

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 November 8, 2006.

Members Present:

John Hohmann
Hector Benitez
Douglas Brimhall
Crista Cloutier

Peter Cook
Daniel J. Harper
Andrea Soto
Ramona Tecumseh

Members Absent:

Lennee Eller
Amanda Buscas
Laurent Teichman

Staff Present:

Gerry Fathauer Rob Schultz
Tom Wilson Sunnee Spencer
Nancy Wolter Carrie Brown
Jean Kaminski

Guests Present:

MB Finnerty
Mike James, Deputy Transportation Director
Brad Konick

John Hohmann, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

John Hohmann, Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of October 11. There being none, Peter Cook made a motion, Crista Cloutier seconded, and the October 11 minutes were unanimously approved by all Board members present. The minutes were posted to the Web page.

Public Comments

- a. Metro Public Art Program: Local Artist Brad Konick To Present an Update on the Sycamore and Main Station Art Design – MB Finnerty
MB Finnerty reported that the original artwork proposal for the Sycamore and Main Street light rail station had to be re-designed due to budget constraints. The new design is in line with the budget and remains unique. Local artist Brad Konick shared some slides of his design, which included a central, large-scale bronze and stainless steel sculpture and bronze pavers. Small open sections of the sculpture will form a spiral giving it the look of a woven basket. This will allow for light to shine through during the day; at night, the sculpture will be lit from within. On one side, the sculpture will have a concave component inspired by Native American in-dwellings from Arizona's history. This part of the sculpture will have a smooth, semi-polished, hi-tech look. The bronze surface of the sculpture will be powder coated, which will not oxidize or corrode. The surrounding pavers will have a bronze inlay that will emulate dropped breadcrumbs drawing patrons to the sculpture.
- b. General
There were no other public comments.

Discuss and Take Action – Consider Approval to Change Mesa Southwest Museum Hours Open to the Public – Dr. Tom Wilson

Mesa Southwest Museum's budget and staff were reduced to 50% July 1, 2006; consequently, there was not enough staff to dedicate to front desk duties to keep the Museum open to the public until 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, which made it necessary to close at 3:00 p.m. Mesa Southwest Museum Guild, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the mission of the Mesa Southwest Museum, funded a volunteer coordinator position beginning in August. With the new volunteer coordinator recruiting and training new volunteers, staff has been relieved of other duties making it possible to reassign staff back to front desk duties, which would allow for keeping the Museum open Tuesday through Friday until 5:00 p.m.

Because of the Museum's hours changing in July (10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday), revenues and attendance have declined compared to last year during the same time period, even though admission fees were raised. The Museum Store has also suffered a loss of revenue. Implementing the additional hours open to the public will be a win/win for all concerned.

There is no additional cost to the City to expand the hours open to the public Tuesday through Friday. Staffing costs and indirect costs, such as extra utility expenses, are negligible, because the Museum is staffed until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, whether the Museum is open to the public or not. The additional hours will increase revenue and allow more opportunities for people to experience the Museum and downtown Mesa.

Peter Cook made a motion, Andrea Soto seconded, and all Board members present unanimously approved the recommended change in open hours to the public from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., to 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. The Museum is closed to the public on Monday.

Peter Cook stated that as president of the Southwest Museum Foundation, the Foundation supports the Mesa Southwest Museum expanding their hours open to the public to 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Information and Discussion – Research Funding Mechanisms for Museums and Arts Centers – Gerry Fathauer

Gerry Fathauer gave an update on Division strategies due to the budget cuts at the Mesa Arts Center and the Museums. Staff has also been looking at other peer arts organizations to see what mechanisms they are using to assist in their funding.

Each Responsibility Center (R.C.) – The Mesa Arts Center, Arizona Museum for Youth, and the Mesa Southwest Museum, has their own 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. Mesa Arts Center works hand-in-hand with the Mesa Arts Center Foundation, and their privately raised dollars are calculated in the Mesa Arts Center budget to balance. In the past, the Arizona Museum for Youth Friends provided additional support for the Museum more on a project basis (i.e., building of ArtVille); however, the Friends have stepped up and are paying for lost gallery educator positions due to budget cuts in July. The Mesa Southwest Museum has also had their Guild step up and provide the salary for the volunteer coordinator position. The 501(c)(3)'s have lent their support so the same high quality of services and programming can continue at the Mesa Arts Center, Arizona Museum for Youth, and Mesa Southwest Museum.

Staff continues to research and explore options of how we can maximize private dollars and continues to look at different ways of optimizing the mix of funding among monies from the City's general fund or Quality of Life dollars, earned income (admission fees, ticket sales, class registrations, and rental fees), and donated income (individual donations, memberships, corporate memberships, and sponsorships). The Mesa Arts Center is also looking at research of operating models that compare the different models with other performing and visual arts facilities in the Southwest region. The research shows how they are owned, operated, and use mixed funding.

