

SEATTLE ARTS COMMISSION

Minutes

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, June 9th, 2020

Remote – Zoom Conference

Commissioners present: Priya Frank (Chair), Quinton Morris, Steven Galatro, Cassie Chinn, Sarah Wilke, Sheila Ghaibi, James Miles, Chieko Phillips, Jescelle Major, Kayla DeMonte, Mikhael Mei Williams, Holly Jacobson, Tracy Rector

Staff in attendance: Calandra Childers, Randy Engstrom, Allie Lee, Ashraf Hasham, Alex Rose, Erika Lindsay, Kelly Davidson, Dominique Stephens (MO), Meghan Sebold (OED)

Guests: Elizabeth Ralston (Seattle Cultural Accessibility Consortium), Reese Tanimura (Seattle Music Commission)

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

Approval of Minutes:

Cassie moved to approve the commission minutes from May 2020. Kayla seconded. Approved.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Cultural Accessibility Presentation

Briefing: Elizabeth Ralston, Seattle Cultural Accessibility Consortium

Elizabeth provided a slide presentation on how the Seattle Cultural Accessibility Consortium (SCAC) connects arts and culture organizations with information and resources to improve accessibility for people of all abilities. Slides can be viewed [HERE](#). Highlights include:

- SCAC benefits arts organizations with professional development and training, website-central clearinghouse of resources, and an equipment loan program
- 2019 accomplishments – steering committee formed, 3 well-attended workshops around access (with captioning available), meet and greets, shared info on what it means for a performance to be accessible, created Facebook page
- 2020 work - [First virtual workshop](#) in May, new brand identity, website and YouTube page, and will participate in the ADA 30th anniversary activities in July
- How the Arts Commission can support - Advocate for accessibility on social media channels, training/accessibility audit at organizations, make sure commission has people with disabilities as members, develop accessibility statement, funding, refer individuals to SCAC, attend workshops, space and staffing for equipment loan program
- If organizations incorporate accessibility in their budgets in the beginning, it will help save money in the long run

SAC Comments/Questions:

- Holly appreciated the presentation and will make sure to cross promote
- Priya asked if there was any feedback received about the May virtual workshop. Elizabeth responded that people found helpful how to integrate accessibility in their marketing efforts, learned the difference between d/Deaf and hard of hearing, and learned about people who don't sign and oral deaf people who rely on captioning. There is no cookie cutter approach, especially with artistic people, and the virtual platform worked better for many.

Director's Report

Briefing: Randy Engstrom, Calandra Childers

- The ARTS Office and Arts Commission appreciate Priya and Quinton for their leadership on the Black Lives Matter solidarity statements; they encouraged/requested both the Commission and Office to quickly act and get a message out, especially asking non-BIPOC to lean into the fight.
 - Budget and recovery are two things we can support; these are ways we can demonstrate our values in a real and tangible way. We need to get to action now.
- City work has now shifted from triage/relief to recovery/reopening/reimagination space
 - BLM events have slowed down the process of the recovery subcabinet, but we have a chance to center the needs of community with community at the table
 - Randy is co-chairing a community resilience subcabinet (economic recovery that centers workers, near term community support, and civic reimagination)
 - Work to potentially involve green new deal, digital equity initiative, multi-year infrastructure projects, future of work/structural rethinking
 - Those already vulnerable have been hit the hardest and COVID-19 was an accelerant. We can design and advocate for a better system on the other side and would like to engage the Commission in this work, both short term and long term, maybe through an advisory task force
- [Seattle Together](#) - BIPOC voices will continue to be important in bringing the city back together and the Seattle Together initiative will be an enabling strategy.

SAC Comments/Questions:

- Cassie – Regarding civic reimagination and inclusion of multi-year infrastructure projects, there's opportunities within that realm for City to use racial equity values to inform how communities hold space in the city. Larger multi-year projects are often systematically large machines that just go and cause harm - Arts and our work can play a central role in how to improve these larger projects.
- Holly – Sounds like a lot of work is shifting at the City with a new subcabinet structure and hoping a chart can be shared to inform those in this group who are not as familiar with the ecosystem of City structure.
 - Randy can provide a distillation of the reopening and recovery chart to SAC
- Kayla – What is the budget letter in response to?
 - There are two budget response letters that SAC is responsible for. The current one is a budget priorities request to the Mayor as they are shaping the budget. Once the budget gets transmitted to Council in the fall, there is a response letter to Council asking them to consider the priorities and any other additional items.

- Quinton – Appreciates the group for their feedback on BLM solidarity statements and to Calandra for opening up space to engage in dialogue about it. SAC leadership put together a strategy very quickly, personally reached out to black artists (leaders) in the community and asked what they wanted to hear from the City. Felt it was carefully crafted before releasing to the public and appreciated SAC/ARTS for keeping racial equity/anti-racism front and center. Not all our local institutions are putting out statements like this.
- Sheila – Institutions should not be silent. Have open dialogue conversations with your employers.
- Priya – Appreciates the space to congregate and talk through what we have been experiencing. ARTS is a powerful space to make a call for action, there are people that will listen and say “how can the ARTS office show up for you.” Thank you, ARTS, for listening, being proactive, and for the quick results.
- Sarah – If a City puts out a strong statement, local organizations will use it as an example/resource to craft their own, which is powerful.

Chairs’ Report

Briefing: Priya Frank, Quinton Morris

- Priya and Quinton will start working on the budget letter – would appreciate help from SAC/Executive Committee with crafting the letter and being thoughtful about our work.
 - Steve is willing to help.
- **Mayor’s Arts Awards 2020 Discussion:**
 - Large groups will not be able to gather by August/September. Potential alternatives?
 - We need a different version of the past event because it doesn’t feel appropriate to single out people and organizations for awards, given what the pandemic has done to the sector. This is a moment to lift up the entire sector and celebrate how arts and culture has nourished us during trying times.
 - We need an event that brings people together – we can produce an event that is broadcast over a channel and have watch parties in neighborhoods across the city with under 50 people gatherings.
 - Consider changing the date from Labor Day weekend to sometime in Fall.
 - Can we change the name “Mayor’s Arts Awards”? People may not feel great about it at this time and it sounds hierarchical. What about something like “People’s Arts Awards”?
 - We need a targeted but purposeful event celebrating/dedicated to Black arts in the city. Artists are uplifting the BLM movement right now, so let’s roll with that.
 - We still want to honor the people who have been nominated. ARTS is working on putting together a committee of community folks who want to support MAA planning efforts. ARTS will get invitations out to community soon.
 - Maybe potential collaboration with cultural districts, music commission, film taskforce, etc.?
 - What is the amount of resources that can be spent on this, and would that be the best use of funds at this time?
 - ARTS is investigating costs right now and how much will go out to fund artists.

- The needs of the event are different this year. The event is for the arts community to come together and recognize what we are going through. That space is important and needed.
- What are next steps?
 - Get invitations out to community collaborators.
 - Get save-the-date out by the end of June – not a priority though.
 - MAA planning committee reconvenes to recap and talk through name, planning, budget, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 5:32pm.