

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Arts and Cultural Division Office, 1 East Main Street, third floor south Studios conference room, on May 11, 2005.

Members Present:

Toni Brucato
Peter Cook
Kimberly Grace
Daniel J. Harper
Lennee Eller
Maureen Chaisson-Stewart
Ramona Tecumseh
Laurent Teichman

Members Absent:

John Hohmann

Staff Present:

Gerry Fathauer
Rob Schultz
Carrie Brown
Nancy Wolter
Jerry Dillehay
Tom Wilson
Melissa Tornquist
Jean Kaminski

Guests Present:

Dennis Kavanaugh
Lisa Anderson
Sandy Dominick

Kimberly Grace, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:42 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Laurent Teichman made a motion, and Toni Brucato seconded. Board members present unanimously approved the April 13 minutes, and they were posted on the Web page.

Public Comments

Sandy Dominic, Director of Economic Development for the Maricopa Partnership for Arts and Culture (MPAC), addressed the Board. Valley business leaders, civic leaders, artists, and arts organization leaders made up the Maricopa Regional Arts and Culture Task Force that made the recommendation to form MPAC. Mr. Dominic reported that MPAC's mission is to celebrate and recognize regional arts and culture in the Valley. MPAC is a staff of four. Two areas MPAC is addressing are economic development and building regional distinctions. The goal is to use economic development and work with economic development professionals to help build a message around the critical nature of arts and culture in building successful communities throughout Arizona. Mr. Dominic's personal goal is to make Maricopa a "Meca" for arts and culture. Based on the research done by the Task Force, there is a time and place for MPAC, and it's now! If not now, the Valley risks falling even farther behind cities that are making strides in building stronger communities through the arts and cultural perspective.

Questions:

Peter Cook – Mr. Cook stated that he feels Maricopa County has a large amount of business activity associated with entertainment, and there is a clear relationship between arts and cultural activities and other forms of entertainment, i.e., sports, movies, etc. What are Mr. Dominic's thoughts on how arts and culture relate as an activity that is vying for peoples' time and money? Mr. Dominic replied that right now, MPAC is grappling with defining what arts and culture is – what does that mean – what does it involve? MPAC's position today is "Yes, how arts and culture relates to people's disposable income is relevant; however, there is a lot of other economic activity and relevance to the for-profit side as well as the non-profit side that needs to be included in the definition. There is a large tie-in between arts and cultural activity (audience activity) and ancillary economic activity, what economists call a "multiplier effect." A study shows that in Maricopa County the amount of money spent per capita for disposable income dollars is \$12 compared to Indianapolis at \$22. This is something MPAC is hoping to change. Mr. Dominic stated that the amount of entertainment activity offered in Maricopa County is phenomenal and went on to say that he was sitting in one of its jewels (Mesa Arts Center). He commented that the Valley is one of the only regions in the country that offers such a high-level quality of youth programming – Phoenix Boys Choir, Arizona Museum for Youth, Childsplay, East Valley Children's Theater, etc.

Ramona Tecumseh asked that given Tempe and Peoria are building Arts Centers, if Mr. Dominic envisions any problems for survival for arts centers? Mr. Dominic deferred to a quote, "a rising tide raises all boats." Multiple cities offering arts centers, does not always mean competition. Initially, it can cause competition; but over time, it can entice the public to want and see more.

Laurent Teichman commented that being raised in Paris, art is part of everyday life. American cities such as New York and Chicago have realized for a long time the importance that art and culture has on its communities. Mr. Teichman stated he hopes MPAC will focus on educating city officials, educators, parents, and children on how arts and culture can enhance our communities and our daily lives.

Lisa Anderson reported for the Mesa Historical Museum. The Heritage grant is off and running. The Museum expects to begin construction in a month. Planning is underway for next year's Sixth Annual Home Tour on January 14, 2006.

The tour is going back to the West Second District. At least two homes in that district are 100 years old. The Museum will also be celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Historical Society. The annual, open meeting and ice cream social will take place on Thursday, June 16, at 7:00 p.m. The last lecture of the "Politics As Usual" series will take place May 19 at 7:00 p.m. with speaker Tom Freestone. Ms. Anderson is also representing the Central Museum Association who has partnered with Robinsons-May to promote Museum month. Patrons can pick up a "Culture Passport" during the month of May at Robinsons-May, which allows them two-for-one admission to 38 participating cultural venues.

