



ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, January 26, 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

Public Present: Tom Robbins with University of Dubuque Heritage Center, Jean Tucker with Dubuque Symphony Orchestra, Gail Chavenelle, Ann Ernst

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Levasseur at 3:33 PM following staff assurance of compliance with Iowa Open Meeting Law.

Addition to Agenda: Introduction of Commissioners for public benefit

Review of Minutes: Motioned to approve minutes of January 5, 2021 with corrections by Commissioner Halder, seconded by Commissioner Siegert. Commissioners Halder, Decker, Siegert, Daugherty, Neuhaus, Levasseur, Riedel voted to approve motion; Motion passed.

Status Updates from Staff

City Council Work Session Presentation: On January 19 a Work Session with City Council was held virtually in which Staff provided an update on the implementation of the City's Arts & Culture Master Plan including recommendations that City Council should consider supporting to propel the work forward. The presentation included brief presentations from several Operating Support grantees. Staff reported that the presentation was well received with supportive comments from the Mayor regarding growth in the presence and impact of arts and culture in Dubuque. Councilmen Cavannagh inquired specifically about recommendation of City / Non-profit partnership during the work session. Commissioner Riedel suggested turning presentation into feature for on City Channel; Staff reported that PIO is open to idea and Staff will pursue as workload allows. President Levasseur complimented and thanked Staff for an outstanding job on the presentation.

Master Plan Working Groups: Branding and Communications WG is focused on developing an RFP/project brief to initiate an overall marketing campaign for Dubuque's arts and culture sector. A short-term committee has been recruited to shape project brief

including Commissioner Levasseur, Jordan Degree (Innovation Lab / Creative Adventure Lab), Tasha Lippold (Premier Bank), Rick Dickenson (GDDC), Lu Gerdemann (Lu Supply Co.) have confirmed. Others still considering invitation to committee. Dubuque Renaissance Project canceled January 16 virtual 'mixer' and has tentatively rescheduled February 20. Public Art to meet February 15. Creative Economy to meet February 9. Larger Task Force tentatively scheduled for February 25. Staff reported that many working groups seem to be in a transition and all are looking for new volunteers to join them; Commission can aid in recruitment by connecting potential volunteers with Staff for follow up.

Winter Arts: The Winter Arts Snow Sculpting will take place February 10-13 in Washington Park in partnership with the Dubuque Museum of Art. Due to COVID-19 concerns, the usual Saturday in-person community event will not be held. Staff in collaboration with Kay Schroeder at DuMA is shifting activities to more virtual engagement with at home snow sculpting activity suggestions, online voting for the People's Choice award, and short "how to" videos with sculptors being produced and released.

Art En Route: Community engagement through survey and activity sheet being extended through end of February. Staff noted that individuals from Green Iowa AmeriCorps, Green Dubuque, City Transit Dept, City Sustainability Coordinator, and Jay Foust of Gigantic Design are assisting with planning and various aspects of the project. Gigantic Design is working on project logo and promotional pieces to launch soon.

Calendar: Staff is working on a Google Calendar to share with Commissioners outlining important dates related to Commission and major activities of the Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs. Staff intends to send out before February Commission meeting.

Other: Staff in-progress of bringing on Community Work Study student from Loras College to serve as an intern for Spring semester. City Council budget hearing for Economic Development Department set for March 8.

Grants Subcommittee Update:

Commissioner Neuhaus reported on areas that may require changes in Operating Support grant program. Grants Committee members continue research on solutions from other communities regarding how they have updated their programs due to COVID-19 pandemic. One area of concern is what budget figures organizations should report to base award % on; current program protocol requests 'last completed fiscal year' and for most organizations this will be drastically impacted, likely reduced, due to COVID-19 thus potentially reducing award amounts and hindering recovery and organizational stability. Commissioner Levasseur asked for a solutions-based 15-minute brainstorming discussion to address concerns. Suggestions included; Organizations reporting both 2020 and 2019 financials for consideration, Basing award on planned expenses for 2020 budget, Reporting proposed 2020 and actual 2020; Reporting and based award on actuals from 2019 as more consistent reflection of where organizations were at before the pandemic. Noted that prior rounds of funding have always been based on verifiable actual expenses. Commissioner Halder inquired if there was guidance on this from other City granting programming; Staff will follow up. Commissioner Neuhaus stated that grants committee will take all ideas into consideration and present a formal recommendation at the February Commission meeting; recommendation will also include changes to activity reporting question in grant narrative to reflect impacts of COVID-19. Commissioner Halder inquired about status 3rd quarter payments to current Operating Support grantees. Staff reported that they have inquired on this but not yet received confirmation; Staff to follow up with Finance Department and Assistant City Manager.

Other: Commissioner Decker requested additional communication, clarity, and easy access to City's precise DEI goals related to arts and culture activities, and additional clarity on goals and outcomes of communications strategies related to Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs and Commission. Commissioner Siegert inquired if there were any updates on progress alternate funder for Mediacom Arts & Culture foundation style grant program; Commissioner Neuhaus reported that a lead has been identified and additional follow up needed.

Public Comment: Gail Chavenelle thanked the Commission for their work but noted that information on all the items discussed were not reaching her, encouraging Commission and Staff to analyze their outreach strategies. Chavenelle also encouraged Commission and Staff to continue diversity and equity work in arts and culture. Tom Robbins reported Live @ Heritage Center has ten virtual presentations scheduled and that the live performances will be only for students and staff due to COVID-19 concerns; he thanked Commissioners for their work. Jean Tucker reported that the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra is moving forward with in-person live concerts in the historic Five Flags Theater on February 20-21 and youth ensemble on Feb 28.

Current Events Reporting from Commissioners:

- Bell Tower Dangers of Valentine's Day with socially distanced seating
- Trainwreck Productions: "Dick Rodgers: Space Detective" (radio play) -- February 12, <http://Facebook.com>, Loras Players: A Midsummer Night's Dream -- April 8-10, Loras College ARC Lawn
- Fly-by-Night: online content (FBN TV), <http://flybynightdubuque.com>
- Grand Opera House: a lot of digital events and gatherings, <http://thegrandoperahouse.com>
- Five Flag Center has a variety of sporting events, DSO, and dance company renting for private performance.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Decker, seconded by Commissioner Neuhaus. Commissioners Levasseur, Halder, Decker, Siegert, Daugherty, Neuhaus, Riedel voted to approve motion; Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 4:39PM.

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 23, 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 Feb. 23, 2021.

Witnessed By:  (signature)

Ari Levasseur (printed)

Chairperson (officer position)