

SEATTLE ARTS COMMISSION
Minutes
Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, October 10th, 2019
Panel Room, King Street Station

Commissioners present: Sharon Williams (Chair), Jonathan Cunningham, Juan Alonso Rodriguez, Cassie Chinn, Dawn Chirwa, Steve Galatro, Ashraf Hasham, Chieko Phillips, Sarah Wilke

Staff in attendance: Calandra Childers, Randy Engstrom, Kathy Hsieh, Allie Lee, Erika Lindsay

Guests: Kayla DeMonte, Holly Jacobson (new commissioners starting 2020)

Call to Order, Introduction, Land Acknowledgement (4:07)

Approval of Minutes:

Steve moved to approve the minutes from September 2019. Cassie seconded. Approved.

Public Comment:

- No public comment.

2019 Mayor's Arts Awards Debrief

Briefing and Discussion: Sharon Williams/All SAC

Sharon encouraged the SAC to provide their feedback on the event. Highlights include:

- It was a wonderful event and the speeches were moving. Kudos to ARTS staff for putting on the event!
- The rain made it unfortunate to have the reception outdoors. It would be good to have a plan-b for inclement weather. Maybe we could consider Chihuly or other partners on the Seattle Center Campus
 - Our attendance is in the 400-500 so capacity would be an issue for Chihuly. Chihuly is also open to the public.
- The schedule felt a bit tight on time. Maybe the duration could be a little longer next time
- Next time we need to get the word out about pre-celebration better so everyone can be in the pictures
 - The event occurs when there are a lot of other city-wide events happening and a lot people going on vacation.
- This year the Mayor selected awardees from candidates submitted by the SAC, but 2 years ago she added names that were not from our list. In such instances, it would be helpful to get clarity on criteria

SAC Questions/Comments:

- A month after the MAA, news came out about Intiman Theatre's financial problems. Did the Mayor have any thoughts about this news, and is there anything that could have been done to prevent it - in terms of being able provide the Mayor with a full picture of the candidate?
 - ARTS has not heard anything from the Mayor's Office regarding this news

- We would not have been able to predict such news. The award is about the candidates' work as artists, not about their financial situation. Submitting financial information is not part of the award process and we cannot blame the organization for being nominated.
- They have interim leadership and are confident about resolving the issue and raising \$200k. For details, see the Crosscut article and follow-up letter on Intiman's Facebook page.

City Council Candidate Cultural Sector Forum Debrief

Briefing: Sharon Williams

Sharon attended the Council forum on 10/7 and presented for District 3. She and a few other commissioners who attended the event provided a recap. Highlights include:

- Overall, the event was not well attended, and it wasn't clear if any of the candidates had a commitment to arts. Most of them only talked about their personal experience with arts rather than cultural issues affecting our city.
 - If the room were fuller, there would have been more back and forth
 - The Creative Advantage was mentioned a few times
 - Manny and Andy worked hard to put on this event. The nature of forums made it difficult, hard to get excited about, and hard to get people out to
- There weren't any thoughts presented on the NHL team, admission tax, or transportation issues at the Seattle Center.
- The forum format was problematic for any depth of conversation. Wondering if there was any core civic engagement that happened.
 - No two district questions were the same. They were community-driven and district-based
- There wasn't much effort seen in terms of pre-research on ARTS or OFMSE work, but overall, candidates seemed supportive of our agencies. The commission needs to have a more sophisticated conversation with candidates
 - The commission needs to figure out how we want to show up at candidate forums in the future. **Let's put this on the workplan for next year**
 - How does the commission want to move forward with the new Council?
 - Invite candidates to committee meetings and commission meetings
 - Invite candidates to 2 (commissioners) on 1 (candidate) meetings
- Candidates need to center racial equity related to historic injustices in the city, which are different from geographic/district equity issues. We need to talk more about unified issues we have
- **Let's look for events coming up where commissioners can be present and lift up issues running up to the election**
- We need to think about how to connect cultural/arts issues with top issues like homelessness, crime, and affordability. It's often hard to have arts related conversations with other pressing issues at stake

Facilities and Equitable Development Committee Update

1. Briefing: Cassie Chinn and Sarah Wilke

Cassie and Sarah provided a recap of the **Tiny Cultural Space visit** to Sawhorse in Columbia City. The idea around the Tiny Cultural Space work is to reallocate small spaces to be used for cultural activities. This particular space will become a small library and community meeting space. FED met with the person running the library.

