

SEATTLE ARTS COMMISSION

Minutes

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, October 13th, 2020

Remote – Zoom Conference

Commissioners present: Priya Frank (Co-Chair), Quinton Morris (Co-Chair), Cassie Chinn, Sarah Wilke, Sheila Ghaibi, Chieko Phillips, Kayla DeMonte, Steve Galatro, Mikhael Mei Williams, Holly Jacobson, Tracy Rector, Yeggy Michael, Dawn Chirwa, James Miles

Staff in attendance: Calandra Childers, Randy Engstrom, Allie Lee, Alex Rose, Ashraf Hasham, Lizzy Melton, Mytoan Nguyen-Akbar, Margo Robb, Kelly Davidson, Erika Lindsay, Ricky Reyes, Mike Davis, Dominique Stephens (MO)

Guests: Danielle McClure, Reese Tanimura

Call to Order, Introduction, Land Acknowledgement (4:05)

Approval of Minutes:

Dawn moved to approve the commission minutes from September 2020. Tracy seconded. Approved.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Quick Announcements:

- Going forward we are disabling the Zoom chat function for SAC meetings, in compliance with City policy and for the safety of SAC members and community. Please direct specific questions to Co-Chairs or Directors.
- Acknowledging Sheila Ghaibi's last day as Get Engaged commissioner. Thank you, Sheila!

ARTS BIPOC Data Project

Briefing: Mytoan Nguyen Akbar, Lizzy Melton, Margo Robb, Rick Reyes

Presentation titled, "Committed Office Payments from 2019 Segmented by Race." Slide deck provided to SAC prior to meeting. Highlights:

- Goals are to 1) report the racial demographics of payments made from ARTS in one budget year; 2) identify a process of assessment and relevant stakeholders; 3) be accountable to ARTS Black Love Union demands; 4) inform RSJI strategy
- Data available for distributed money and committed money
 - Distributed money – Money that was issued in the 2019 calendar year.
 - Committed money – Money that was allocated in 2019 for distribution in 2020 or later. This column is larger, due to Public Art commissions which are awarded on a multi-year timeline, the Cultural Facilities Fund and Civic Partners, and other multi-year grants.

- Definitions of the anti-racism assessment continuum for groups, networks, and organizations (organization type). These assessments are self-reported.
 - BIPOC/POC – Black, Indigenous, and People of Color-led board, staff, and community
 - Diversifying – Increasing numbers of BIPOC/POC board, staff, community
 - PWI – Predominantly white-led institutions board, staff, and community
 - Unclassified – no information is known about most or all of the org composition
- Additional info is available upon request, project is still a work in progress
 - Narratives for each racial group is also available upon request
- Reading this presentation info as a baseline for how to shake out funding in the future
 - Ideally there would be more tiers in “diversifying” orgs and no “unclassified” orgs
 - Making recommendations to ARTS policy team and digging deeper into specific group investments

SAC Questions/Comments:

- Please clarify how org types were self-reported.
 - When applicants apply, they are asked to voluntarily select from the 4 categories
- Will this project look at success rate (those who applied, instead of awardees) based on race?
 - Data is available but haven’t coordinated yet
 - Data is available at programmatic level but not officewide aggregated level
- Capable to segment/cross section data and category of investments?
 - Data is available but haven’t coordinated yet. It all comes down to prioritization – now that we have the matrix team/baseline, we need to figure out the most helpful way to look at this information. What questions should we be asking?
- Re: diversifying org category - what were the contributors to say that an org is “diversifying”?
 - This would be an org that has mixture of diverse board, staff, and community members. However this is a relative term since applicants self-assessed, so there may be marginal error. The category can be sliced and diced in different ways.
 - As a follow up, staff will send out the “Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Cultural Organization” document, which informed the way in which we segmented cultural organizations.
- The data overall shows there are more committed dollars than distributed dollars – does this mean there are more BIPOC orgs that are receiving committed dollars than distributed dollars? Has there been increased support to BIPOC orgs? What were the main factors in that evolution?
 - Committed vs. distributed funds is more of an accounting issue - one year vs. over a few years (public art projects for example are committed dollars that go out over a few years)
 - We won’t be able to see if there is shift in support until we have data for another year of funding. Starting next year we would see more of a pattern.
- Is this information public or internal?
 - Our hope is to put together an annual public report and press release at some point, but we are not there yet. This is the first time the info has been aggregated and presented.
- What was the process for interpretation of figures?
 - The narrative is based on the org definitions presented. But perhaps the interpretation should happen over time, perhaps at the Cultural Investments Committee. We need a robust process for interpretation and thought partnership from the commission is welcome.

