

## 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 June 11, 2008.

### Members Present:

Amanda Buscas  
Peter G. Cook  
S. Vicente Fernandez  
Daniel (DJ) Harper  
John Hohmann  
Lars Nielson, Jr.  
Ramona Tecumseh

### Members Absent:

Hector P. Benitez  
Douglas Brimhall  
Dr. Kent Layton  
Andrea Soto

### Staff Present:

Johann Zietsman  
Sunnee Spencer  
Jean Kaminski  
Rob Schultz  
Tom Wilson

Peter Cook, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m.

### Approval of Minutes

Peter Cook, Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of May 14. There being none, Daniel (DJ) Harper made a motion, Ramona Tecumseh seconded, and all Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of May 14, and they will be posted to the City's Web page.

### Items from Citizens Present:

Peter Cook, Chair, distributed an opinion piece he wrote that was published in the *East Valley Tribune* on May 24. Mr. Cook was responding, point-by-point, to an article written by a member of Valley Business Owners (VBO) a week or two before who expressed a negative opinion on Mesa's leadership and budget. Mr. Cook wrote his article in the same framework as the previous writer using his metaphor of a "reservoir," but from a positive viewpoint. We can either have our "reservoir" muddy, shallow, and useless, wrote Mr. Cook, or we can have it at a comfortable range. Mr. Cook feels no one can say the City is spending or not spending too much money, it has to be done in the context of things we are giving up or the things we are funding, and each individual needs to find his comfort zone and define what that means to the individual.

Johann Zietsman commented that he thought the article hit some important points and the more people that write positive articles to counter the negative ones, the better. What this begs to challenge/define, in his opinion, is the way the bottom line in this "reservoir" has been defined traditionally, which has been to capture it with the term "essential services." We will always have essential services at the bottom line of the "reservoir." A new approach would be to define "essential services" in a broader sense. "Essential services" has come to mean certain departments and excluding others. Many communities see "essential services" to be more than just fire, police, safety, etc. The definition of "essential services" needs to be revisited and include language that incorporates the minimum needs and qualities of life wanted in a community, not just a selected few.

Mr. Zietsman shared that he traveled to Charlotte, NC, as an invited panelist for an Economic Development Council conference. As one of three panelists, his session was on arts and cultural partnerships. He wasn't sure how many would be interested in the topic, as this was an Economic Development conference. He anticipated possibly 20 or so attendees at their breakout session on arts and culture, but was surprised when 120 showed up (standing room only). He asked how many of them were involved with arts and culture – two raised their hands. He stated it was reaffirming to see that economic development leaders are realizing the value of arts and culture and see it as an "essential service" to the vibrancy of a community.

### Staff Reports

#### Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee Spencer

- "Sonoran Safari" opened May 3 with over 100 attending the reception. Phoenix Zoo was there for the opening and brought several animals (Harris Hawk, tarantella, scorpion, and chuckwalla). The Zoo and the Desert Botanical Gardens provided materials that helped with the interpretation for the exhibition.
- Looking at this fiscal year, the Museum is 34% ahead of revenue from last year; anticipate finishing the year at \$315,000, well above the projected \$250,000 benchmark. This is attributed to the success of the "Henson" exhibit and changing the strategy of having two galleries rather than one large one (with two, the Museum doesn't have to close down to change out exhibits).
- Council approved the Cultural Impact Fees for the Museum at the last meeting. In the coming year, the Museum will begin working on a plan to refurbish the Museum. Ms. Spencer distributed a proposal for a new entry/admission area including relocating the store. The Museum will be able to do a lot with \$285,000 from Cultural Impact Fees and the Arizona Museum for Youth Friends will also contribute funds to complete the project. A focus group of 20 women for

the ArtVile phase of the project met last week. Ten of those women will continue as an advisory board to help with future planning.

