

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, 200 South Center Street, on January 12, 2005.

Members Present:

Toni Brucato
Peter Cook
Lennee Eller
Kimberly Grace
Elizabeth Good

Members Absent:

Jesus Hernandez
Maureen Chaisson-Stewart

Staff Present:

Gerry Fathauer
Jerry Dillehay
Tom Wilson
Nancy Wolter
Melissa Tornquist
Andreya Hernandez-Garcia

Rob Schultz
Carrie Brown
Gerri Green
Walter Morlock
Jean Kaminski

Kimberly Grace, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Elizabeth Good made a motion, Ramona Tecumseh seconded, and the November 10, 2004, minutes were unanimously approved and posted on the Web page. The December 2004 Board meeting was canceled.

Public Comments

Gerry Fathauer introduced the newest staff member to the Mesa Arts Center, Walter Morlock, who began on December 27 as a Marketing/Communications Specialist. Mr. Morlock came from CA where he assisted in the opening of the Cerritos Center for the Arts. Melissa Tornquist, Community Arts Coordinator for the Arizona Museum for Youth, was also introduced. Ms. Tornquist is reporting for Barbara Meyerson in her absence.

Kimberly Grace addressed an e-mail sent to her from Maureen Chaisson-Stewart, who was absent. Ms. Chaisson-Stewart is looking for a volunteer to act as a liaison and attend the upcoming Arts Congress on Monday, February 7, at the state capital. Lennee Eller stated she would attend and contact Legislator Russell Pearce to share lunch with her.

Discuss and Take Action – Approval of Affiliate Applications – Andreya Hernandez-Garcia

Andreya Hernandez-Garcia stated that the Affiliate Program is new to the Mesa Arts Center and offers unique rental benefits. Those applying must be Mesa-based, non-profit producing and presenting organizations that meet the five eligibility requirements and maintain a fiscally responsible budget. Those approved for affiliate status will receive the best licensing rates available when booking certain venues of the Mesa Arts Center. A three-year step-up rental fee plan has been designed to help the organizations afford the new Mesa Arts Center rental fees without compromising the integrity of their productions or jeopardizing their budgets. The five eligibility requirements (created by Mesa Arts Center staff) are as follows: 1) recognized as tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service; 2) have an office in, and a three-year history of, public performances in Mesa; 3) have been meeting with the Mesa Arts Center staff over the past year to plan an event(s) and have dates held on the Center's calendar; 4) plan on producing multiple events on an annual basis (single night or multiple run) or a multi-venue/multi-day festival on an annual basis in the Theaters with a minimum of a three-year commitment to the Mesa Arts Center; and 5) evidence of community support as demonstrated by: a) Mesa residents comprise at least 50% of the board; b) Mesa residents comprise at least 35% of the audience; and/or c) Mesa residents represent at least 50% of the donors. In addition, the affiliate organization must attend 75% of the various workshops and coaching sessions, which are designed to help the organization transition into the new Mesa Arts Center. Affiliate status must be renewed every three years, showing that the organization continues to meet the above criteria.

Those who have applied and met the criteria for affiliate status are: Ballet Etudes, East Valley Children's Theatre, Mesa Encore Theatre, Mesa Symphony Orchestra, Southwest Shakespeare Company, and Xicanindio Artes, Inc.

Elizabeth Good posed the question of whether staff envisions arts organizations outside of Mesa being eligible for affiliate status. Ms. Hernandez-Garcia replied "No."

Daniel Harper made a motion, Toni Brucato seconded, and the Board unanimously approved the six applicants to receive affiliate status under the new Affiliate Program for the Mesa Arts Center.

