

Public Art & Cultural Commission

March 22, 2012



Members Present

Jennifer Gordon
Mark Koven
Robert Todd
Honor Moor
Jaan Ferree
Sharon Trammel
Gwynne Rukenbrod

Staff Present

Diane Ruggiero, Cultural Arts Superintendent
Jenny Bowen, Cultural Arts Administrator
Abigail Riley, Special Projects Coordinator

Guests Present

Stephanie Monson, Riverfront Development Coordinator in Economic Development Department

Robert Calls the meeting to order at 4:06pm

Approve February Minutes

Mark moves to approve February minutes; it is seconded by Jennifer; all approve. The motion passes unanimously.

Robert asks Abigail to give a quick primer on calling consent when using Robert's Rules. She says that once the motion has been made and passed, a member can call consent to move past discussion and a vote. It is up to Robert, the chair, to accept the consent. He can choose not to accept the call for consent and move back into discussion and vote.

smART Initiative Grant Proposals

Robert reminds the group that there is an action required. Diane says that they received in their packet the grant guidelines. She has received many questions about the grant. This is a new grant. Similar to the NEA grant because they are trying to encourage collaborations between the arts community and municipalities. It also allows the municipality to have only one project, either initiated by the municipality or as a partner with a nonprofit. Diane introduces Stephanie Monson from the City of Asheville's Economic Development Department. Diane adds that due to the nature of this grant, it will not have to go before City Council. The commission's recommendation is the one that will stand. Diane asks that if any member has insight into the grant to please share any information.

Stephanie introduces herself and thanks everyone for having her come to the meeting. Her focus is combining the arts and economic development. She feels this grant is about "place making." She wrote a draft proposal. She understands that everyone here is involved within the River Arts District, but she wants to give information about what the City is doing in the River Arts District.

Grant funds will be used for an arts-driven economic development strategy that results in increased investment in the arts economy in the River Arts District and the region; the strategy will focus on retention and expansion of regional artists through collaboration on a transformational redevelopment project within the core of Asheville's River Arts District. The transformational redevelopment project is approximately seven acres around 1400 Riverside Drive, the building formally known as the PSNC building (with the fence). She shows pictures of the location. It is next to 12 Bones and across the street from Curve. The city has, in hand, \$50,000 to provide a feasibility analysis for this site, and they will be putting out an RFQ to hire real estate, economic development, and design professionals for the building and the area. They want to have four to eight working artists or artist organizations with one economic development entrepreneur and one real estate to create a team that ensures that the redevelopment is arts-driven. They want the region to have a sector for economic development like manufacturing and green economy. There are pockets of artistic areas that feed into other economic development areas. They want to make sure that artists are at the table when they are looking at special strategies for retention and expansion of individual artists.

She wants to underscore the reasons for this location and speak to funding. The grant is \$20,000 or \$25,000 to be used for planning of the economic strategy, but there is an opportunity to have implementation money in that. They do not know what the money will be paid for other than paying the artist-team previously referred to during the presentation. They want to pay a decent wage, like \$25, for the multiple-days work (maybe a charette or mini-charette). After these work sessions, \$20,000 is not very much. They will be gathering data and working with economic development professionals. The money will mostly be used for these hours, but they want to keep a contingency for publications, marketing, and other things. Stephanie says that it is the downfall of grant administration to want to show the grant was received and the effects coming from the use of the grant monies but no funds are left to market it. She wants to hold money in order to market the economic development strategies produced by the group.

Stephanie says that some people have asked why not downtown. The Downtown Master Plan came out with good strategies for arts and resources, but the River Arts District does not have this momentum. The Downtown Master Plan is to maintain and strengthen, but with the River Arts District they want to get ahead of the game to begin building economic development now instead of in the future. She has other historical information; she asks for questions from the Commission.

Robert asks her to hold up the map. Stephanie describes the area between the bridges where they are looking to develop. She shows the members where everything is located.

Stephanie adds that there is also a \$600,000 River Arts District transportation improvement project that they are aligning with this project.

Mark asks what role the Cultural Arts Division will play in the project. Stephanie says partner, sounding board. The Cultural Arts Development might help to figure out the artist resources team. She asks Mark if he means the Cultural Arts Division or the Public Art and Cultural Commission. Mark says both. She asks what role he wants to have. Mark says he is curious as to how much say they will have with projects brought forth, as in who is hired for this process. He

asks if there is a structure already outlined. Stephanie says that the North Carolina Arts Council has a structure for this. She says that she might point them in the direction of the Commission. Any strategies would come to the Commission for review but not for approval. She says their role can be built. Mark clarifies that, currently, their role is small. Stephanie says yes, Gwynne adds that there is concern on staff resources. She asks what responsibilities will fall on staff. Stephanie says that Parks staff is just a sounding board at this point. Stephanie says she can help the community navigate processes, but she says the idea is for it to be community driven and not staff driven.