- There is still a lot more to distill, especially with the diversifying orgs category.
- Are there similar offices locally and nationally that have done this work? Are there best practices and resources to think through ways info can be broken down?
 - This is emerging work in our field and Seattle is relatively far ahead. Some resources to reference would be the Helicon report and reports that LA, Minneapolis, Portland, and Indianapolis have put out. The latter two have dramatically shifted their model of getting funds out the door. Race Forward is also pushing the conversation.

Chairs Report

Briefing: Quinton Morris, Priya Frank

- SAC Matrix Analysis (Steve Galatro)
 - A bird's-eye-view overview of areas for commissioner recruitment to make sure we are a robust/diverse group. Overview document provided to SAC prior to meeting. Highlights:
 - Gender/identity – we are 100% binary, need to think of non-binary representation
 - Age – we have a pretty good mix with the exception of 65 and older
 - Race/ethnicity – we are lacking Latinx, Middle Eastern/North African, and Indigenous representation
 - Committee representation is fairly balanced – 3-4 commissioners on each, but we don't have representation on the Langston board.
 - Background – we are very diverse in experience. During a BLU/SAC meeting, BLU mentioned the need for more arts workers in support roles, not leadership roles, and that we need different levels of management represented. We are also lacking individual/working artists.
 - Not mentioned on the matrix but we need more folks with expertise in video, digital remote learning, advocacy, and activism. It would be good to have commissioners with expertise that intersect in these areas.
 - Commissioners have been adding recommendations to the matrix, but we encourage more recommendations based on what Steve highlighted today. Allie will send out the matrix google link again as a reminder.
- City Council Budget letter (Holly Jacobson/Kayla DeMonte)
 - The Mayor has put out draft budget and it is currently with City Council for review.
 - ARTS has sustained some cuts but no staffing cuts, and the balance submitted to the City Budget Office was maintained for the most part.
 - In the letter we express our appreciation and hopes that we see the same level of funding maintained, in addition to laying out some of the work that the commission will support ARTS with. Will have a draft to Quinton by mid next week for review, Quinton will send to the Executive Committee for review, and will bring an update to our November meeting.
- Black Arts Showcase update
 - Vivian Phillips will be joining us in November to give an update
 - Vivian and Quinton met with Black artists and organizers/leaders and held small workshops on what the purpose and mission of the showcase will be. Mission, vision, and objectives have been identified.

- Vivian and Quinton are working on a proposal and will seek approval from the 5 subcommittees of the project
- ARTS Black Love Union (BLU) update
 - BLU would like to have a more involved role with policy and committees
 - Currently working at executive level to figure out next steps and process on how to invite BLU into subcommittees.
- Next Meeting
 - Hoping to close out the year on a more positive note. Want to remind everyone why we are here and want to invite artists to come and talk about their work. Let's make sure to keep the arts community and art organizations front and center of our work

Directors Report

Briefing: Randy Engstrom

- We are close to getting the Cultural Space Agency PDA charter into the world. Clarifying a few things with the Law department currently.
- Randy is presenting the Hope Corps model to National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and Americans for the Arts next week – keeping the conversation going on what investing in cultural workers, artists, and creatives (especially BIPOC) could look like locally and nationally.
- Directors have been meeting with BLU regularly, in flight with most of the demands that were made including a lot of the work reflected in the BIPOC data presentation as well as how we are setting up our individual and collective goals for 2021.
- Equitable communities initiative taskforce – there will be cultural representatives part of the taskforce (some former SAC members are engaging). As long as community voice is at the center of what we are advocating for we will figure out the authorizing environment to get there. Trying to make sure community is served in the best way it can be and walk our talk when it comes to our commitment to racial equity.
- Individual check-ins are welcome!

Meeting adjourned at 5:18pm.