Information and Discussion – Convening a Joint Study Session with City Council – Kimberly Grace

At the November 2004 Board meeting, Heidi Gast, Assistant to the Mayor, presented ways in which to communicate with the Mayor and City Councilmembers. Convening a joint study session was mentioned and of interest to the Board. Kimberly Grace, Chair, felt more discussion and clarification was needed. Toni Brucato stated that she would like to have the session so that rather than having conflicting views, the Board would have an understanding of the Mayor and

Council's vision for the future of arts and culture in Mesa and know how to best support their vision. It was pointed out that the Mayor and Council have been supportive of the arts as evidenced by the opening of the new Mesa Arts Center this spring, and, at this time, it is important to thank the Mayor and Council for that support. Discussion ensued as to the Board's role in regard to the Mesa Arts Center. The consensus is that the Board would continue in their role of advocating for arts and culture in Mesa and the East Valley. Again, it was suggested that the Board take an active role in approaching Councilmembers on a one-to-one basis. It was stated that convening a joint study session is rare and the key element would be to have fundamental, specific, and substantive information for them to review. The Board decided that requesting a joint study session is not warranted at this time.

After the recent Public Art tour, the Board learned to be better prepared when interacting with the Mayor and Councilmembers in educating them on the economic value of public art, and art in general, within the community. Staff stated that they would provide specific talking points on issues when addressing the Mayor and/or Council when requested.

Information and Discussion – Morrison Report – Gerry Fathauer

The Board was forwarded the link to the Morrison Report via e-mail in December. After reviewing the report, Toni Brucato had a few questions. Gerry Fathauer pointed out that out of the nine categorized quality-of-life areas that were studied throughout the Morrison Report, that in most cases, arts and culture was listed as least important. Ms. Brucato stated her concern that after reading where the citizens polled placed arts and culture (least important), should the Board's efforts be geared more toward citizen groups? It seems clear that education on the economic and sociological impact of arts within the community is necessary. John Hohmann stated that when discussing the Morrison Report, it is important to remind people that this report only focuses on one aspect of the communities reporting while other economic reports do show a strong, positive impact that arts and culture have on a community, for example Cultural Heritage and Tourism reports. Mr. Hohmann continued to say that with the Mesa Museums, Mesa Grande, and now the new Mesa Arts Center opening, it is important to convey the message of how the impact of these arts and cultural facilities create an economic stimulus and is putting us on the edge of becoming a destination of choice in the Valley. This in turn brings in tourism, which creates revenue for Mesa.

Nancy Wolter reported that the Americans for the Arts, a national service organization, received an endowment and have decided to use the funds to address the issue of creating awareness among citizens on the importance of arts and how arts and culture impact the community. To read more on Americans for the Arts and what they are doing, visit their Website: www.artsusa.org

Committee Reports – Board Members

Peter Cook reported for the Diversity Committee. The committee feels most people do not have a clear picture of what is meant by arts and culture and tend to link it with entertainment. The committee feels that there is a strong economic argument that can be made to improve the impression of people's view of the term "arts and culture." There is a notion that most people have some discretionary money and discretionary time. The Cactus League, etc., already exists and provides opportunities for the public to expend their discretionary money and time, as well as on commercial shows and entertainment. Now the City of Mesa is offering a major opportunity to substantially enhance this scene. It is an opportunity to make Mesa a center for arts, culture, and entertainment in the Valley. This will bring tourism to Mesa, which in turn will entice actors, artists, businessmen, etc., to make Mesa their home. The Diversity Committee would like to pursue this line of thinking and work to broaden the public's view of arts and culture as more than just a way to spend extra cash. Arts and culture is an economic catalyst to help businesses that in turn provide jobs and revenue for the community.

Toni Brucato reported that the Diversity Committee wants to look at groups of people who have not been targeted in the past; one being the handicapped. Are there arts programs geared toward this group? Could their work be highlighted like that of the Arab Americans at the Mesa Southwest Museum?