Peter Cook asked if the Board could be involved in some way as the process evolves and that they be kept informed in order to make an informed recommendation to Council. Gerry Fathauer replied that she would keep the Board informed.

Discuss and Provide Direction – Present Materials to be Included in Information Packet – Daniel Harper

An information sheet and the list of paired Board Members prepared by the Education Committee was distributed. The information is to assist with visits to the Mayor and Councilmembers. The Board was instructed to set the appointment to meet with their designated Councilmember or Mayor, be sure to wear their name badge when conducting the visit, listen carefully to what they have to say, and be sure they are familiar with the information provided. Once the meetings have been conducted, they are to forward information to the Education Committee chair (Daniel Harper). The Education Committee will compile the information and present a report to the whole Board. The Board will then use what they have learned to strategize on how they can fulfill their responsibilities and serve the Mayor and Council better on arts and cultural issues.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee Spencer

- The "Cats" exhibit was de-installed on October 20.
- The Museum's October revenue numbers were \$10,385.50 with attendance at 3,345. Both figures are down from the same time period last year. The Museum was closed for eleven days in October due to changing exhibits.
- The "Wheels" exhibit opens Friday, November 10, with a reception from 10:00 a.m. – noon.
- Some staff vacancies have been filled – Michelle Martinez is the new Community Arts Coordinator. She is also bilingual and will help reach new audiences. Jeffery Morris is the new Curator and began work on November 2. Marsha Lehman, who is coming from the Reading Public Museum in Pennsylvania, will begin on December 4 as the new Education Supervisor.
- Veronica Ochoa is the new Gallery Shop manager and began working on October 2.
- Sunday, November 5, House of Tricks held a fundraising event that benefited the Arizona Museum for Youth. Final figures are not available yet.

Mesa Southwest Museum – Tom Wilson

- Copies of the Museum's new *Southwest Quest* magazine were distributed. The magazine will come out three times a year – next issue is scheduled for mid-January.

- The Steering Committee of the new collaboration formed by the three Mesa Museums (Mesa Southwest Museum, Arizona Museum for Youth, and Mesa Historical Museum) is meeting every other month. Between meetings the three administrators of the Museums meet to discuss ways that they can work together to raise the profile of the Museums in the community. Right now, they are working on collaborating for the annual home tour that the Mesa Historical Museum presents in January. Arizona Museum for Youth and the Sistine House will have events that day as well. The team is looking at ways to collaborate on marketing for that event. The idea of putting a kiosk in the lobby of each Museum that contains information on the others was also discussed, as well as cross-training of docents, volunteers, and front desk staff to make sure they are aware of what is going on in the other Museums and relay that information. There is talk of doing a collaborative Museum brochure that would include Mesa Contemporary Arts as well.
- The "Croc" show is now open through April 22, 2007. "Grand Canyon Grandeur" opens with a reception on November 17, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m., with food, refreshments, and a short program. Staff continues to work on "Paradise Lost," which opens in January.
- The exhibit at Banner Mesa Medical Center, in collaboration with Southwest Ambulance and Salt River Project, will open in January.
- Friday, November 9, staff will be trained on the Omni ticket project, which is a Valley-wide collaboration among the Museums. This will allow patrons to purchase admission tickets from around the world prior to visiting Arizona. Patrons can also purchase package deals that would include a single pass that would allow admission to Museums throughout the Valley. Maricopa Partnership for Arts and Culture (MPAC) has funded Alliance for Audience, who organized the Website ShowUp.com and has also spearheaded the Omni ticket project.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- The annual empty-bowls event, in partnership with Mesa Community College (MCC), took place October 25 with an additional date this year at MCC's Red Mountain campus. The event was a success, raising approximately \$17,000 for charity. Mesa Arts Center students and volunteers contributed approximately 500 bowls.
- Mesa Contemporary Arts staff organized the first Acquisitions Committee meeting. Lennee Eller, Board member, represented the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board at the meeting. All four donated artworks were accepted into the permanent collection.
- Mesa Arts Center Foundation's annual fundraiser, Art on the Move, will take place on Saturday, November 11, at the Broadway Palm Dinner Theater in east Mesa.
- Jeff Rollins, Theater Technician for Stageworks, has resigned and accepted a position with the Higley Unified School District.
- Polly Smith, full time jewelry and metal smith instructor, was on FMLA leave and has requested additional time. She will return on December 12.
- The Holiday Art and Music Festival will take place on Saturday, November 18, on the Shadow Walk from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (formerly MACStravaganza). There will be approximately 32 artist tables, free live entertainment, and food available for purchase.
- Mesa Contemporary Arts had their opening reception for the two new exhibits: "Molten," and "Out There: Unconventional Landscapes by Melissa Martinez and Mary Shindell," on Friday, November 3. Approximately 400 people attended the event.
- The second "Sound in the Ground" event, titled "Molten," will take place on Thursday, November 9, from 9:00 p.m. to midnight. There will be fire sculptures, fire dancers, and glass blowing on the Shadow Walk. In the courtyard, Wicked Children and Les Hell on Heels will perform, and there will be finger foods. Tickets to the galleries and courtyard events are \$6 in advance or \$8 at the door. Alcohol will be available for purchase in the courtyard. A "MySpace" has been created on the Web to attract the 18 – 35 year old demographic.

