



SEATTLE ARTS COMMISSION

Draft Minutes

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

City Hall, Room 370

Commissioners present: Juan Alonso-Rodriguez, Jeff Benesi, Cassie Chinn, Dawn Chirwa, Jonathan Cunningham, Priya Frank, Steve Galatro, Terri Hiroshima (Co-Chair), Ana Lester, Vivian Phillips (Chair), Tracy Rector, S. Surface, Sharon Williams.

Staff in attendance: Calandra Childers, Randy Engstrom, and Amber Rose Jimenez

Call to Order:

Vivian Phillips called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m., with an acknowledgement that we are meeting on Indigenous land, that of the Coastal Salish people.

Approval of the February Retreat minutes

Tracy moved to approve the February minutes, with one change in the Artist Performance section, "*it presents a significant cost-barrier since affordability within the Central Area is rapidly decreasing.*" Steve seconded. All present approved.

Vivian moved to adjust the agenda, to include a discussion of the passing of recent members in the community.

Directors Report

ARTS presented the 2016 RSJI work of the office to City Council, noting a significant overlap in connection to the work of the Seattle Arts Commission. One highlight was the racial equity statement co-developed with the Commission.

Vivian set up a meeting with the Mayor for Wednesday, March 15th and will inquire about how we can bring artists to the table for HALA, the Equitable Development Initiative, and how we can help the mayor advance his agenda.

The DIY Spaces conversation is moving forward, in coordination with the Fire Dept. to develop meaningful response to the Commission's letter. The Mayor announced the state of emergency on homelessness last year, and has recently opened the Emergency Operations Center—the center typically addresses an environmental crisis causing massive displacement, and yet this scenario is targeting unprecedented levels of homelessness. He's asked all departments to be a part of this effort; ARTS are working through the possibilities.



In the context of the question, “Who benefits the most and who is accountable to addressing this problem of homelessness,” a growing concern on the impact of gentrification and rapid development of the City centered on:

- Many artists and cultural workers are losing studio space, affordable housing, and more
- The gap between a progressive public art percentage, and the lack of incentive or requirement to include funds for including art within new developments to balance the rapid gentrification
- The impact of arts programs having a greater effect on youth than jailing them; there is an upcoming King County vote on the new youth jail—what is the role of the Mayor in this?
- What will keep the culture here in Seattle? What policies can we help change to address this displacement issue? What is the role of developers?
- A big push for Matthew’s work was creating an incentive for creating cultural space in new buildings. How can we be the L(livability) in HALA and the E(equitable) in EDI?
- San Francisco looking at tapping into Architecture (architecture/design) to build micro-housing for homeless—how can we integrate affordable, inviting spaces into the community?

Access for All (CAWA)

Reflections regarding the strategic focus of the campaign’s efforts around community based organizations, as well as incorporating equity and social justice were highlighted as needing improvement; Commissioners were also challenged by the current narrative of Access for All. The King County Council will vote on the ordinance on April 22, 2017.

Commissioners noted that there is no greater opportunity to stand in our mission given the current conditions, and cited recent improvements in the legislation, given advocacy efforts thus far. A discussion of voter fatigue over the many recent local tax increases and the preexisting deficit in public safety and infrastructure funding prompted the question of how the SAC could best engage in communications and advocacy for Access for All.

- Commissioners discussed their role in communicating the need for funding that would channel through Access for All, and the possible advocacy work that could unfold, given the strong racial equity lens that frames the work of SAC. Folks agreed that they would like to see greater access for the arts. Given threats to funding for federal programs like the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Access for All arrives at a critical time in the community.
- Consensus about the need to communicate how art benefits the whole community and how it is a strategy for community development and economic vitality. Access for all is an investment in the community; folks need to feel like they’ll benefit more financially if they’re asked to be taxed.



A proposal was made to postpone a decision on advocacy for Access for All until learning about the federal budget for the NEA and NEH, with an update on how the legislation is moving through Council later in April, and before it goes to the ballot.

SAC Council Vacancy

Dr. Quinton Morris was confirmed through Council Committee on March 14th, and is on track toward full Council approval by next Monday.

Community Members: Legacy

Jonathan Moore (Wordsayer, Source of Labor) passed away at 47 last week. Vickie Williams, the owner of The Life Enrichment Bookstore passed away as well. While there is no existing protocol on how to honor the legacy and contributions of community members who have recently passed away, the commission will pursue an immediate strategy of issuing a statement on Jonathan Moore, and pursue a longer termed approach in developing the protocol, and exploring how to include within the Mayor's Arts Awards.

Questions about how the Commission could respond ranged from working with ARTS to commission a mural, issuing a Lifetime Achievement Arts Award or acknowledgement, and issuing a proclamation for Jonathan Moore Day to proclaim his significance to the community in music and arts. Commissioners also discussed how to honor folks by naming a room, hall, or building in honor on their behalf, or working within cultural districts and information hubs to honor the legacy. A concern about adding an acknowledgment into a preexisting cultural space, rather than a more centralized location like King Street Station, would miss an opportunity to share about the contributions of critical community leaders.

There was a decision to draft a proclamation by Jonathan, Priya, and Vivian, with staff providing support and consulting with law on sending flowers for the service.

2017 Work Plan

An overview of all Commission Committees' Work Plan priorities was discussed. The Commission decided to postpone a vote to approve the plan until the April SAC meeting, pending refinement of Youth & Communities priorities.

The Commission decided to move forward with organizing a full racial equity refresher, with a possible meeting structure to feature morning training for folks newer to the framework, and the afternoon section to use the racial equity lens to activate the workplan priorities.

Amber Rose will invite Diana Falchuk to the April Meeting to discuss options and format.

The Meeting Adjourned at 5:31pm