Ramona Tecumseh reported that the committee wants to develop core beliefs. The committee sees the Board as becoming a catalyst for community growth through project activities. Some of the core beliefs would be to encourage diversity among board members (referring again to Toni Brucato's comments above) and putting ideas into goals. The committee also plans to create a strategic plan to identify community stakeholders and discussed the importance of supporting the Town Center's Parking Plan, which is crucial to the success of the new Mesa Arts Center.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Melissa Tornquist Reported for Barbara Meyerson

- Holiday attendance was exceptional.
- Free Sundays have leveled out and become manageable for staff.

- The current exhibition in the art gallery, "Show of Color," continues for two more weeks.
- Next exhibition is "Jeepers Creepers: Bugs in Art" beginning February 18 and running through May 27. There is already a lot of school interest in this exhibit. The opening reception is Thursday, February 17.
- Barbara Meyerson and Rebecca Akins met with artist Robert McCall, who is well known for his space art. The Museum is talking with him about exhibiting his work this summer.

Mesa Southwest Museum – Tom Wilson

- "Hatching the Past: Dinosaur Eggs, Nests and Young" will close on February 13.
- "Tusks! Ice Age Mammoths and Mastodons" will begin March 5 and run through July 17.
- "The Pottery Detectives: Decoding the Secrets of Southwest Pottery" from the Arizona State Museum, will run through May 1.
- "Navajo Saddle Blankets: Textiles to Ride in the American West" will open May 20 and run through September 15.
- The current exhibition "Arab Americans in Arizona: Stories, Traditions, Experiences," runs through April 17.
- "Whales: The Inside Story" will open in May.
- This year's blockbuster, "When Crocodiles Ruled," will open in October.
- 900 patrons attended January's free Sunday, which is three times the attendance of a normal Sunday.
- Plans to place an exhibit, in collaboration with Southwest Ambulance, Salt River Project, and Banner Medical Center, on the eighth floor of the hospital is being re-evaluated as the hospital intends to close.
- Excavations at the Riverview Dobson project have been on hold due to the holidays and rain. Because of findings, the project has entered the political arena; however, the City Manager has instructed the Museum to go ahead and finish their work on the project, which will be wrapping up soon.
- An outside firm is completing the study on the Federal Building sometime in January.

Elizabeth Good asked that if the exhibit at the Banner Medical Center does go forward, could it be used as a mobile exhibit? Dr. Wilson replied that it is one of the criteria being used in re-evaluating the project.

MAC/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz & new Mesa Arts Center – Randy Vogel

- Rob Schultz thanked Kimberly Grace, Chair, for speaking at the closing of the current Mesa Arts Center on December 19. Over 250 attended the closing celebration. Several former students spoke and shared their heartfelt experiences, which conveyed the true essence of what the Mesa Arts Center is about and the spirit we want to carry to the new Center.
- Staff is packing and planning for the upcoming move.
- Instructors are working on new demo pieces, developing new class sessions, and working on the class catalogue. Spring session will begin in late April.
- The permanent collection at Mesa Contemporary Arts is being packed and prepared for the move.
- The troupes from Stageworks continue to rehearse in the current Mesa Arts Center building. Stageworks is also preparing to present, as an outreach project this spring, "The Sun and the Moon." Their first play will be presented in the new Theaters in the fall.
- The move into the renovated Scene Shop is nearly completed. Two staff members will move into the building before the end of January.
- Over 100 pedestals for the new galleries have been constructed.

Public Art Program – Carrie Brown

- Carrie Brown thanked the Board for their feedback on the Public Art tour and will incorporate their ideas and suggestions for future tours.
- The transit shelter at Broadway and Macdonald (on the southeast corner) will be completed in February. Dedication will be planned once completed.
- The pergola and benches by artist Joe Tyler at Mesa Community College (MCC) are installed. An affiliate group associated with MCC and the rose garden has donated funds to install sandstone slabs in the benches. Ms. Brown is meeting with representatives of MCC next week to plan a dedication, tentatively scheduled for April 5.
- Two new transit shelter projects are beginning. 1) Banner Baywood Medical Center – the RFQ (Request for Qualifications) is ready for submission, but waiting for the okay from Transportation. This site is in conjunction with our Moving Art Master Plan for artist designed transit shelters. 2) Superstition Springs Mall – on hold at this time as the Transportation Division may turn this site into a transit center.
- Dedication for the Public Art projects at the Mesa Arts Center is tentatively scheduled for April 22 or 23. The three Public Art artists will be at the dedication, and Ms. Brown is looking for a possible time when the artists can hold lectures on their artwork.