Jennifer says that this a way to move forward as a City and to show there is an initiative to work with the North Carolina Arts Council and carry it through. Stephanie agrees. She thinks it is a stronger proposal if they have the arts community support it. Jennifer says in the outline the River Arts District is identified. Gwynne says it is a case study. She said that she talked to Nancy about the grant application. Gwynne clarifies that Nancy is the Deputy Director of the North Carolina Arts Council.

Robert asks for further questions. He thanks Stephanie for coming. Robert adds that he thinks it is important to get artists and economic developers to come together. It is good to start that process early. He asks for clarification on the action the Commission needs to take. Diane says the Commission is being asked to make a recommendation. She says how ever they would like to make that recommendation is up to the members.

Gwynne asks if they need to make a motion. Diane says yes.

Jennifer says that she thinks it is valuable if they can agree that the community needs to work on this.

Jennifer moves to put forth this proposal; Gwynne seconds; Robert opens it up for discussion.

Robert asks if the City is a partner in this grant. Diane says that in this case, the City will be the lead applicant. The Economic Development office will be working with the artists as part of that grant.

All are in favor of the motion; the motion passes unanimously.

Stephanie extends the invitation that if they want to come present to the Riverfront Commission, let Diane know. Robert is glad that she mentioned that.

Urban Trail Subcommittee—Vote New Members

Jaan put forth two names that the subcommittee has nominated and accepted. She looks forward to approving Justin Kewen and Jennifer Gordon. She puts forth their names for nomination.

Diane asks how many members the subcommittee currently has. Jaan says it is now eight.

Jaan sent an email with an update on conversations in the committee to update everyone. She has asked for recommendations for another male who is computer savvy and understands social networking would be a great asset. They are looking at how to inform the public about the Urban Trail. Tom Roberson came by and spoke with them at their last meeting.

Jaan says that the City's brochure is great, but it is also a challenge. She adds that the Chamber knows they are expensive to print. They could be handing out many more. Diane says that funding issues should not be their concern. They can give out as many as they want. She asks if the brochure can be changed to include and asks if a QR code can be integrated into it. She mentions, Fingo. Diane says that Fingo is a private enterprise, and the City is not able to promote that. Jaan says it is difficult to find the trailhead currently.

Jennifer says that the size is a problem. Diane says that this is being looked at by the Business Services Division because they are looking at branding and formatting. Jen says that it is an industry standard. She hears about it from organizations. Diane will bring it forward to the Business Services Division again.

Robert agrees that this issue needs to be tackled because other Parks and Recreation brochures are driven towards local citizens but the Urban Trail brochure is driven by tourists. Diane offers that a representative from Business Services to come talk to the Commission.

Jennifer moves to accept new committee members to the Urban Trail Subcommittee; Jaan seconds, and Robert opens it up for discussion. All vote in favor, and the motion passes unanimously.

Retreat Planning

Robert wants to drill down with subcommittees during the retreat. He would like for subcommittees to be activated. He asked Diane to come from a City perspective and talk to the calendar and come up with a timeline for things that need to be activated.

Diane says there are other projects also. There is a grassroots arts program grant. There is a lot going on that can make the Commission and subcommittees active and engaged. This retreat could even open the possibility if more subcommittees are necessary.

Diane says that she needs guidelines for choosing the date and time. She asks for a show of hands for a full day retreat versus a half day retreat. Three people prefer a full day, and three people prefer half day training. She asks for a show of hands for a morning schedule or an afternoon schedule. Two people prefer the morning, and two people prefer the afternoon. She asks if people would prefer a weekday or weekend. Six people prefer a weekday.

Robert, Jen, and Diane can come up with the agenda and that can dictate the length of the retreat.

Diane asks if the members want the retreat in lieu of a meeting or have a meeting and a retreat. Everyone says that would prefer to have both. Gwynne says that she would like the privacy of the retreat. Sharon would also like both in the case that she cannot come to the retreat.

Diane says that she would like to hold the retreat before the end of the fiscal year, in June. She is thinking about the middle or the end of May. AFTA is in June. Bele Chere is in July. She will send out a doodle poll to see what everyone can do. She will start the dates in the morning, sometime in May on weekday.

Honor asks if they all care that it be in the morning. She has to get special arrangements for her children if it is held in the afternoon. Diane clarifies that it will start in the morning. The question is to when it will end, but everyone can be mindful of that caveat.

Mark says he has a job and it depends on the day as to whether he can do it. Diane says that she will keep that in mind and offer different days.

Sharon says she has break between spring and summer semester. She will be out of the country for the week of May 13. Diane has obligations within the Department too. Sharon says her summer schedule is more flexible. Diane will give everyone a choice. She speaks to the location. She will try and find a place that is conducive to getting things done.

Jaan asks about subcommittee members being there. Robert says that they could possibly come in the last two hours to meet the members and talk more in depth regarding the subcommittee issues. Diane says the subcommittees should be actively staffed by that time. Diane suggests that members could also be introduced during subsequent meetings.