- The FED received feedback from the grantee that the application process was simple and got rid of barriers that usually exist when applying for grants. They felt anyone could participate and the process was as simple as writing a letter and telling us what they needed. Receiving a grant meant a lot to them because it showed that Seattle is serious about displacement and that re-emerging in a neighborhood that is being displaced can be done.
- The work is positioned at an intersection between history and community engagement
- The process worked because of the leverage everyone brought from their relationships and partners.
- One hurdle we have is that permitting costs a lot more than we thought. A code change will need to happen

2. Briefing: Cassie Chinn

Cassie provided an update on the **cultural space PDA**. Cassie, Sarah, Matt, and Randy went to the council committee presentation, council was excited about supporting the PDA and wanted to know about timeline. We are heading towards a tangible - hopefully - demonstration project and will be pitching the demonstration project to the Mayor.

- Once the Mayor hears the pitch and green lights it, we can share more information – most likely before the joint commission retreat in November.

Public Art Advisory Committee Update

Briefing: Juan Alonso Rodriguez and Steve Galatro

Juan and Steve provided an update on staff transitions and committee appointments:

- Public Art Program Director Ruri Yampolsky will be working for the Office of the Waterfront starting October, and Calandra Childers will be taking over interim leadership
- Juan will not be seeking reappointment in 2020
- 2 design commissioners will be terming out soon
- We need one more arts commissioner to join the PAAC. Juan held the role of a working artist, and as we think about new appointments and type of skillsets to bring on to the commission let's consider that role
- Staff and committee appointment changes brings opportunity to activate visionary ideas

SAC Appointments Update

Briefing: Randy Engstrom

Randy provided an update on commissioners terming out and new commissioners (starting 2020):

- Juan (Council) will not be seeking reappointment
- Sharon (Council) will be terming out
- Jonathan (Mayoral) will be terming out
- Holly Jacobson (Council), Kayla DeMonte (Mayoral), Mikhael Williams (Mayoral), James Miles (Mayoral), and Sheila Ghaibi (Get Engaged) will be joining the commission as voting members starting 2020

SAC Questions/Comments:

- Are we collecting recommendations for the seats opening up?

- Not at the moment. Let's figure out the commission's work and community's needs first at the November retreat, then prioritize work, then collect recommendations
- We can reconfigure existing commissioners' involvement with committees
- Community advocates can serve on subcommittees without being on the commission

Director's Report

Briefing: Randy Engstrom

There will be a SAC/SMC Joint Retreat on 11/13 (W) 10am-4pm (location TBD). The last hour (3-4pm) will be a public meeting of both commissions and we will provide a summary of what comes out of the retreat. We may have a happy hour reception afterwards, 4-5pm, if people aren't too tired.

- Vivian Phillips will facilitate the retreat. We will present data from this summer's community engagement (Vivian's report and contract work commissioned with Ostara, Andy Fife, and Leah Baltus), discuss what the work means through a race and social justice lens, and present a synthesis of all reports.
 - Randy and Vivian will be building the retreat structure next week
- We will look at current structures (commissions, subcommittees, film taskforce) and community recommendations to align cultural advocacy work
- We will figure out what is commission work vs. staff work
- For our Racial Equity Toolkit process, we will ask questions around:
 - Gig workers and the changing nature of our workforce
 - What branding and identity should look like for cultural advocacy
 - What barriers exist
 - A collective impact model
 - Commissions' leadership/civic development potential
 - How special events, film, and the creative industries team fit in with SAC and SMC work and what advocacy leadership should look like
- Seeking recommendations for the location of the retreat
- We must be accountable to our community and will hold a share-back event on 12/4 at Langston