Daniel Harper asked why Thursday night? According to research and younger staff members, Thursday night appears to be a good night for the younger crowd – Friday and Saturday typically being "date night."

- Registration for spring classes has begun.

Crista Cloutier asked if Mesa Contemporary Arts plans to de-accession any of their permanent collection? Mr. Schultz replied, not to his knowledge.

Public Art Program – Carrie Brown

- An updated project status report was distributed.
- Installation of the artist-designed passenger shelter by Simon Donovan and Ben Olmstead at Banner Baywood Medical Center will begin the second week of December.
- The third temporary project by artist Mary Consie will be installed the first week of December.

Director's Report – Gerry Fathauer

A Division quarterly report was distributed. The report has a new format for the City and shows revenues and performance analysis targets. The report is shared with Council as well.

Performing Live – Vince Gill, November 8, is sold out. Wynton Marsalis, November 2, also had strong ticket sales as tickets for Tower of Power, November 3, are going well. Performing Live had their third dinner in conjunction with the Wynton Marsalis performance. The buffet is planned with the linked performance in mind; for example, the Wynton Marsalis dinner was Cajun cuisine. The dinners, prepared by the Mesa Arts Center concessionaire, Sodexo, have been popular, and staff continues to improve on them with each experience.

Ms. Fathauer distributed a copy of the City's new re-organizational chart. The Community Services Department, which consisted of the Arts and Cultural Division, Parks and Recreation Division, Commercial Facilities Division, and Library Division has been dissolved. Divisions will now be called Departments. Parks and Recreation and Commercial Facilities have been combined and will join with other Departments that report to Deputy City Manager, Brian Raines. Library will join other Departments and report to Deputy City Manager, Jack Friedline. The Arts and Cultural Division, consisting of the Mesa Southwest Museum, Arizona Museum for Youth, Mesa Arts Center, and Public Art, will now be called the Arts and Cultural Department and will stand on its own reporting to Debbi Dollar, Assistant City Manager, through Trisha Sorensen, Executive Manager. Trisha Sorensen will handle the day-to-day issues where Debbi Dollar will be instrumental in problem solving and larger issues. Departments will continue to work in collaboration with one another where there are parallels.

Update Events – Board members: Share Personal Arts Experiences

Daniel Harper read in the October minutes that Peter Cook commented on the Stageworks' play, "There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom." He too saw the play and wanted to add that he loved it and was impressed with the high quality that Stageworks continues to present in spite of budget cuts.

Mr. Harper also saw Southwest Shakespeare's, "The Tempest," and thoroughly enjoyed that play as well.

He continued to say that he is excited with the development of downtown Mesa: two new art galleries have sprung up along with a few new restaurants and restaurants that are now open at night (Grandma's Kitchen and S'Bistro).

Peter Cook commented he too is pleased that restaurants like S'Bistro are opening. As an aside, he stated that their opening was delayed by a number of weeks due to complications with City inspections, permits, and misunderstandings of the process. He feels that it would behoove City staff to facilitate potential businesses that want to open in the downtown area.

Ramona Tecumseh reported that on November 14-16, the Arizona Library Association would be holding their annual meeting at the Marriott Hotel.

The 24th Annual Native American Recognition days have been going on for the past six weeks and will continue through November 16. The theme is "Native Voice: Inspiring Our Community." Sponsors include the City of Phoenix, Desert Botanical Garden, Heard Museum, Phoenix Suns, Pueblo Grande Museum, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, and many others. Ms. Tecumseh attended most of the activities and said they were phenomenal. On November 16, the Heard Museum will present the Spirit of the Heard Award to Margaret Dosedo, Zuni Pueblo, for personal excellence and community and cultural preservation. On November 11, from 11:00 a.m. – 4:00, the Pueblo Grande Museum is having a Veteran's Day Gourd Dance and community potluck on Washington Street.

In the past, the City of Mesa had supported the annual Mesa Pow Wow; however, with the budget cuts the City is no longer able to support the event. Casino Arizona, Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe, and Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community stepped up and sponsored this year's Mesa Pow Wow.

Gerry Fathauer shared a newspaper article on the artwork that Lennee Eller, Board member and curator for Sky Harbor Airport's Phoenix Airport Museum Gallery.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Gerry Fathauer, Director
Arts and Cultural Division