

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting via Zoom video conference on Thursday May 27, 2021.

Members Present:

Ivan Martinez
Jocelyn Condon
Ronna Green
Alycia de Mesa-Weeden
Dilworth Brinton, Jr.
Nick Willis
Melvin Van Vorst

Members Absent:

Angela Buer
Michelle Streeter
Tara Phelps
Theresa Schlechty

Staff Present:

Cindy Ornstein
Sarah Goedicke
Randy Vogel
Dyan Seaburg
Alison Stoltman
Illya Riske

Alycia de Mesa-Weeden moved to start the meeting and Dilworth Brinton, Jr. seconded. Alycia de Mesa-Weeden called the meeting to order at 4:09pm.

Public Comments: There were no members of the public present.

Approval of Minutes from the March 25 Meeting:

Alycia de Mesa-Weeden moved to approve the minutes and Dilworth Brinton, Jr. seconded. Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes from March 25, and they will be posted on the city's website.

Non-Discrimination Ordinance Update – Alycia de Mesa-Weeden

Alycia de Mesa-Weeden updated the group on the status of the Non-Discrimination Ordinance (NDO). The Board voted in the last meeting to take action in support of the NDO if necessary. The Mesa Arts Center Foundation Board also agreed to join the Museum & Cultural Advisory Board in this effort.

The Board does not need to take further action because the opposition to the NDO withdrew the petition, and the ordinance is no longer under threat of contestation. Nick Willis added that the opposition to the NDO only had two or three large donors and lacked the funding to continue. Nick thinks this shows that the citizens of Mesa do support the NDO.

New Topics Discussion

Public Art – The Board revisited their previous discussion on public art in Mesa and discussed what to address over the coming months. The Board decided to have the Working Group start working on this over the summer. Alycia de Mesa-Weeden also asked the Working Group to think about public art in a broader context rather than just a permanent art piece such as smaller works, temporary works, performance art, etc.

Arts & Culture Department Update – Cindy Ornstein

The state is expected to pass a budget that includes \$2 million for the arts. There are additional discussions going on at the Capitol about potential supplemental arts funding with the budget surplus. Mesa Arts Center's (MAC's) application to the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) has been put in the third priority round because MAC is a government organization. No word yet on the status of that application. The Small Business Association is currently sending out notifications to the first priority group, but MAC hopes to hear something in about a month. Over \$16 billion was allocated for SVOG and currently only \$11 billion has been requested. MAC is eligible for about \$2.8 Million and it's looking very positive that everyone who is eligible will be awarded what they are entitled to under SVOG guidelines. There is actually a push to get more organizations to apply, as it looks like there will be funding left over.

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) has a section for city and state governments that acts as a local recovery grant fund. The Arts & Culture department submitted ideas to City Management for ways those funds might be used. There is no official decision yet, but we do know that Council has been looking at some major infrastructure projects that would benefit the entire community. Alycia de Mesa-Weeden asked about timeline for this decision and Cindy responded that discussions related to this program could take a few months.

Cindy Ornstein shared that the department held interviews with a round of candidates for both Museum Administrator jobs last week and we have a finalist for i.d.e.a. Museum about whom we are very excited. Second interviews are scheduled for next week. Cindy Ornstein asked if any Board members were interested in participating in the second round on June 1 and Melvin Van Vorst volunteered. Ivan Martinez had been previously confirmed to join the interview panel.

The City of Mesa has updated its mask policy. Masks are now optional at all City public facilities, but the Arts & Culture department still has reduced capacity for people to distance if desired.

Staff Reports

Mesa Arts Center (MAC) Update on Programs and Operations – Cindy Ornstein, Illya Riske, & Randy Vogel

There's a lot going on at MAC right now. Randy Vogel gave updates on Performing Live and theaters. Theaters staff are reviewing all procedures and processes in preparation of reopening the theaters in September. Randy's department is currently in process of hiring theater staff, event coordinators, and food and beverage staff. Sales are going very well. On May 16, MAC had \$105,000 in sales, the highest ticket sales on record for an on-sale day for Performing Live. For reference, MAC had \$75,000 in sales on the on-sale day for the 19-20 season, which had 15 additional shows for sale that day. This shows that people are hungry and ready to buy tickets, and MAC may have a banner season. Several more shows will be announced over the coming weeks.

Illya Riske recapped the plan for the theater renovations and shared a time-lapse video of the Ikeda Theater's seat demolition (See screenshot in Exhibit A). MAC is replacing all seats in the Ikeda and Piper theaters, replacing or repainting floors in the theaters, and replacing carpets in the lobby. This is being done on an accelerated schedule over the summer. Funding for the seat replacement comes from restoration fund fees from ticket sales and funding for the floor replacement comes from the City's Capital Improvement Project Budget. Illya showed photos of the theater building in varying stages of construction (see Exhibit B).

Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum (MCAM) received a \$25,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for the Visionary Art Exhibition at the museum in the fall. This is the second NEA award in a row for MCAM. MCAM has also had good participation and a successful summer opening. MCAM's summer exhibit, which was postponed from summer 2020, features and focuses on Indigenous artists and themes. The centerpiece is *Passages: Something To Hold On To* by Cannupa Hanska Luger. Alycia de Mesa-Weeden asked what the current capacity is at MCAM, and Cindy answered that it just increased to 30 people per session. The plan is to gradually increase capacity at all the museums over the coming months. The department started extremely conservative, and the galleries felt empty. AzMNH is increasing capacity the fastest because it is so large. The department is working to solidify a plan and anticipate being back to normal by the fall.

There is very exciting work going on in Memberships at MAC right now. They just did a membership campaign for new members, a big membership mailing, and big promotional push for membership for early ticket purchases. The results of these efforts have been exciting, with close to 200 new members, for a total membership in the 800 range. MAC is normally around 900, so this puts us very close to where we were before COVID. We anticipate having a membership level at or above normal when MAC fully reopens in the fall.

Studios classes are going well, and most classes are at capacity. Alycia de Mesa-Weeden asked if a 14 year old could do adult classes and staff responded that adult classes are 16 and up due to the equipment being used, and some classes may have different age limits. Studios currently is not offering the full number of classes, but some options for youth will be expanded in the fall. Cindy Ornstein also shared that MAC is exploring creating a "teen zone" in a section of the Studios every weekday from 3-6pm. Randy Vogel shared that Laura Wilde, Studios Manager, would like to create more performing arts classes and is looking to hiring instructors for those classes.

Jocelyn Condon asked when the Box Office would open to in-person purchasing and if the color scheme for the theaters is the same as before. Cindy said that the original design team was involved in the renovation process for the theaters and recommended the new fabrics. The color schemes will stay the same for each theater. The Box Office will reopen to the public on June 15.

Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) – Alison Stoltman

AzMNH is currently focusing on summer camps and upcoming exhibitions. This year's summer camp is a hybrid format with a greatly reduced capacity for the in-person part and at-home activities. The camp is close to selling out. Staff are focusing on the two exhibits opening in July: 75,000,000 BC and 'Oologies. Alison Stoltman gave an overview of 75,000,000 BC in the March meeting and will give an overview for the 'Oologies exhibit today. This exhibit features collections not normally on display, the use of Q&A to help create dialogue, visitor research with both Spanish and English text, and collecting data through passive observation and randomly selected visitor polls. Through a partnership with ASU, the museum has brought on two ASU graduate students. These students will gain experience in the field while working on murals and volcanoes that explode for the exhibit. The museum staff and Foundation also reached their funding goal for this exhibit and the City will match that for a total of \$50,000.

Alison Stoltman shared that the museum has been reviewing data on its Learning REimagined content and it is clear that this project met the needs of teachers. AzMNH plans to create more content for this platform. The lighting project that has been ongoing for months is finally complete and includes programmable lights with different hues and intensities. This will make a huge impact in the galleries. The museum is also experiencing changes in staffing, including a couple of retirements, and rehiring staff and hiring new staff.

i.d.e.a. Museum – Dyan Seaburg

Cindy Ornstein reminded the Board that Dyan Seaburg is the Interim Museum Administrator at i.d.e.a. Museum. Dyan stated that the museum is gradually increasing attendance and bringing back interactives. The museum is still on timed admission but hope to go to rolling admission soon. There is one summer camp planned and sales are going well. The museum is also working on increasing staff, particularly in the Education department. In addition, the museum is currently doing both in-person and virtual VIP Imagine Tours.

The Atrium renovation is underway and will hopefully be done by June 30. Elements include updated walkways, water features, a fairy garden, and musical flowers. It is hoped that the new Atrium will be unveiled July 1, in conjunction with the Robo Art Exhibition. The Robo Art Exhibition will run through January 22, 2022.

Discuss any Projects, Initiatives, or Presenters of Interest & Report on Conferences and/or meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only

Jocelyn Condon stated that they went to the Mesa Farmer’s Market on MAC campus and enjoyed it. Cindy Ornstein stated that it will be at MAC through the end of the calendar year.

Ivan Martinez went to the MCAM Opening and said the exhibit was very unique, different, and impactful. Ivan also agreed that the Mesa Farmer’s Market feels better at MAC than it did at Pioneer Park. It could help bring crowds into Downtown Mesa for eating and shopping and exposing new people to MAC.

