

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular hybrid meeting via Zoom and at i.d.e.a. Museum on Thursday November 16, 2023.

Members Present:

Kerry Lengel
Annalisa Alvrus
Colleen Byron
Katelyn Armbruster
Nick Willis
Melvin Van Vorst
Angela Buer
Brad Peterson
Greg DeSimone
Karen Rolston

Members Absent:

Andre Miller

Staff Present:

Illya Riske
Sarah Goedicke
Jarrad Bittner
Simon Tipene Adlam

Nick Willis called the meeting to order at 4:01pm.

Public Comments: There were members of the public observing but there were no public comments.

Introduction of New Board Member – Sarah Goedicke and Karen Rolston:

Sarah Goedicke introduced new Board Member Karen Rolston and she gave a brief overview of her experience in the arts.

Approval of Minutes from the regular July 27 Meeting – Nick Willis:

Greg DeSimone moved to approve the minutes as written and Katelyn Armbruster seconded. Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes from July 27, and they will be posted on the city's website.

Approval of Minutes from the ad-hoc August 23 Meeting – Nick Willis:

Colleen Byron moved to approve the minutes as written and Melvin Van Vorst seconded. Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes from August 23, and they will be posted on the city's website.

Approval of Minutes from the ad-hoc September 13 Meeting – Nick Willis:

Katelyn Armbruster moved to approve the minutes as written and Colleen Byron seconded. Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes from September 13, and they will be posted on the city's website.

Presentation: AzMNH schedule and new mammal hall – Simon Tipene Adlam:

Simon Tipene Adlam gave a presentation (**Exhibit A**) on the museum's new mammal hall exhibition. The museum has long had an exhibition on Arizona and the movies, which is a holdover from when it was the Museum of the Southwest. They have been working with Mesa Historical Museum to dismantle the exhibition and send the items to Mesa Historical Museum. That space has been turned into the new Mammal Hall. Mammal specimens from the lobby were moved into this new gallery space, which also features bilingual signage with Spanish as the prominent language.

The museum is setting a new direction with question-based content, a focus on curiosity and wonderment, and basing exhibitions and engagements on scientific facts from the museum's own research and collections. There is also a new quiet space for individuals on the Autism spectrum. They are building a new paleo lab in the museum lobby that will feature scientists doing real work and

interacting with guests. Additionally, they are working on live streaming into classrooms, engaging older audiences, and creating more interactive exhibits.

Spring Festival – Mandy Tripoli:

Mandy Tripoli was out of the office and Illya Riske discussed a spring festival with the board. He explained that staff would like to eliminate Season Kickoff Festival and replace it with a festival in the spring. Mesa Arts Center (MAC) has been producing the Season Kickoff Festival since 2011 on the first or second Friday of September in line with the Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum (MCA) fall opening. Having this festival in September and the large Dia de los Muertos in late October creates a lot of strain for staff. The heat is also a challenge for staff and attendees. Producing a spring festival will create a more comfortable experience for the community with milder weather. Having more time and staff capacity will allow MAC to provide a better overall festival experience for the community and allow more investment in MAC's signature Dia de los Muertos Festival.

Staff would like to implement this next fiscal year, with no Season Kickoff Festival in September 2024 and the new spring festival in 2025. This will also coincide with MAC's 20th anniversary. Staff and city leadership are supportive of this change and are seeking Board input. Karen Rolston asked what this festival would be. Illya Riske stated it would be at least one day, perhaps a weekend, but staff are not that far into planning yet. Greg DeSimone liked the idea of this change and asked what kind of content this festival would focus on. Illya Riske stated that the first one would be themed around the 20th anniversary with similar content to Season Kickoff. Nick Willis asked if any challenges have come up regarding this change and Illya stated the only challenge so far is timing. The city has many events in March and staff are focusing on not overlapping with other city events. Board members were generally supportive of this change.

AEP6 Update – Sarah Goedicke:

Sarah Goedicke gave a brief review of the city's participation in Americans for the Arts' (AFTA) Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 study (AEP6). This study is generally done every five years, but this study was delayed two years due to COVID. As a result, this is a study on the first full year of normal operations for organizations post-COVID. The study was conducted from May 2022 through May 2023 but most of Mesa's data was collected from October 2022 through April 2023. There are two survey components to this study: an audience intercept survey and an organizational survey. The audience intercept survey asks about participants' spending beyond the cost of admission such as childcare, travel, food and beverage, parking, etc. A new component to the audience survey this year asked audiences about their personal values regarding the arts. The organizational survey asks for financial and employment information from Mesa-based arts and culture organizations.