SAC Questions/Comments:

- The SAC would like to know what specific input they can provide. Randy responded that questions that drive the Racial Equity Toolkit should be prioritized
- The SAC thinks it will be good to have a reception after the retreat
- Ashraf noted that The Vera Project is available on 11/13 to hold the retreat, if needed
- The SAC would like to know if there are any materials to read prior to the retreat and that they would like to spend some time with it if possible. Randy responded that there will be materials provided 1-2 weeks before the retreat, and that we will be leaning on the synthesis/findings of all reports to guide the retreat

Chair's Report

Briefing: Sharon Williams

- Congratulations to Juan who will be a 2019 Governor's Arts and Heritage Award recipient!
- Congratulations to Priya who was named to Puget Sound Business Journal's 40 Under 40 list!

- We need representatives from the SAC on the Langston board. Those interested should let Sharon or Inye Wokoma know.
- Spread the word: Jack Straw Cultural Center residency applications are open for visual media artists, writers, etc.

Cultural Investments Committee Update

Briefing: Calandra Childers

Calandra presented a change in how we will review and approve recommendations from grant funding panels, which represents a modification in how the Cultural Partnerships team will interact with the Arts Commission. This change includes the following:

- At the beginning of each grant cycle, we will invite all Project Managers to attend the full Seattle Arts Commission meeting to present the grant opportunity, share the specifics of the criteria and encourage Commissioners to share with their networks
- We will formalize the invitation for Commissioners to sit in on panel processes as observers – this invitation can happen at the SAC meeting, with plenty of notice to get it on calendars.
- Once the panel is complete, we will send the “Report” (which includes recommendations for funded partners, as well as a set of demographic and other information about applicants and recipients) to the Cultural Investments Committee for approval. Since they have the most hands-on expertise with the goals and guidelines, this advisory body makes the most sense for approving (vs. the full Commission).
- We will continue to provide the reports in with the full SAC agenda packets, so they are available for the larger group to peruse.
- The CIC will also take lead on discussing the specific grant programs, updates we’re looking at year-over-year, and trends in outcomes.

We hope this change will allow us to get dedicated support for the program in the CIC, where these programs are discussed more in-depth and hopefully maintain knowledge within the group; align with how the Public Art Advisory Committee functions as a subject matter-specific and approving committee; and still provide time for face-to-face meetings with the full Commission.

Cultural Facilities Fund Vote

Briefing: Kathy Hsieh

Kathy provided an overview of the panel recommendations for the 2019 Cultural Facilities and Rainmaker Funds. Reports detailing the panel recommendations and panelist feedback were provided via email prior to the meeting for SAC’s review. Highlights include:

- 100% of the panelists were people of color
- The fund includes opportunities following the Racial Equity Toolkit’s recommendations
- Racial inclusion continuum: ARTS has created a way of categorizing arts and cultural organizations using a Racial Inclusion Continuum based on a definition of POC Organizations we created in 2016. We use these categorizations as a way to meet our goal of becoming more equitable in our investments into communities of color.
- Award vs. Funding: An award means the recipient is receiving some size of a grant or (token) award. Funding refers to the actual \$ amount and how much of the dollars actually went to communities (and not just simply received a grant).

- There were 5 organizations that applied last year and didn't get anything, but were awarded this year
- Please do not share the recommendations until we get all the awards and notices out

SAC Questions/Comments:

- Facilities and Equitable Development Committee is interested in in the Cultural Facilities Fund and would like to discuss the possibility of integrating in the plan
- This Cultural Facilities Report will be the last full report and approval to go to the SAC. From here on out, we will send these reports through the CIC and require a quorum of the CIC membership to approve.
- Thank you Kathy for managing this process!

Approval of Recommendations:

Cassie moved to approve the Cultural Facilities Fund recommendations. Sarah seconded. Approved.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:40pm.