Gwynne asks to come up with strategies and have a mini strategic planning session during the retreat. Jennifer adds that it will give them time to figure out how to accomplish those strategies through the subcommittees. Gwynne adds how the subcommittees can supplement and better support staff. Diane agrees that it is a good idea for all members of the Commission and subcommittee to meet. Jaan also agrees and says that she would like to put faces to names. Jennifer agrees. She adds knowing the tasks of each of the subcommittees will help in planning the strategies.

Gwynne will offer Handmade Space free of charge. Diane thanks her. She adds that the Department has Recreation Centers.

Robert says that the Urban Trail committee is in place. He says that since the Urban Trail Subcommittee is fully setup that it could be the first subcommittee to come to a meeting. It is important to interact with subcommittee members. Robert says that traditional Commission meetings are formal, and he cautions this. Diane reminds the subcommittee chairs to email her or Robert to ask to put their updates on the agenda. She adds that presenting these subcommittee-related issues can be delegated to other members of subcommittees to come give the report.

Gwynne adds that members could make it more inclusive with more socializing and partying. She knows that members who serve on the subcommittees want to serve on the Commission and have interaction with members. She suggests that they talk about that in the retreat for the July meeting. Robert adds that they get inspiration at that meeting. He also thinks that it is a great idea to have subcommittee members give the report at these monthly meetings. Diane says to make

sure that subcommittee reports are on the agenda. If chairs have something to say remind Diane and Robert, and they will add it to the agenda.

Robert asks for further input regarding the retreat. Diane says that if the retreat is in May, more items can go on the April agenda for further input on the retreat structure.

Subcommittee Updates

Honor has an update. She is going to have lunch with David Starkey, Executive Director of the Asheville Lyric Opera. She is going to persuade him to be on the Advocacy Subcommittee. She encourages suggestions to round out a representative of arts in Asheville and Buncombe County. She thinks it is good to have a different style of voice and perhaps on the fringe rather than a major arts organization. Email her suggestions, and she will meet with them and talk to them.

Sharon says that Jaan had recommended Grace Plass. She had already spoken to Rick Ramsey. She has two positions and wants to talk to both of them as they both bring something different to the table. She has known Grace for a long time, but she needs her contact information. Jaan thanks her for considering her. Sharon says that Grace is the backbone of the Urban Trail, and they will be lucky to have her in the subcommittee.

Jaan asks about the plaque cleanings. Sharon says she talked to Diane, but they need training before they can clean plaques. They would start that process and do it in September.

Jaan says they are ready with volunteers and want to contact donors of plaques. Sharon's idea would be to do that from April to September. Sharon adds that students will be back in fall too for student volunteers. Diane says they could do a condition assessment so that plaque cleaning can be prioritized. If she wants to get the group together and do that. Diane and Sharon can meet.

Mark says the first meeting for the Education Subcommittee is at the end of the semester, around May 5. He hopes to have the first meeting then.

Division Update

The rock garden under the Energy Loop is now gone, along with the railroad ties. It is now just mulch.

If any member would like to attend the Creative Sector Summit, the Arts Council will waive registration fees. Diane asks that members email her if they wish to attend. Sharon has already registered. Diane will tell Kitty that Sharon is attending and has already registered. Gwynne said some members are doing the breakout sessions. She would appreciate everyone coming. Last year's event was two days. This year is one whole day. It is for everyone. This is for anyone who needs to understand why this sector is important. The City is a partner; please attend at least a portion.

She thanks all those who continue to come out to the Mobile Art Lab events. Easel Rider birthday party had an amazing birthday cake. She will email everyone with further dates for Easel Rider.

Arts North Carolina, the statewide lobbying agency, is hosting a summit next month. Fee is \$40. They are working to put a big plan together to talk to politicians in the state.

Gwynne asks to give Diane kudos, but Diane says she is the state captain for NAFTA. No one else in the state is registered for the conference in DC. It is April 16 and 17th. Arts NC summit is April 11th in Raleigh. Arts Advocacy Day's speaker is Alec Baldwin this year.

Robert wants to call attention to Easel Rider's appearance at the Asheville Art Museum. Everybody is invited. Sunday is the free day at the Museum. Easel Rider will be there. Robert says they are opening their raw space. He says that Kenn Kotara will be there showing his work. Diane adds that the emergency remediation company has created an installation.

Old Business

Diane says that the Commission needs to vote on who will go to AFTA. Robert says that there were three members who were interested in going, but only Jennifer is able to at this point. Jaan would like her name considered for next year. Gwynne got invited to another event, and she cannot go.

Gwynne moves to have Jennifer Gordon to represent the Commission at the AFTA conference; Jaan 2nds; Mark calls consent; Robert accepts consent, and the motion passes unanimously.

New Business

Robert wants to say that Honor was selected to be in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. It opens in April and goes through May. The YWCA has approved it to help end racism. If you know young people, remind them what the south was like not too long ago.

Sharon adds that the premiere for the Hunger Games went well as there were many Commission members in attendance.

Robert adjourns the meeting at 5:09.