

## SEATTLE ARTS COMMISSION

Minutes

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Remote – Zoom Conference

**Commissioners present:** Sarah Wilke (Co-Chair), Cassie Chinn, Kayla DeMonte, Holly Jacobson, Yeggy Michael, Steve Galatro, Vivian Hua, Rick Araluce, Vanessa Villalobos, Racquel West, Dawn Chirwa, Ebony Arunga

**Staff in attendance:** Calandra Childers, Allie Lee, Kathy Hsieh, Ashraf Hasham, Erika Lindsay, Kelly Davidson, Alex Rose, Tina LaPadula, Ruri Yampolsky

**Guests:** Carol Roscoe

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

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

Cassie moved to approve the commission minutes from May and June 2021. Rick seconded. Approved.

#### **Public Comment:**

No public comment.

### **Waterfront Art Projects Update**

#### **Briefing: Ruri Yampolsky**

Ruri gave an overview of the Waterfront Art Program. Renderings of the Alaskan Way cross section, protected bike lanes, promenade terraces, the overlook walk, Pioneer Square Beach, Union Street pedestrian bridge, Pike Pine Streetscape, Salish Steps, etc. were shared. Highlights on the guiding art plan include:

- Art projects are funded through the Waterfront program and Elliot Bay Seawall Levy 1% for ARTS. Arts and culture are a key part of the vision for the Waterfront.
- There will be activations and programming before, during, and after construction
  - Permanent commissions will go to artists Stephen Vitiello, Ann Hamilton, Malynn Foster, Tamela Laclair, Kimberly Deriana, Shaun Peterson, Norie Sato, Oscar Tuazon, Randi Purser, Tyson Simmons, Keith Stevenson, Buster Simpson, Derek Bruno and Gage Hamilton. Past work samples from several of these artists were shared.
    - A dedication event for Stephen Vitiello's *Land Buoy Bells* will be on 8/6/2021 at Pier 62. An invite will be sent out to commissioners soon.
- Art projects will help people understand the place they are in. (projects about Indigenous land, culture, and history)
- Pier 62 and 63 activations are in partnership with Friends of Waterfront Seattle. Future Forward Artist in Residence Takiyah Ward is leading the program.

- Adjacent projects include Stewart Wong’s Chinese American Legacy Artwork Project, Dan Friday’s work at the Seattle Aquarium, Elizabeth Conner’s work at Colman Dock, and Leo Berk’s work at King County Water Taxi
- Some projects will not complete until 2024.
- Please contact Ruri Yampolsky at the Office of the Waterfront for additional questions.  
[ruri.yampolsky@seattle.gov](mailto:ruri.yampolsky@seattle.gov)

**SAC Questions/Comments:**

- Feels like the timing turned out to be good - a time when community can benefit the most
  - The diversity of people using Pier 62 is great, everyone feeling they are welcome
- This is one of the largest investments in City’s history; acknowledgement to Ruri and team for working on this project over the years.
- The SAC would like to keep posted on progress so they can spread the news to community and share the project more widely.

**Mayoral Forum/Survey Engagement**

**Briefing: Ashraf Hasham (Stepping in for James Miles)**

SAC and Seattle City of Literature are working in partnership to coordinate a mayoral candidate forum (for Primary) and a pre-survey. Highlights:

- Forum takes place on 7/22 6-8pm. Candidates and moderators will be in-person, audience will view virtually.
- We have RSVPs from over half the candidates
- Partners include SAC, City of Literature, Cultural Districts, Arts Fund, CD Forum, Shun Pike, etc.
- An event registration link will be available no later than tomorrow morning. Allie will follow up.
  - One major request is finalizing questions to send to the moderators – a Google Doc link will be shared.
  - Will also send a link to the survey questions that the candidates are being asked.

**SAC Questions/Comments:**

- Appreciation to Cultural Investment Committee members and partners for coordinating this work.
- This is the moment we can establish constituency and lay groundwork.
- It’s important to show the numbers of folks showing up to this event – please attend and spread the word!

**Cultural Space Agency Update**

**Briefing: Cassie Chinn**

The Cultural Space Agency was established as a PDA late last year and an interim council has been meeting twice a month to help steward ongoing developments. Interim council members include Cassie, Sarah, Vivian Phillips, Tim Lennon, Cote Soerens, and Randy Engstrom. Goals have been to establish the

BASE constituency and committees (joint board governance committee, property investments and programs committee, racial equity committee) and work with committees to establish a permanent council and figuring out how to transition from interim.

- Work completed so far (with appreciation to Matthew Richter who has been carrying a huge load!):
  - Joint board governance committee implemented a permanent council application and selection process
  - Property investments and programs committee have been working to establish an initial pipeline for the evaluation of potential developments. Talking about developments from racial equity and values-oriented lens in addition to nuts and bolts.
  - Cultural Space Agency was recently elevated as a potential partner developer in the City's Strategic Investments program (a 30M fund to help with site acquisition) – shows the great need for something like the PDA for BIPOC community spaces. Matthew is engaging with potentially 18 applications for this round alone.
  - Racial equity committee further developed racial equity values, which is embedded in the charter documents for orgs – want to keep these living and active.
- Upcoming – Permanent council transition, hiring of first staff
- First members of the permanent council are being put through the pipeline right now, but there will be a full second group that comes on in the fall, so applications will continue to be rolling. Will make sure SAC knows about this opportunity.

