

## Museum and Cultural Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting via Zoom video conference on Thursday September 24, 2020.

### Members Present:

Ivan Martinez  
Theresa Schlechty  
Ronna Green  
K. Alycia Perry  
Michelle Streeter  
Angela Buer  
Jocelyn Condon  
Nick Willis  
Melvin Van Vorst  
Dilworth Brinton, Jr.  
Tara Phelps

### Members Absent:

### Staff Present:

Cindy Ornstein  
Sarah Goedicke  
Randy Vogel  
Sunnee O'Rork  
Alison Stoltman  
Illya Riske

Theresa Schlechty moved to start the meeting and Ivan Martinez seconded. K. Alycia Perry called the meeting to order at 4:04pm.

**Public Comments:** There were no comments from the public. An ASU journalism student sat in on the meeting.

### Approval of Minutes from the September 24 Meeting:

Ivan Martinez pointed out that the date of the minutes to be approved was listed as May and not July. Sarah Goedicke will correct that to July before posting to the city's website. K. Alycia Perry moved to approve the minutes with corrections and Ronna Green seconded. Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes from September 24 with corrections, and they will be posted on the city's website.

### Discussion: Task Force/Working Group Update of Activity, Findings, and Recommendations

Nick Willis and K. Alycia Perry gave an overview of the work the group has done and shared a letter that they recommend sending to the City Council asking for approximately \$250,000 in support to Mesa-based arts non-profit organizations (**Exhibit A**). These funds would come from the CARES Act emergency funds that the city still needs to spend by December 31. Nonprofit organizations were not eligible for Mesa's Small Business Reemergence grant program rolled out earlier this summer, and they are hurting as much or more than for-profit Mesa businesses. The Mesa Arts Center Foundation Executive Committee is also on board for this request and added their names to the letter.

There are approximately 15-20 Mesa-based arts nonprofits that serve thousands of people each year. Their survival needs are very similar to other small businesses, including technological needs for a changing audience and changing industry. The proposed letter also highlights a 2015 study that shows how much economic activity is driven by the arts and suggests that supporting these organizations will enhance economic recovery in Mesa.

Proposed criteria for aid would be: the organization must be a 501(c)3 nonprofit, have an arts-based mission, be physically located in Mesa, can show the impact COVID has had on them (loss of revenue, etc.), and can speak to the value they bring to Mesa residents. Logistics would be handled by staff. No process is proposed in the letter itself – it is a broad ask for Council to allocate funds for this purpose. The Working Group recommends this letter be sent as soon as possible to hopefully get this discussion item in from of Council quickly.

### Take Action: Vote on Task Force/Working Group Recommendations

After discussion and some questions for clarity on what the purpose of the letter is, Nick Willis made a motion to send the letter as written to Council as soon as possible. K. Alycia Perry seconded, and the Board voted unanimously to send the letter as written to Council as soon as possible. Board Chair K. Alycia Perry will send the letter.

### Arts & Culture Department Update – Cindy Ornstein

Cindy Ornstein shared that the department will have a soft reopening of the i.d.e.a. Museum and Arizona Museum of Natural History in late October/early November if Council is good with the proposed reopening plan. The reopened museums will have shorter hours, reduced days open each week, and discounted admission through the end of the

calendar year. The reduced admission was offered because the museums are still upgrading exhibits and galleries and that will not be completed by the time they reopen later this fall. Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum will reopen in December or January – a date has not yet been set. In person Studio classes and some in-person Engagement programs will also resume in January, though with social distancing measures and masks. The theaters will remain closed for now and currently there is no proposed reopening date.

## **Staff Reports**

### Mesa Arts Center (MAC) Update on Programs and Operations – Cindy Ornstein

Cindy Ornstein and Randy Vogel shared some of the things being investigated for the Performing Live program in 2021. Randy Vogel has booked many virtual events, and Classical Music Inside Out will be a virtual series this fiscal year. Cindy Ornstein updated the Board that the *Strange Encounters* exhibit will be installed downtown soon, and installations will be located along Main Street and at i.d.e.a. Museum and the Arizona Museum of Natural History. Día de los Muertos will be a virtual event this year, streaming pre-recorded content live on October 24. *Distanced But Not Separated*, a curated exhibit located in the theater building windows, is being installed and will be available for viewing through January 3, 2021.

### Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) – Alison Stoltman

Alison Stoltman shared what the museum is working on to get ready for reopening and discussed new educator resources they are working on to support area teachers. The DinoZone gallery is now empty with new flooring, and work on the 75 Million gallery is continuing.

### i.d.e.a. Museum – Sunnee O’Rork

Sunnee O’Rork shared what the museum is working on to get ready for reopening, including extension of *Art of the Story*, and changes to ArtVille and interactives. Staff have also been busy creating content to keep members engaged during closure and further engage other museum audiences. Prototypes of the HUB Activity Kits were sent to members and Foundation Board members’ families and feedback overall was very positive. The Natural History course museum educators created started on September 1.