- In final stages of formalizing a partnership with Arizona State University's Art Education Department for internships with the education area of the Museum. Also working with Americorp to have an Americorp position at the Museum.
- Held the Strategic Planning Retreat on May 9 and 10 and now have a plan in place. As part of the Strategic Plan, the Friends board has moved their fiscal year to match the City's.
- Arizona Museum for Youth Friends have voted to hire Schmidt Westergard and Company to perform a financial review to be completed by June 30.
- Interviewed four candidates for the Arizona Museum for Youth's Museum Exhibition Coordinator position – Andy Behrle was promoted to the position from Museum Exhibits Preparator.
- Beginning process to search for the Community Arts Coordinator position to replace Michelle Balani.
- An ad will be placed in the papers this weekend announcing the opening of the new Children's Museum in Phoenix. The Director is a former colleague of Ms. Spencer's and will be collaborating with the Arizona Museum for Youth. They have purchased some of the Museum's puzzles and things. They will have signage stating that they were created by Arizona Museum for Youth.

Daniel (DJ) Harper commented that he responded to a blog that was saying how wonderful the new museum will be for children and how excited people are to have one in the area. In his blog, he made it known that they are following the Arizona Museum for Youth's lead and encouraged people to come and visit Mesa's Museum as well to see what Mesa has to offer. Ms. Spencer thanked him for doing that and said that with Arizona Museum for Youth's 30 years in the Valley, they are solid and strong and feels both will do well.

#### Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- Two years ago the City's Budget Office projected the Museum to have revenue of \$325,000 this fiscal year – to-date, the figure is over \$437,000 and it is hoped that they will break \$500,000 by the end of June. Attendance – will be close to 130,000 visitors this year compared to 107,000 visitors last fiscal year; the Museum is doing well! They attribute the increases to advertising. The Museum has good press coverage; Monday Kathy Eastman was broadcasting for seven major broadcasts from Channel 5 on their new exhibition; on Saturday, the *East Valley Tribune* published a major article on "Feathered Dinosaurs," bringing in a lot of people.
- Dr. Jerry Howard and Dr. Tom Wilson completed a grant to the Heritage Fund for the next stages of the Mesa Grande development. The Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community gave a grant of \$150,000 last year. The Museum is asking \$100,000 from the Heritage Fund. The project will provide for interpretive trails and signage throughout the site and lay the groundwork for a telecommunication system on site.
- Dr. Bob McCord continues to work at the southeastern Arizona site. Findings are estimated to be 97 million years old. He is finding dinosaurs, turtles, and other things of that era. This age in the cretaceous is not known that well anywhere.
- "PSI: Poop Scene Investigation" opened last Friday – a scientific show with a twist of fun for the kids; basically looking at the scat that animals leave (both prehistoric and contemporary) and what you can learn from studying that – their diet, habits, etc.
- This Friday is "Friday Night Out." The Museum will be opened and everyone is invited to stop in.
- On May 12, Chris Brady, invited the East Valley City Managers to meet at the Arizona Museum of Natural History.
- Mesa Historical Museum was notified they were going to receive a national *Award of Excellence* from the American Association of State and Local History (national association of history museums). Congratulations!

Peter Cook asked whose idea it was to have the PSI exhibition? Dr. Wilson responded that the nucleus was an exhibition that staff saw at the International Wildlife exhibition in Tucson. A large collection of "poop" was borrowed from Northern Arizona University and displayed in Petri dishes. Staff felt they could take the specimens and make it fun and interesting.

#### Mesa Arts Center (MAC)/Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) – Rob Schultz

- Stageworks' final play, "Ferdinand the Bull," finished and generated revenue of \$27,500 – most ever for a Stageworks production. MAC brought in 3,600 through school day shows; putting more emphasis on school day shows in the future. Schools as far away as Tolleson, Casa Grande, Superior, and points well beyond the Valley came to see the Stageworks shows. As part of next year's planning, Stageworks will take a production or two to the Herberger Theater in downtown Phoenix to take advantage of that central location to encourage more school shows at that site. Jenny Akridge is working on a collaborative agreement with the Herberger and hopes to generate revenue from the endeavor.
- Stageworks will hold their annual volunteer appreciation on Saturday, June 21; expect 40 – 50 kids attending.
- Continue to assist the development of the Main Street bus rapid transit shelter; committee will review to see if there are any changes now that the project is 100% designed. December is targeted as the completion date.