Mesa collected over 1100 viable audience intercept surveys from over 120 events across the entire city. Some events surveyed included the Asian Festival, MLK Day Festival, and events at Mesa Arts Center. Staff made a concerted effort to survey a variety of different events and institutions across the City of Mesa. Nick Willis asked about the audience survey goal from AFTA and if Mesa exceeded it. Sarah Goedicke explained that AFTA asked for 800 audience surveys and Mesa collected over 1200 with 1160 of those being viable. Nick congratulated Sarah on her collection of this data. AFTA also asked that 25% of surveys collected come from BIPOC/ALAANA (Black, Indigenous, People of Color and African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and Native American) organizations' events. Staff did the best they could and are still trying to connect with BIPOC/ALAANA organizations they may not know about so that in the future the data can become more and more representative of the community.

AEP6 also had close to twice as many Mesa-based arts and culture organizations participate in the organizational survey compared to AEP5 in 2015. Some of that is due to new organizations popping up,

but much of that is due to the department's purposeful outreach to organizations and support of the creation of a coalition of Mesa's arts and culture organizations.

AFTA released data to participants in mid-October and staff are submitting a report to city management, but also wanted to give some highlights to the Board. Before sharing the data, Sarah Goedicke explained that Mesa Arts Center's recovery post-COVID is an anomaly in the field. The organization is doing very well with participation and ticket sales but across the nation that is not the norm. Even for other Mesa-based arts and culture organizations that is not the norm. Katelyn Armbruster asked why we think that is and Sarah Goedicke stated that she is not sure but because the department is city run and supported, it did not bear the same brunt that many nonprofit organizations did. There also was a very strong appetite in this area to return to live events and that probably had a lot to do with it. Simon Tipene Adlam added that the city's museums have also had a very strong recovery post-COVID with record attendance and revenue, and that recovery was much faster than many other nonprofit museums in the state and metro Phoenix.

Karen asked if that likely had to do with the city's support during COVID. She said that when she was with East Valley Children's Theatre during COVID, the financial support they received from the City of Mesa helped them to survive. Sarah Goedicke shared that additional data from AFTA showed that cultural organizations in communities who invested in sustaining their them survived at a much higher rate than organizations from communities that did not support them in some way.

The direct economic activity of the arts and culture industry in the City of Mesa was \$35.2 million, about \$15-20 million more than in the 2015 study. Data also showed that direct spending of Mesa arts and culture institutions resulted in a total impact of 960 jobs. Also, between September 2022 and May 2023, there were over a half million attendees to events, exhibitions, or museums in Mesa. The average spend of participants beyond the cost of admission averaged \$30 per person. Out of town visitors who had to spend a night for lodging averaged spending of around \$180 per person beyond the cost of admission. This demonstrated that the arts and culture visitor economy is very important, and they accounted for about 16% of total participants.

A press release will come out the first week of December and the full report will be linked on the website. There will also be an event in the spring. Sarah Goedicke also shared that 77% of people who completed the survey said that the venue or facility was an important pillar in the community, 86% stated they would feel a great sense of loss if this venue or activity went away, and 85% said this venue or activity instilled a sense of pride in their community. 78.5% also stated that attending this activity was their way of ensuring it is available for future generations.

Discuss projects or presenters of interest and report on events attended:

Nick Willis asked Illya Riske to give an update on the Shepard Fairey mural and MCA exhibitions. Staff are still working with Shepard Fairey's team on the mural project on the west side of Mesa Arts Center. There will be a public review process that will likely involve the Board. Illya Riske shared that the postponed exhibit at MCA is now on display and that all but two indigenous artists originally scheduled have their exhibitions currently up in the galleries. Thomas "Breeze" Marcus and Douglas Miles both declined to participate.

Katelyn Armbruster asked for an update on the hiring process for the new Director of Arts & Culture. Nick Willis stated that the city did not feel the top two candidates in the first round of finalists had the level of experience needed for this role. Another candidate was brought in to meet with staff, the Museum & Cultural Advisory Board, and foundation boards, but no decision has been made yet.

Katelyn Armbruster also asked about the neon sign garden. Nick Willis said the Mesa Preservation Foundation is working on that and Nick is on that board. Nick can work on scheduling someone to come discuss it. It's early in the planning process.

Melvin asked who is running The Post, the new event space in Downtown. Jarrad Bittner explained that the Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities Department is running it and staff have reached out to them regarding events.

Brad Peterson mentioned the city hall redesign. Nick Willis and Brad Peterson gave updates from their perspective from serving on the design selection panel. One artist was asked to create a light and water concept but there is no final draft yet.

