



ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, April 27, 2021

TIME: 3:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Via GoToMeeting

Regular Meeting

Commissioners Present: Nicholas Halder, Ryan Decker, Gina Siegert, Tyler Daugherty, Paula Neuhaus, Ali Levasseur, Susan Riedel

Staff Present: Jennifer Petersen-Brant, Arts & Cultural Affairs Coordinator; Annie Flanagan, Arts & Culture Intern

Public Present: Tom Robbins (Heritage Center/University of Dubuque), Jean Tucker (Dubuque Symphony Orchestra)

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Neuhaus at 3:34 PM following staff assurance of compliance with Iowa Open Meeting Law. Commissioner introductions followed for public benefit.

Review of Minutes: Motion to approve minutes of March 23, 2021 with corrections by Commissioner Decker, seconded by Commissioner Halder. Commissioners Halder, Decker, Siegert, Daugherty, Neuhaus, Levasseur, Riedel voted to approve motion; Motion passed.

Review of Reports from Working Groups: Staff shared written notes from recent meetings of active Master Plan working groups in advance of the meeting. Commissioner Levasseur shared that she was glad to hear action moving forward specifically in DEI efforts.

Motion to accept reports from Master Plan working groups by Commissioner Decker, seconded by Commissioner Siegert. Commissioners Halder, Decker, Siegert, Daugherty, Neuhaus, Levasseur, Riedel voted to approve motion; Motion passed.

Status Updates from Staff

FY22 Arts & Culture Grants update: Staff reported that roll out of applications and virtual informational webinars were successful. Grant deadline for Operating Support program continues to be May 17; Special Project grant applications due June 1. Staff requested assistance from Commissioners to help identify and connect with external reviewers.

Art on the River update: Staff reported that the roll out of the Art on the River open call for artists has been a success thus far with press release sent out, opportunity posted broadly to call for art websites, and boosted social media posts. 4 applications have been received thus

far; application deadline is May 24. The planning committee will meet soon to identify jurors, marketing strategies for reception, and discuss reception program; reception is scheduled for Friday, August 6 from 5-7PM on patio of Grand River Center. Commissioner Siegert noted that Taste of Dubuque will be divided into three smaller events, "Taste of Summer"; third one in August still aligns with AOTR reception date.

American Rescue Plan Task Force: Staff reported that she is serving on a task force that has been pulled together by Teri Goodman, Director of Strategic Partnerships for the City, to prepare City and community partners across various sectors for maximizing availability of American Rescue Plan Act funding. Other arts and culture organizations are participating as well; Staff will keep Commission informed of pertinent updates. Commissioner Levasseur noted that she is glad to know this group has been pulled together and to know that a variety of arts and culture organizations are lending their voice to the task force.

Iowa Local Arts Agency Leaders Task Force: Staff reported that they were invited to be a part of an Iowa Local Arts Agency Leaders task force being convened by the Iowa Arts Council. IAC is interested in developing greater networking and support mechanisms to build up the Arts and Culture sector on a state wide level. Staff will keep Commission informed of pertinent updates.

Old Business

Resilience Grant Proposed framework using unspent FY21 grant programs: Grants Subcommittee provided proposed framework for a Creative Resiliency grant program that would be available to eligible Dubuque-based arts and culture nonprofits and would utilize the approximately \$23,500 in FY21 grant program balances. This program is closely based on the Iowa Arts Council's current Resiliency Grant for NonProfits program and builds on language and protocols of the City's current Operating Support and Special Projects grant programs. This new program must be approved by the end of the current fiscal year, or June 30, 2021, to authorize a carryover of funds for disbursement in FY22.

Discussion followed. Commissioner Neuhaus briefed Commission on criteria of program and discussed need to streamline questions, perhaps to just 2 questions, as size of grants are small so application should not be cumbersome; suggested one question about how pandemic has affected operations and second on how the organizations will use the money to re-engage audiences as community bounces back from pandemic. Commissioner Levasseur inquired about how changes to application questions will affect rubric; Staff noted that point system will be decreased accordingly. Discussion on how operating budgets and which years will be reported; Staff noted that organizations will not complete arduous worksheet and will report FY18 and FY19 which will be averaged to determine tier of funding organization is eligible for. Commissioner Riedel inquired about a timeline; launch anticipated May 24 with deadline June 14.

Motion to allow the subcommittee to finalize this grant program guidelines, application questions and the scoring rubric and push forward to City Manager by Commissioner Riedel, seconded by Commissioner Decker. Commissioners Halder, Siegert Levasseur, Neuhaus voted to approve motion; Motion passed.