- The first annual MAC Report is near completion. Mr. Schultz has been working with an expert volunteer in the field. They are reviewing the draft layout this coming week and then it will go to the printer, but will wait for the final fiscal year budget numbers – should be ready to go in August.
- Sarah Moran begins as the Marketing/Communications Specialist II on Monday, June 16. This will complete the marketing staff for MAC – first time in over two years marketing will have a complete staff on board.
- Summer class registration is going well – compared to last summer, up 20% in registration and some 30% in revenue.
- Mesa Community College (MCC) offered three summer classes, only one made with enough students due to MCC having a serious problem with their new on-line registration; wouldn't allow students to register for two of the three classes. MAC continues to work with MCC within their system, which they keep trying to improve and overcome their challenges. MCC's performance at MAC has lacked due to problems on their end, not with MAC registration or staff.
- MAC has negotiated an agreement with Gateway Community College to offer their classes here next fall.
- MAC's volunteer program had approximately 300 volunteers last month donating just less than 5,000 hours for a value of just under \$100,000.

Peter Cook, Chair, commented that he often parks on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. and enjoys the walk down the Shadow Walk to Main Street; however, he has noticed that there is not much activity on the Shadow Walk at that end. He was wondering if there are any plans to do more on the Shadow Walk, especially on the south end? Mr. Schultz replied that staff has discussed, in concept, that there is an area on that end, much like the Wells Fargo Garden, where there could be bands performing, etc., but because it is right by 1<sup>st</sup> Ave., road noise prohibits any kind of live music in that area on a regular basis. There is discussion to move the glass panels from the west side to the east side of the south end, which would avoid the traffic noise, but that is a big expense. Staff continues to discuss how that space could be used. For the Holiday Art and Music Festival last year, that area did have a stage with a live band, which was successful. The grassy area also had Pet Smart there, which helped to bring people to that end. The space has also been used for kid's activities during festivals and classes. The area is not heavily programmed. Staff is looking at ways to use it long-term in the future.

### **Director's Report – Johann Zietsman**

Mesa Arts Center Foundation's Artistic Support Committee invited the new Mayor and Councilmembers to a briefing of the Arts and Cultural Department, which Johann Zietsman, Director, presented; five of the new seven Councilmembers attended, the other two were out of town.

Mr. Zietsman suggested that the Board invite the Mayor new Councilmembers to a Board meeting to get acquainted, and, as the Council advises the Mayor, it would be wise to hear what their perspective and expectations are from the Board.

Mr. Zietsman presented the overall performance of the Arts and Cultural Department to-date.

At the beginning of FY06-07, Mesa Arts Center (MAC) had a roll over of \$1.3 million from construction. The plan was to allocate approximately \$600,000 to this fiscal year's budget and \$700,000 for the following year's budget to allow MAC an operational chance to get on its feet. Once the roll over amount is used up, MAC would not have that additional money to spend in the budget any longer. To make the money stretch farther than a two-year span, management challenged themselves by setting a goal of using under the \$600,000 amount in this fiscal year hoping to stretch the \$1.3 million over an additional one – two more years, with the anticipation that the economic climate will have improved by then.

For Mesa Arts Center (MAC), which includes money received from the Alliance, its numbers are as follows: MAC's revenue budget was set at \$11,455,265; if numbers hold true to the end of the year, the projected actual will be \$11,250,030. On the expense side: the budget is set at \$12,059,701; if numbers hold true to the end of the year, the projected actual will be \$11,104,344. Projected revenue against projected expenses gives MAC a savings against budget of approximately \$150,000, which would roll over to next year's budget, certainly increasing our chances of stretching the \$1.3 million an additional year, if not longer.