Discuss and Take Action – Consider Approval of Two Artists for the Public Art Temporary Art Project on Mesa Arts Center Campus – Carrie Brown

The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the two Temporary Projects deadline was April 29. A selection panel consisting of Kimberly Grace, Museum and Cultural Advisory Board; Lennee Eller, Museum and Cultural Advisory Board; David Manje, Mesa Arts Center instructor; Susan Laidlaw, Mesa Arts Center Foundation Board member; and Lori Osiecki, Design Committee member, met on May 6 to select two finalists to present to the Board. Carrie Brown, Public Art Specialist, facilitated the meeting.

The panel agreed that: 1) installations would be for outside for more accessible visibility, and 2) that the artists would create new, site-specific artwork. Artists were judged on past work and the capability of working with a shorter budget and shorter time frame. The panel unanimously selected Ted Troxel and Jose Benavides. The work would be installed in time for the grand opening in September and would come down in December.

A photocopy of slides of Jose Benavides' work was distributed, and a DVD of Ted Troxel's work was shown. Both artists work with recycled/found objects types of materials. The proposal of each artist's work will be brought back to the Board for approval at a later date.

Toni Brucato made a motion to award proposal stage contracts of \$500 each to the selected artists. Ramona Tecumseh seconded. Kimberly Grace, chair, called for a vote. Eight Board members voted to award the contracts. Laurent Teichman voted against.

Mr. Teichman commented that although he does like that type of work, he feels it is the wrong medium for the Mesa Arts Center and something more visually appealing would be more suitable. Lennee Eller, Public Art Director at Sky Harbor Airport, stated that when the Airport had an exhibit of recycled work, it was one of the most popular. The public got it; found it playful, not stuffy; accommodating; and warm. She went as far as to say that the exhibit generated more sales than any other, and people were disappointed when it came down. Ms. Eller reminded the Board that the work is temporary (three months).

Maureen Chaisson-Stewart commented that she thought having both artists in the same medium might be too much.

Ms. Brown reminded the Board that the artists will be creating a new, site-specific art piece, and the Board would have the opportunity to see and approve the proposals before the artists begin their work.

Discuss and Take Action – Visual Arts Class Fees – Rob Schultz

Rob Schultz addressed the Board regarding the process in which fees and charges are recommended and established for the Arts and Cultural Division. Mr. Schultz was specifically addressing fees and charges at the Mesa Arts Center. Each year staff reviews fees and charges at the Center that include: Performing Live, Mesa Contemporary Arts, Stageworks, and Visual/Performing Arts classes. Staff researches what neighboring cities are charging to maintain a policy of having the best value that includes quality instructions and good facilities. In May 2004, staff requested an increase in the range of fees for arts classes. The Board approved the requested range, which raised the *maximum* cost of a class from \$175 to \$225, and Council approved. For the 2005 summer session, the price of all arts classes were increased by 25%, remaining within the range of fees approved by City Council. At this time the Mesa Arts Center is looking at approximately a 50% cost recovery rate for adult visual arts classes and approximately 45% cost recover for adult performing arts classes. At the last Council meeting, the Mayor proposed moving to 100% cost recovery for adult visual arts classes beginning with the fall session. At the Study Session, Council voted four to three to move to 100% cost recovery for adult visual arts classes. Essentially, we would move from 50% cost recovery to 100% cost recovery in the fall session. At the same meeting, Councilmember Griswold was encouraged by Councilmember Walters to reconsider his stance. He agreed to reconsider his vote (which was the fourth vote) pending staff's research into what the market is for adult arts classes both in Mesa, neighboring cities, and the private sector. Staff is busy conducting the research and hopes to have the results within the next few weeks and present the report to Council. It is the hope of the Mesa Arts Center that the report will enable the Council to make a more informed decision.

Dennis Kavanaugh addressed the Board in his role as an advocator on behalf of the Mesa Arts Center Foundation Board. As a former Board member of the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board and a former Councilmember, Mr. Kavanaugh has a long history with the City of Mesa on the process for setting fees and charges in the Arts and Cultural Division. When Mr. Kavanaugh was on the Board, the vision was consistent with that of staff in that everyone wanted the programs to be excellent – offering the best teachers and staying competitive within the Valley. This goal over the past 17 years has proven to make the Mesa Arts Center a successful program.

