regard to the election: when in a social setting, can a Board member speak as an individual while wearing their Museum and Cultural Advisory Board badge (such as at a Museum opening/reception or at a City event); can a Board member state that they are a member of the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board when speaking as a private citizen at a public meeting?

Gerry Fathauer instructed the Board to send any other questions they may have for Ms. Spinner to her prior to the April meeting, and she would forward them to Ms. Spinner to address.

The Board was reminded that a FAQ sheet on the tax issues is available to the public on the City's Website. Also, as private citizens, Board members can join organizations such as ACORN to gain facts and information for personal use.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Marie Raymond for Sunnee Spencer

- The new fee structure approved by Council March 6 will go into effect April 1.
- The Museum is looking into a tiered Membership program in the fall; there are over 900 members now.
- The Museum has developed a fresh newsletter, "*Arty Facts*."
- A letter was sent to members to join the "Golden Palette Fund."
- The domino game created by staff for the "Inuit" exhibit sold well in the gift shop. Staff is now creating a "Wild Cat Bingo" game in conjunction with the upcoming "Cats in Art" exhibit.
- The "Inuit" exhibit, borrowed extensively from the Heard Museum, has been extended through June 9.
- Approximately 7,000 school children have toured the Museum to date.
- The logo painted in the front of the Museum and paving the parking lot are completed.
- The donation box is up in the lobby. Proceeds will go to the "Golden Palette Fund."
- The National Plastics Museum will be visiting and conducting a workshop on March 25.
- The Museum has received five stars in the *Lila Guide* listings.
- Approximately 460 patrons attended the "2nd Sunday Free" in February; over half were Mesa residents.
- KAET has been airing the Museum's ad.
- Rebecca Akins, Youth Museum Specialist, presented a talk to docents in Prescott.
- Staff moral is low, and the Museum has received their first resignation from Dorothy Rohn.
- Staff is working with Gerry Fathauer and Carrie Brown on de-accessioning the Museum's pergola. The pergola has become potentially unsafe to the public, with tiles lifting, wood deteriorating, etc. Ms. Brown has asked the artists if the Museum could keep the ceramic tiles that were made by school children, under the supervision of the two Public Artists who designed the project, and incorporate them elsewhere on the Museum grounds.

The suggestion was made that in the future, wording be added, when soliciting donations for public artwork, stating that the City of Mesa reserves the right to de-accession public art projects when necessary. Ms. Fathauer replied that it has been discussed and will be added to donor materials relating to Public Art. The Public Art Program is also paying closer attention to what materials wear best in our climate.

Mesa Southwest Museum – Tom Wilson

- Museum volunteers were honored. The Museum received over 12,000 volunteer hours in the past year, which is equivalent to six full time positions.
- The new fee structure approved by Council March 6 will go into effect April 1.
- The new-tiered Membership program is being implemented, with the main benefit being a subscription to the Museum's new, *Southwest Qwest*, quarterly magazine. The first issue will be available June 1.
- Each year Mesa Leadership, Training, and Development (LTD) undertakes a project and has selected Mesa Grande this year. At their March 1 meeting, Jerry Howard, Museum Curator, presented an overview of accomplishments and plans for the future preservation and development of the site. Roger Lidman, Pueblo Grande Museum in Phoenix, described the site and the role of Phoenix government in its development. Mesa LTD plans to present a report on the project.
- Dr. Wilson had a special treat as the Master of Ceremonies for Arizona's Statehood Day event at the State Capitol. He not only got to introduce Governor Janet Napolitano, but also former United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.
- Dr. Wilson was elected to the Board of Directors of the Arizona Humanities Council.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- Mesa Contemporary Arts has hired a new Associate Curator Tiffany Fairall who has been working to get the docent program started. Two trainings have been conducted providing a pool of volunteers, and she has created and produced a docent training manual/handbook.
- Staff is working on the summer session class brochure. It was decided to conduct classes in June and July as usual, per direction.
- Discussion to potentially partner with Mesa Community College continues.
- There will be an opening reception for several new exhibitions at Mesa Contemporary Arts on March 24. Michael Eastman will open the evening with a talk at 5:00 p.m. followed by a reception. There will be a Buddhist Monk blessing for the Laos silk show at 7:00 p.m. The craft show continues. Darrell Tousley, sculpture instructor at Mesa Arts Center, is showing his work. Artist talks will take place on Thursday, March 23, beginning at 6:00 p.m.
- Stageworks' second show of the season "Dreamcatcher," closes this weekend. The final show of the season, "Sarah, Plain and Tall," opens April 21 and runs through May 7.

The question was asked regarding the cost of printing the class brochure. Mr. Schultz reported that fewer are being printed for the summer session, and a less expensive brand of paper is being used to cut costs. Patrons are also being asked if they prefer to receive information electronically to cut the cost of mailing and producing hard copy brochures.

Director's Report – Gerry Fathauer

Last month, Daniel Harper asked if it were possible for a sub-committee to meet prior to the Board meeting, have a report from the meeting as an agenda item, and add an action item to the agenda in case the sub-committee had a discussion that would require a vote from the Board. Gerry Fathauer was informed by City staff that it was not possible to have an action item on the same agenda, as there would not be time to let the public know what the action item would involve. It was decided to move the sub-committee meetings to another day and time to allow time for positing and placing action items on the agenda.

The Board will not have the Monthly Director's Report available to them at the Board meeting as in the past. City Management wants to see more metrics in the monthly narrative reports. As that information is not available to staff until later in the month, it is not possible to have them prepared in time for the monthly Board meeting. When the report is compiled, Jean Kaminski will e-mail the reports to the Board.

Zarco Guerrero will begin to install his temporary public art project Thursday, March 9. The three Olmec heads will be installed in the grassy area on the south end of campus first, and the masks in the arroyo will follow. Information on the project will be placed on a plaquered by the Olmec heads.

Each City Department has the opportunity to go before Council regarding the impact of the City Manager's recommended cut list in terms of dollars and programs. Community Services Department has the most potential cuts on the list and will go first on Thursday, March 9, beginning at 7:30 a.m. with a 55-slide PowerPoint presentation. Council is inviting each board to have one representative speak following the presentation. Daniel Harper agreed to speak on behalf of the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board.

Upcoming Events – Board Members

Daniel Harper reported on several items: 1) suggested that the Financial Stability Committee consider looking at how Arizona Museum for Youth used corporate sponsors for public art years ago; 2) attended "Dreamcatcher, enjoyed it, and encouraged others to see and purchase tickets, and he further stated that purchasing tickets is the best way to support Stageworks and other local arts organizations to achieve cost recovery; 3) saw a sign at the public library by the checkout that said, because of budget cuts, there was no one sitting there and you would need to use the automated machine or wait for assistance; 4) requested that Randy Vogel come, when appropriate, and speak to the Board on next year's programming; and 5) he became engaged!

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerry Fathauer, Director
Arts and Cultural Division