Directors' Reports – Gerry Fathauer and Jerry Dillehay

Gerry Fathauer: Gerry Fathauer reported for Randy Vogel, Mesa Arts Center-Theaters, who was at a booking meeting in New York.

- Programming for the FY05-06 season is nearly completed.
- Staff is working on budgets, which are due the end of January.

Mesa Arts Center has two nonprofit partners: Mesa Arts Alliance and Friends of Mesa Arts Center. The Alliance is our partner for capital funds, and the Friends of Mesa Arts Center is our partner for operating funds. Mesa Arts Center is looking at identifying a new process to work with the nonprofits on budgets earlier. It will benefit all concerned to know that where we have gaps, they will be able to step up and fill those gaps in planning our budget and their budget. For Board awareness, Ms. Fathauer distributed a list of nonprofit support groups within the Arts and Cultural Division and a description of their roles. Each nonprofit group advocates and raises funds for the Division.

Arizonans for Cultural Development is looking for a liaison, from District 18, who would be available for a conference call every Friday morning at 10:00 a.m. Discussions include talking points, messages to convey to legislators, etc.

Mesa Arts Center is no longer presenting the "Showcase" event for Mesa arts organizations. Just a reminder that the Board will be making recommendations to City Council regarding Mesa Arts Center Community Aid Grants, and attending as many Mesa arts organization events as possible is the responsibility of each Board member. Board members are encouraged to seek information via the arts organizations' Websites for programming information. **Note:** Southwest Shakespeare Company is presenting "King Lear" January 13 through January 29 at Westwood Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.

Andrea Hernandez-Garcia announced that the review date for the Community Aid Grant applicants is Wednesday, February 23 from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the Arts and Cultural Division Office. The applications will be reviewed by the following panel: Rex Gulbranson, Arts Administrator at the Glendale Arts Commission; Claire West, Performing Arts Director at the Arizona Commission on the Arts; Kariann Median, Public Relations Manager for Arizona State University Public Events; Jamie Brennan, Marketing and Communications Program Director at the City of Mesa; and Bettye Williams, Community representative. The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board Grants Committee will serve as grant monitors. Grant applications are due February 4. Mini-Grant applications are due February 4 as well.

Ms. Fathauer reminded the Board that the "Financing the Future Citizens Committee" is meeting Wednesday, January 12 at 5:30 p.m. and will be aired on Mesa's Channel 11. The Committee has heard from all City Departments and will now begin to discuss what the options are to stabilize Mesa's budget in the future. The Committee meets regularly on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month.

Nancy Wolter announced that the opportunity to become members of the new Mesa Arts Center would be coming soon. Memberships will range from \$50 - \$1,500.

Jerry Dillehay: Congratulations to the Board for pushing and advocating for a free Sunday at the Museums. Last weekend there were over 1,300 patrons at the two Museums. Families continually express their delight in being able to attend the Museums with their children when otherwise it would not be affordable for them. Word-of-mouth is the only advertising being used, and attendance has been good!

Mr. Dillehay, Gerry Fathauer, and Jesus Hernandez met with Ellen Pence and members of Mesa's Channel 11 to explore the idea of an "arts magazine" that would be played on channel 11 on a periodic basis. The magazine would focus on artists and their work and staff working in the Arts and Cultural Division. The City has recently requested that channel 11 expand their programming, so the idea was presented at an opportune time. It appears the project has great possibilities, and details are being discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerry Fathauer, Director
Arts and Cultural Division