Angela Buer said the Dia de los Muertos breakfast event was fantastic, and she enjoyed hosting the Mariachi stage. Sarah Goedicke thanked all board members who volunteered at Dia de los Muertos because having them as stage hosts has made a wonderful impact on stage transition times. She also thanked board members for volunteering in other ways throughout the festival weekend.

The next scheduled meeting date is January 25, 2023 and will be a hybrid meeting on zoom and at the Arizona Museum of Natural History.

There being no further business, Melvin Van Vorst moved to end the meeting and Greg DeSimone seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Illya Riske, Interim Director
Arts and Culture Department

Arizona Museum of Natural History

(Whare taonga o te whenua me te rangi)



Our mission: is to interpret and preserve the record of the natural world and our place in it, and to promote understanding and respect of the Southwest in a global context.

November 8th, 2023.

But what are we:



We are the hub of discovery, discourse, and positive change.

We share evidence-based perspectives about the world we live in.

We empower our curious communities.

Arizona in the Movies Exhibit:



In August we had the opportunity to rethink the 'Arizona in the Movies' gallery which was not on mission. It was out of date with its content and tone to which it was delivered.

We worked with the Mesa Historical Museum to de-installed the gallery and aided in sending their new additions to the museum.de-install

New Mammal Hall:

Climate moves

Plants change

Animals perish

ANIMALES
SAPAREN.
NISH.



SE MUEVEN, LAS PLANTAS CAMBIAN, LOS ANIMALES DESAPARECEN
MATES MOVE, PLANTS CHANGE, ANIMALS VANISH.

EXIT





SE MUEVEN, LAS PLANTAS CAMBIAN, LOS ANIMALES DESAPARECEN
MATES MOVE, PLANTS CHANGE, ANIMALS VANISH.

EXIT



“The wow and the how!”



Bi-lingual Exhibit



¿POR QUÉ NO ESTÁN AQUÍ HOY?

Durante la Edad de Hielo, los ciclos de clima relativamente húmedo y fresco fueron seguidos por un clima cálido y seco, terminando con el más cálido y seco de todos, el presente. Grandes mamíferos vagaron por Arizona hasta su repentina desaparición, un tema de gran discusión entre los científicos. La investigación del suroeste sugiere que estas fluctuaciones climáticas cambiaron drásticamente los recursos alimenticios. La vegetación cambiante tuvo profundos efectos en cadenas alimentarias enteras, lo que resultó en la inanición de la megafauna. La llegada de los humanos modernos al paisaje probablemente contribuyó a la extinción de estos animales ya estresados por el medio ambiente.

WHY AREN'T THEY HERE TODAY?

During the Ice Age, cycles of relatively moist, cool climate were followed by dry warm climate, ending with the warmest and driest of all, the present. Large mammals roamed Arizona until their sudden disappearance, a topic of great discussion among scientists. Southwest research suggests that these climate fluctuations dramatically changed food resources. The changing vegetation had profound effects on entire food chains resulting in the starvation of megafauna. The arrival of modern humans on the landscape likely contributed to the extinction of these already environmentally stressed animals.

León Americano Panthera atrox (340,000-11,000 antes del presente)

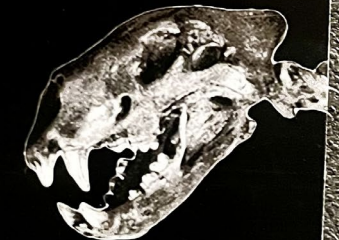
Aunque no es tan conocido como su primo lejano, el Diente de Sable, el León Americano era un 25% más grande que el león moderno y era uno de los ápices depredadores de la Edad de Hielo. El cambio de vegetación afectó a los herbívoros y sin sus presas, grandes carnívoros como el León Americano perecieron.

¿Quién es el principal depredador hoy?

American Lion Panthera atrox (340,000-11,000 Before Present)

Although not as well-known as its distant cousin the Saber Tooth, the American Lion was 25% larger than the modern lion and was one of the apex predators of the Ice Age. Changing vegetation affected the herbivores and without their prey, large carnivores like the American Lion perished.

Who is the top predator today?



Setting the direction for the AZMNH



‘Why aren’t they here today?’ is a community-driven project that is our first dialogue with our audiences about our ever-changing natural world.

The exhibit is:

1. Based on **scientific facts** from our research and collections.
2. **Bilingual** preferencing Spanish.
3. **Question-based** content.
4. Accommodations for those **on the spectrum**.
5. Built on **curiosity and wonderment**.

Now & Next: Access, Labs, and Science first.



Kia ora

(Thank you)



mesa arts
& culture
Inspiring Creativity & Discovery