#### **SAC Questions/Comments:**

- Hearing that the need is greater than dollars – short and long term, what are the potential funding streams, and what can SAC do now to help be competitive down the road?
  - Open to creative ideas for funding. To date, working hand in hand with the Equitable Development Initiative and Strategic Investment Fund administered through OPCD. Through these avenues, there's been initial seed funding when there is a sale of City property – sometimes these sales have been tied to supporting affordable housing, etc. so there may be potential advocacy in that area.
    - The Equitable Development Initiative with the support of Race and Social Equity Taskforce and SouthCORE were able to advocate for tax streams to be able to support the initiative. (5M from the Airbnb tax would go towards EDI)
    - Annual 20M jump start tax to EDI – will make sure this stays within the allocation
  - We often talk about equitable development in the city, but a lot of our community of color have already been forced out/displaced from the city. There is an effort to establish an equitable development initiative in King County as well:  
<https://secure.everyaction.com/kpJuzgjML0SnLq57C0xPRw2?emci=5f32b131-18e0-eb11-a7ad-501ac57b8fa7&emdi=2bc16a67-19e0-eb11-a7ad-501ac57b8fa7&ceid=4515112>
- The first project will be important and the various ways in which community will lift it up will be important in terms of gaining public favor and helping us in advocacy efforts.

## **Co-Chairs Report**

### **Briefing: Sarah Wilke**

- Debrief meeting with Mayor Durkan:
  - Regarding the new ARTS director search, the Mayor really heard the need for deep community engagement and made a huge difference by making a pivot to the path forward. The director appointment will now happen with the next Mayor and we are able to use the next 6 months to think about community engagement and pair this conversation with Mayoral candidate engagements.
    - Regarding the Mayor's comments about interim directors not having as much influence and a new appointment for ARTS being back of line – should we be concerned and how can we prepare?
      - These should be posed as clear asks in mayoral candidate survey/forum questions. We still need candidates who don't win on our side.
      - This can be more about projects – we want to make a case that the next Mayor knows the importance and value of arts. SAC can hand them a package of what it looks like to be successful, and we can do the research ahead of time. The work starts now.
  - Reflecting on how hard it was to get arts as a line item in the budget, and the need to put pressure on electeds to take care of people. The next mayor needs to be a strong advocate of arts – arts has already done so much for the city and we don't want to have to make a case for why arts is important.
  - When can we start talking about 2022-23 budgeting and putting suggestions together?
    - There are two formal opportunities for SAC – the letter that goes to the Mayor in May and the letter to City Council after Mayor transmits budget to Council (last week of September). The executive committee will discuss how to gather that information. We will also reference the letter from May and see what should go forward. Sarah will follow up on this via email.
    - Commissioners meeting with City Council this summer to share priorities and perspectives will be an impactful time on awareness (e.g., how are we putting funding into Cultural Space Agency; admissions tax being down when cultural community needs most support; director search priorities)

## **Director's Report**

### **Briefing: Calandra Childers**

- Deep appreciation to SAC on recent advocacy and mobilizing around the needs of artists and our cultural organizations, which resulted in major changes to the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and what will be available for our cultural sector. It's a true demonstration of the role of SAC as advocates and the incredible impact on policy and budget as a collective.
- Dedicated funding:
  - Created Commons – Public Art program hiring artists to activate neighborhoods. First events kick off 7/17-18 weekend. More info will be provided in follow up email.

- 3M fund (from OED but will be managed by ARTS) towards cultural organizations for restarting/reopening (rehiring staff, paying for rent and utilities, jumpstarting programming, etc.). Currently working on parameters and structure and will keep SAC posted. Also coming from this bucket includes funding for Cultural Districts for their geographically focused work and a dedicated Hope Corps program that is about hiring creative workers to work on storytelling related to gun violence (working with media outlet and King County Public Health).
- 25M direct dollars for low-income individuals – Through our advocacy conversations we were able to get artists and cultural workers added to the list of individuals who might be facing these circumstances. We are working with OIRA on how to get funds out and how to ensure creative workers are part of the folks getting reached out to and getting access. (figuring out how to get partnerships set up with specific arts and culture orgs that are connected with low income BIPOC artists) Please let Calandra know if you know of any orgs to consider.
- Steve will be terming out at the end of the year, and we need to recruit our SAC Commission Appointment. We currently don't have a specific process set for the Commission seat and would like to propose that we use our SAC Matrix to identify our gaps and move forward with recommendations. Please see previous email from Allie and make sure to fill in your information in the SAC Matrix, and at our September meeting we will go over the matrix, identify the gaps and ask commissioners to fill out a nominations form that meet those gaps. Then in October we can vote on those folks and bring them forward in November/December.
- Location for August Picnic - SAC traditionally takes a break from monthly meetings in August. Instead, we have a BBQ/get-together during the same time (second Tuesday at 4pm)! If you have any location ideas/recommendations, please let Allie or Calandra know. Hoping to confirm this next week.

**SAC Questions/Comments:**

- One of the challenges that orgs are facing with reopening is the change of public spaces and public use of cultural institutions which SAM is experiencing related to houseless services. Wondering if there is a connection to this new body of funding and support for orgs that might be grappling with this issue (trying to be sensitive and helpful but also maintain a safe and open environment)?
  - Kathy Hsieh has been supporting this issue - we are trying to put in a request to see what resources might be available, but we are also trying to be cautious and center what we are hearing from BIPOC communities in terms of what their priorities are. We are looking at the health, wellbeing, and safety of communities that have been most deeply impacted and trying to find a good balance that benefits communities of color but might not directly address houseless/public space issue. Also talking to other departments on how to partner and look at issue holistically.
  - Maybe there is a role that the Cultural Districts might play in this conversation in terms of being able to be a provider of support services or a conduit into neighborhoods where there's a high concentration of arts orgs?

Meeting adjourned at 5:30pm.