## **Discuss any Projects, Initiatives, or Presenters of Interest – Board Members**

No projects, initiatives, or presenters of interest to discuss.

## **Report on Conferences and/or meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only**

No Conferences, meetings, performances to discuss.

*The next scheduled meeting date is November 19, 2020 via Zoom video conference.*

There being no further business, K. Alycia Perry moved to end the meeting and Ronna Green seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Cindy Ornstein, Director  
Arts and Culture Department

## EXHIBIT A



September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Mesa City Council Chambers  
57 East 1st Street  
Mesa, AZ 85201

RE: Support for Mesa-Based Arts Nonprofit Organizations

Dear Mayor Giles and Council Members,

We urge the City of Mesa Council to allocate \$250,000 to support Mesa-based arts nonprofit organizations from funds set aside for future emergency needs from the CARES Act funding package. By doing so, the Council can ensure the economic survival of these groups and the efficient recovery of Mesa's economy in full.

We understand that through the CARES Act, the City of Mesa received \$90 million in funding to support expenditures incurred due to COVID-19. We applaud the City's quick and decisive use of the dollars to support public safety, small businesses and food distribution/aid. We appreciate that approximately \$35,000 in rent and utility support was granted to Mesa Arts Center's Founding Resident Companies to cover the lack of access to facilities used as primary performing spaces for the groups.

**However, beyond these five organizations, arts non-profits in Mesa have received zero aid.**

Arts nonprofit organizations in our city continue to be hit hard by this ongoing pandemic, including but not limited to restrictions on group meeting size and physical performances. These are small organizations for which even a modest amount of funding can make a large difference for survival as well as for technological investments to serve audiences virtually during this "new normal" time. In order for the arts nonprofit community to rebound as the pandemic recedes, financial needs need to be addressed similarly to other sectors, such as small businesses.

There is ample evidence that support for all arts organizations will ***directly improve Mesa's recovery***. In 2015, an Americans for the Arts study determined that "the nonprofit arts and culture sector is a significant industry in the City of Mesa—one that generates \$29.6 million in total economic activity. This spending—\$16.9 million by nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and an additional \$12.8 million in event-related spending by their audiences—supports 1,024 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$25 million in household income to local residents, and delivers \$3.1 million in local and state government revenue."<sup>1</sup> Mesa's effective recovery is tied to the success of our nonprofit arts and culture groups.

Tourism dollars are equally tied to healthy arts and culture groups. 46.4% of nonresidents surveyed in the same study indicated that their primary purpose to visit the city of Mesa is “specifically to attend this arts/cultural event,”<sup>1</sup> demonstrating the power of arts groups of all sizes in attracting tourists, Valley visitors, and associated spending power within the city of Mesa.

Without financial support, it will take **years** for our Mesa nonprofit arts organizations to recover if they do not receive assistance...and some may never recover. Mesa-based groups such as **Millet House Art Collective** that support and showcase emerging and established local artists including Native American artists, **Arizona Youth Ballet** that provide young dancers training and performing opportunities, **Tetra String Quartet**, **Phoenix Chinese Arts Ensemble**, and **Mesa Encore Theater** that produce community theater with diversity and inclusion as its focus are just a small sample of arts nonprofits in Mesa with strong missions and audiences.

We ask the Council to ensure that all of our Mesa based arts nonprofits are included in CARES Act funding. As members of the City of Mesa Museum and Cultural Advisory Board, we offer our service to the city to advise on program needs and implementation of recovery funds.

Again, we urge the City of Mesa Council to allocate \$250,000 from CARES Act funding to support Mesa arts nonprofit organizations to ensure the economic survival of these groups and the efficient recovery of Mesa’s economy.

Respectfully,

The City of Mesa  
Museum and Cultural Advisory Board

*Members At Large:*  
Alycia Perry (de Mesa), *Board Chair*  
Nick Willis, *Vice Chair*  
Dilworth Brinton Jr.  
Angela Buer  
Jocelyn Condon  
Ronna Green  
Ivan Martinez  
Tara Phelps  
Theresa Schlechty  
Michelle Streeter  
Melvin Van Vorst

Mesa Arts Center Foundation  
Executive Committee

Jo Wilson  
Heidi Kimball  
Debby Elliott  
Lisa Knowles  
Mark Asplund  
Paula Gibson  
Mike Hutchinson  
Traci Ahlstrom Beagley

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1. *Arts & Economic Prosperity 5: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations and Their Audiences in the City of Mesa.* For more information about this study visit [www.mesaartscenter.com](http://www.mesaartscenter.com).