The Arts and Cultural Department will end this fiscal year with a surplus compared to budget of approximately \$600,000; a performance far beyond expectations.

Mr. Zietsman also shared some of the Departments performance factors, which are used to measure efficiency and value for money. The five indexes are: expenditure per service (total expenditures divided by participants), the earned revenue per service (total earned revenue divided by participants), subsidy per service (expenditure minus revenue), gross revenue per service (earned income plus contributions divided by participants), and net cost per service (expenditure minus gross revenue). Again, the department has done well and it continues to track the trends and analyze if we are moving in the right direction and assists in improving our efficiencies.

Comparing revenue and participation for the Department, there is an increase of \$682,580 in FY07-08 over FY06-07, and an increase in participation of 35,871 from FY07-08 over FY06-07.

The purpose of the briefing was to show the new Council that our role is broader than selling tickets or presenting exhibits, it has more to do with integrating ourselves into the life, image, identity, and economy of the community.

The vision of the Arts and Cultural Department is: engage. entertain. educate. everybody! Mr. Zietsman would like to see it more as – everybody engages everybody. everybody entertains everybody. everybody educates everybody! He commented that it is a two-way street.

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

Daniel (DJ) Harper saw Mesa Encore Theatre's "Breaking Legs" and found it very funny/hysterical and would highly recommend.

Mr. Harper also reminded the Board that there is a Light Rail public meeting on Thursday, June 12, 6:30 p.m. at EVIT. As it is proposed that Light Rail be near the Arts and Cultural facilities, Board members are encouraged to attend and be a part of the discussion.

Mr. Harper complimented MAC on having a focus group of "gen Xers" or DINKS (dual income no kids) take a look at new strategies for engaging young people in arts. Mr. Harper participated in the focus group. Amanda Buscas asked if MAC had tapped into the Emerging Leaders Network on the issue? Mr. Zietsman replied that the focus group was meant to get the ball rolling. Management meetings will follow and the focus group is invited to participate in those meetings as well. MAC is committed to engaging this demographic and this is a beginning.

Mr. Zietsman just returned from a conference in Charlotte, NC, and in addition to that conference, he was invited to speak at a conference on creative cities in Pittsburgh earlier in the month. It was reaffirming to know that they perceived Mesa as a place they wanted to hear about in terms of being a creative city.

Peter Cook attended the Paul Potts concert and found it interesting and fun. On Dr. Kent Layton's recommendation at last month's meeting, Mr. Cook and wife went to see the flying kids in Ballet Etudes, "Peter Pan." They found the performance impressive and excellent. He further stated that it was a delight to see the house filled with children dressed in costume and see parents exposing their children to the arts. Mr. Zietsman commented that we could not survive without our Affiliates "they are part of our life-blood."

Ramona Tecumseh reported that on June 23 through July 2, she would be attending the American Library Association meeting in Anaheim, CA. In August she will be going to Oklahoma City to attend the Native American Library Association's presentation on how to preserve photographs and ancient materials and put how to put them in your collection. She will be learning new skills on historic preservation.

Ms. Tecumseh also attended the opening reception at the Arizona Museum for Youth and was impressed with the exhibit.

Johann Zietsman thanked Dr. John Hohmann and presented a gift certificate to the Arizona Museum of Natural History's store for his six years of dedicated service on the Board and contributing a wealth of knowledge; he will be missed. Dr. Hohmann said he too would miss coming each month, and if there was any way he could help in the future, to let him know.

### **Identify Items for Future Agendas**

- Discuss strategies to engage Council (what are their expectations, what is the role they want the Board to play in building a better Mesa).
- How to resurrect the letter sent to Council last January for new Councilmembers.
- Election of new chair and vice-chair to the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Johann Zietsman, Director  
Arts and Cultural Department