Alycia de Mesa-Weeden volunteer for the Arizona American Indian Arts Festival at Scottsdale Center for the Arts. It was a two day event outside and was wonderful. There were performances, demonstrations, and Indigenous village recreations. Alycia asked about Board openings. Sarah Goedicke stated Cindy recommended two applicants to Mayor Giles but there are still two openings to fill. Thanks to Michelle Streeter, Tara Phelps, Ronna Green, and Dilworth Brinton, Jr. for their service!

The next scheduled meeting date is July 22, 2021, via Zoom video conference.

There being no further business, Alycia de Mesa-Weeden moved to end the meeting and Dilworth Brinton, Jr. seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:17pm.

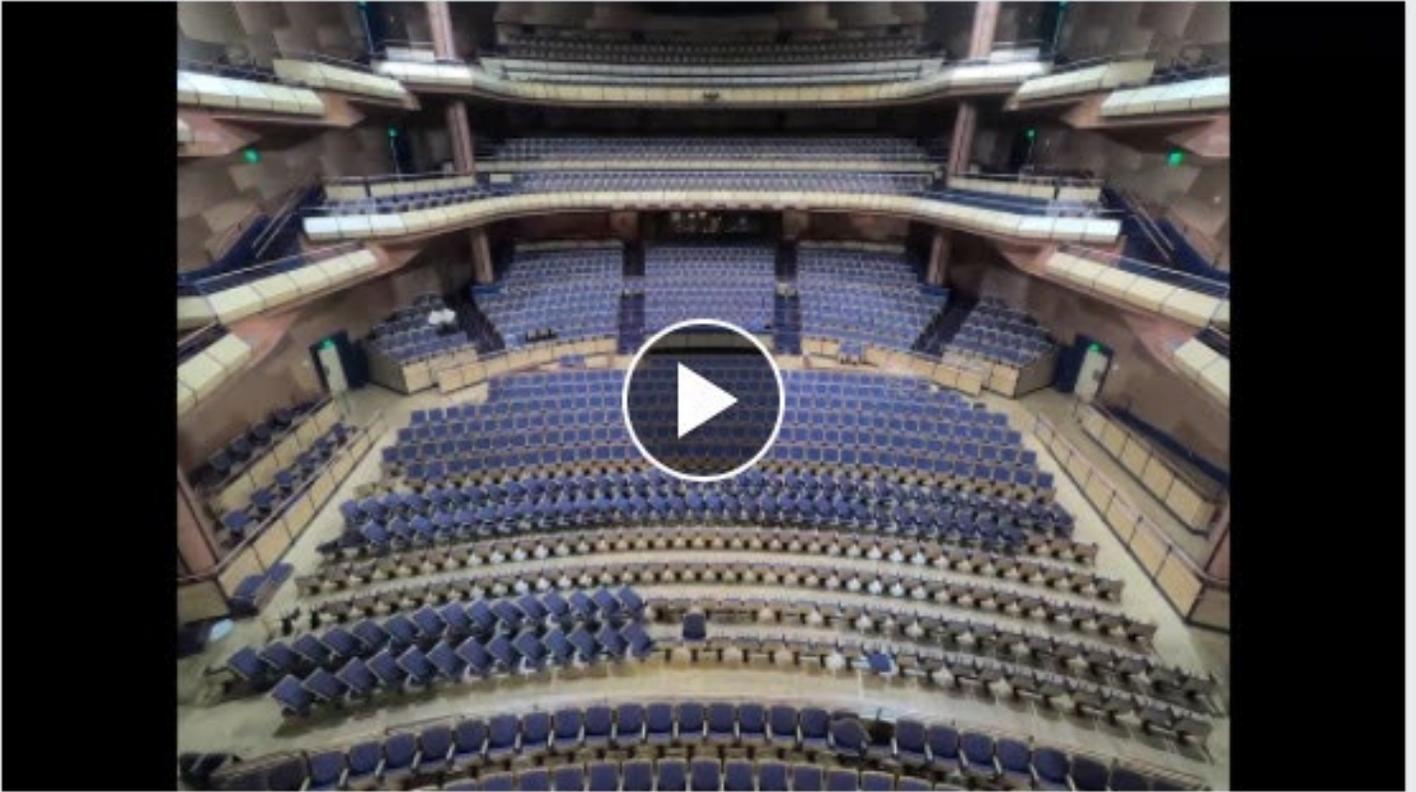
Respectfully submitted,



Cindy Ornstein, Director
Arts and Culture Department

EXHIBIT A

Video Details



Mesa Arts Center: Theater Seat Demo Time-Lapse...

Our theaters are getting a face lift! 📱 We have been undergoing much-needed renovations including replacing floors and seating in the Ikeda Theater, Piper Theater and Nesbitt-Elliott Playhouse, just in time for our 2021-2022 shows. Who else is excited for th...

EXHIBIT B