Research and development related to former MediaCom arts and culture grant program: Staff reported that contacted Kathy McMullen. Kathy is happy to speak with us about framework of previous MediaCom funding program to help Commission build out proposal for potential funder. Commissioner Seigert inquired about why MediaCom program was ended; Staff noted that the original agreement with MediaCom was that it would sunset in 15-years and this was not on Commission's radar until notification by MediaCom Foundation to City Council that it was time for the program to end. Commissioner Levasseur and Commissioner Neuhaus expressed interest to be at meeting with Kathy. Staff will follow up and schedule meeting.

Commission Goal Setting and Reporting: Staff along with Commissioner Levasseur and Commissioner Neuhaus met with City Clerk's office this past month in regards questions to be addressed in Commission's to be scheduled strategic planning. Topics covered with Clerk's office included cultivating youth service on Commissioner through dedicated seat; youth advisory group was suggested as option. Discussed number of Commission seats; largest City Commission is 9-member and suggested not to exceed that. Also discussed ordinance amendment process; Trish Gleason will assist with that process if and when needed. Commission can pursue a partnership with or pursue creation of a 501c3 to assist in meeting goals such as diversifying funding streams; suggested 'Friends of Library' as model.

Clarification on recruiting for open Commission seats. Current commissioners can actively recruit individuals and are strongly encouraged to do so as it is considered a role of the Commission to fill seats. Staff publicly share notifications to broader community regarding openings on Arts Commission. City Clerk's office least active in recruitment; does regular generic notifications regarding all openings. Commissioner Neuhaus noted that the Clerk's office is developing an equity plan to assist with recruitment of diverse commissions and boards. Applications for seats opening end of June are due May 24; applications will be considered at June 7 City Council meeting and appointments made during June 21 City Council meeting.

Discussion on scheduling strategic planning with Jan Powers per FY22 Improvement Package funding. Commissioner Levasseur suggested August meeting, Commissioners Halder and Decker concurred with this suggestion of starting in August. Commissioner Riedel expressed that September may be better for her. Consensus that August as the earliest to work with Jan. Commissioner Neuhaus will follow up with Jan on her availability in August and September, and will report back at May meeting.

Staff discussed goal setting worksheet that needs to be completed by Commission and submitted to Cori Burbach for City Council's goal setting process in August. Staff asked for volunteers to assist in completing worksheet so it adequately reflects Commissioner's voices; Commissioners Siegert and Halder volunteered. Commissioner Riedel advised all to reflect on Master Plan in completing worksheet.

New Business

Opportunity for Economic Impact Study Participation: Staff shared that the Iowa Arts Council is offering opportunity for Dubuque and other Iowa communities to participate in a new Americans for the Arts' Arts & Economic Prosperity study. IAC is subsidizing costs and financial commitment for Dubuque would be \$6,000; staff noted that unused FY21 Art on the River funding has been okayed by Jenny Larson as potential funding source. AFTA's study

will focus on non-profit sector as it did in 2012 but IAC intends to compliment with for-profit creative economy research. Timeline for data gathering would be late Summer into Fall 2021 and results available in Spring 2022. Commissioners Riedel and Siegert expressed concerns about timing of study and whether data would accurately demonstrate sector's impact with organizations still being in recovery mode. Commissioners Levasseur and Decker shared interest in participating in this study. Commissioner Halder expressed interest, but also acknowledged drawbacks of timing. Staff will follow up with IAC on concerns; study participation to be revisited at May meeting

Other: Staff reported that City Clerk's office conducted a meeting recently to gather input from various staff on how future commission and board meetings will be conducted regarding return to in-person, need for hybrid, etc. Commissioners asked to think about this topic to revisit at May meeting.

Public Comment: Tom Robbins of University of Dubuque Heritage Center introduced himself and thanked Commission for their work. Jean Tucker of Dubuque Symphony Orchestra introduced herself and thanked commission.

Current Events Reporting from Commissioners:

- UD Heritage Center will be having a dedication event and concert on May 15 for new pipe organ, will be streamed online at <https://www.dbq.edu/NewsandEvents/Calendar/#d:c:Heritage%20Center%20%2F%20Arts%20Events>
- Dubuque Symphony Orchestra unveiling plans for Music in the Gardens to return this Summer.
- Bell Tower Theater hosting "The Numbers Game" as live event April 26 – May 2 and virtual play Internet Cats on June 10 and 20. Comedy performances August 13-29.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Halder, seconded by Commissioner Decker. Meeting adjourned at 4:56PM.

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 3:30PM via GoToMeeting

Respectfully submitted:

Jenni Petersen-Brant
Arts & Cultural Affairs Coordinator, City of Dubuque

These minutes were passed and approved on May 25, 2021.

Witnessed By: 
Paula Neuhaus (Oct 29, 2021 10:19 CDT) (signature)
Paula Neuhaus (printed)
Vice-Chair (officer position)

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Final Audit Report

2021-10-29

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