Over the past year-and-a-half the Mesa Arts Center went through a public process of looking at increasing fees as we moved into the new Center due to increased costs associated with operating programming. Every City Department goes through the same process when looking to change fees and charges: 1) staff researches and compares other like venues, 2) the citizen Advisory Board has input, and 3) the public has input by attending public meetings of the Advisory Boards and City Council. The Mesa Arts Center went through this process last year when Council approved the requested range of fee increases recommended by the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board. When City Council approved a motion without any public input last week, or input from the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board, the process took a turn. Mesa Arts Center classes are the type of programming that needs input by the Advisory Board and the public. He further encouraged the Board to let the Council know that if we go to 100% cost recovery right now, the program will suffer serious harm. It will not leave us competitive with programs in the rest of the Valley. Cost recovery of 100% is a noble goal, but that is a different philosophy than what Council has endorsed in the past. Mr. Kavanaugh reminded the Board that the issue of accessibility must remain in the forefront. As this is a community facility, we want to insure that we have true community access to our programming. The Foundation will advocate that the Council “stop, look, and listen.” Look at the research, listen to the advice of the Advisory Board and the other support groups of the Center, and listen to the public. We, as citizens, know there is a budget crisis in the City, but classes at the Mesa Arts Center have not created the crisis. The Foundation, along with other support groups, hopes to educate Councilmembers on the issues about which they need to be concerned, urge Council to take steps that are economically sound, will benefit the community by retaining the accessibility, and do not impose a double standard for the Mesa Arts Center. The Mesa Arts Center should be allowed to follow the same process that every other City Department does when setting fees.

Lennee Eller commented that if we raise fees for 100% cost recovery, the Mesa Arts Center is looking at fees similar to what the community colleges are charging, which gives a person a degree. She further stated that if the Center does take off and accomplish what is planned, it has the potential of being a large economic impact in Mesa. Requiring 100% cost recovery at this point will kill those hopes and dreams.

Maureen Chaisson-Stewart commented that she feels 100% cost recovery for sports activity makes more sense as that programming is there for citizens who live in the area. Arts is not just for people within a community, but includes people outside the community who bring their money into the community through their purchases while attending events offered through the arts. She continued to say that people who are shopping the market for visual arts classes are getting more for their money per hour at Mesa Community College. They get a class plus credit toward a degree. If Mesa Arts Center raises their fess, we will be taking ourselves out of the competitive market. She stated that 100% cost recovery at the Mesa Arts Center is unfair, unrealistic, and inequitable when you think that the Mesa Arts Center is an economic stimulus to the community that sports events sponsored by the City are not.

Laurent Teichman commented that to him this is a moral issue. From a businessman’s viewpoint, he fears raising prices to 100% cost recovery will cause the Center to lose a large amount of its faithful student base.

Peter Cook asked Rob Schultz what the increased costs for operating amounted to with the move to the new Center? Rob Schultz replied that when addressing programming costs, he is speaking of direct cost, which includes instructor salaries, materials and supplies for classes, equipment, ancillary printing, guest artists, and anything relating directly to the program. It does not include security or utilities. Those costs have been apportioned into one cost center that is separate from the programs. It would be virtually impossible to divide those costs between the different types of programming offered at the Mesa Arts Center. Roughly, it costs \$600,000 for visual arts classes, and \$350,000 is realized in revenue.

Daniel Harper commented that he feels a dangerous precedent would be set if a City action is allowed to take place that does not follow the normal public process.

Discussion continued as to what the Board could do to alert Council that as a citizen Board, they have been asked to volunteer their time to offer an informed recommendation to Council on such issues. The Board is frustrated that they are being overlooked and disagrees with a “shock” transition to a 100% cost recovery.

Mr. Schultz commented that given time, the Mesa Arts Center could pursue other possible sources of revenue to override costs. This would take some of the pressure off classes and look at alternatives other than huge fee increases to remain as accessible as feasibly possible. The Center was built on community dollars and needs to remain accessible to the community.

Maureen Chaisson-Stewart made a motion stating that the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board disagrees with Council's proposal to approve 100% cost recovery for fall classes, and the Board recommends that City Council allow this issue to be researched and reviewed through the normal public process, which includes research by City staff, input through this Advisory Board, public input to the Advisory Board, and public input to the Council before making such a policy shift or fee increase. Daniel Harper seconded. Kimberly Grace, Chair, called for a vote, and Board members present unanimously approved the motion.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Melissa Tornquist

- Attendance is up approximately 300% as compared to last year.
- A retirement party for Museum Administrator, Barbara Meyerson, will take place on Monday, May 23, from noon until 2:00 p.m. All are invited to attend.

Mesa Southwest Museum – Tom Wilson

- "Whales: The Inside Story" and "Navajo Saddle Blankets: Textiles to Ride in the American West" are having their formal opening Friday, May 20, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. "Tusks! Ice Age Mammoths and Mastodons" has also opened. The Museum is coining the exhibits "Summer of the Giants." The Museum is working closely with the Libraries in getting the information out as well as advertising on public television and public radio.
- Angelica Docog, Cindy Diaz, and Dr. Wilson attended the American Museums Association meeting in Indianapolis. Ms. Docog and Dr. Wilson presented at the meeting.
- Angelica Docog, who served as the Assistant Director of the Museum and Curator of Education, has resigned. She has accepted a position as the Division Director at the Colorado Historical Museum in Denver. There will be a national search for her replacement.

MAC/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz, new Mesa Arts Center – Randy Vogel, and Development – Nancy Wolter

- Approximately 350 people attended a donor reception at Mesa Contemporary Arts on April 20.
- Mesa Contemporary Arts' opening public reception took place on Friday, April 22, with approximately 3,500 in attendance. Saturday, April 23, featured an all-day event that included the galleries, music, and children's activities on the Shadow walk. Approximately 5,000 attended on Saturday.
- Mesa Contemporary Arts is averaging approximately 180 patrons a day since the grand opening. That comes to approximately 9,000 to date (two and a half weeks) as compared to 6,500 attending all last year.
- Development will host a Members Preview Thursday, May 12 at 7:30 p.m. at Mesa Contemporary Arts courtyard. Members will be given the first look at the premier season, and the event will kick off ticket orders for Members.
- An Open House for City employees and Board members will take place on Saturday, May 21. From 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. visitors will be given a sneak peak at the Theaters and can then enjoy the entertainment on the Shadow Walk sponsored by Target. Target will be on campus doing a promotional film on grants that they have given.
- The goal for Memberships is \$85,000. To date, Development has received \$82,000.
- Filling the Volunteer Coordinator position is underway. Interviews will take place next week. Staff is hoping to have the position filled by mid-June.
- The Preparator position in the gallery is open. Staff is hoping to have the position filled by late June.
- Andreyra Hernandez-Garcia, Community Arts Coordinator, has been on leave for 12 weeks. She returns May 16.
- Summer classes begin the week of June 6. Over 1,000 students have registered to date.

Ramona Tecumseh asked how many registrants were from cities outside of Mesa? Rob Schultz reported about half.

Public Art Program – Carrie Brown

- The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) has been released for an Artist-Designed Passenger Shelter at the Banner Baywood Medical Center on Power Road and Baywood Ave. The deadline for applications is June 15.

Director's Reports

Gerry Fathauer

Installation of Ned Kahn's public art project of free flowing, blue shade screens that grace the front of the Ikeda Theater and the Virginia G. Piper Repertory Theater has begun. Catherine Widgery, who works closely with Ned Kahn, has

begun installation on her public art project. Ms. Widgey has crafted 35,000 metal medallions that will create, on the exterior stones as well as the lobby stones, desert blown sand patterns related to Ned Kahn's shade screens.

City Council will decide at the Thursday morning Study Session, May 12, whether any money will go into the capital portion of the Public Art program.

The Performing Live Inaugural Season will be announced in the local newspapers Friday, May 13, including announcing the opening headliner on September 17. The season includes a variety of well-known artists and up-and-comers.

The Financing the Future Citizens Committee meets tonight, May 12, at 5:30 p.m. The Committee is working to make recommendations to Council on balancing the budget over the next 10 years. Many areas are being discussed and reviewed such as property tax and fees other cities are leveling or have in place that Mesa does not, etc. Another concern is what happens when the City comes out of "Debt Valley," which means a period of time when the City has less debt payment on bonds, in FY07-08. Their recommendation to Council, regarding additional funding sources, will be crucial in influencing/determining whether or not we continue to see the painful decisions Council is currently having to face regarding the budget.

To assist in balancing the budget this year, the City is offering a one-time opportunity for employees to take early retirement and/or a severance package. Three employees from the Arts and Cultural Division have applied. Two applied for retirement, and one for the severance package. The "payout" is based on how many years the employee worked at the City of Mesa. *(See below for additional information regarding Management's role regarding the severance package).

Jerry Dillehay

The City has engaged Management Consultants for the Arts to assist in the search to replace Barbara Meyerson as Administrator at the Arizona Museum for Youth. Two consultants were in Mesa to meet with key staff and tour the facilities. They have developed a marketing job description that will attract candidates nationally. The consultants just returned from the American Museums Association meeting in Indianapolis where they met preliminary candidates. They are working on screening candidates and will present a report next week.

*Management from each Responsibility Center (R.C.) had to develop a plan to recoup the cost of employees who have chosen to sever ties with the City. The idea was not to force anyone to leave, but to save the City money. Management needed to show double the savings, which in most cases means leaving the position vacant for a considerable period of time.

Council will hold two public hearings on budget issues. The first meeting is Wednesday, May 18, Red Mountain Library, 6:00 p.m. The second meeting will be Thursday, May 19, Webster Elementary gym, 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerry Fathauer, Director
Arts and Cultural Division