

SEATTLE ARTS COMMISSION

Minutes

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, May 12th, 2020

Remote – Zoom Conference

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

Staff in attendance: Calandra Childers, Randy Engstrom, Allie Lee, Ashraf Hasham, Kathy Hsieh, Alex Rose, Erika Lindsay, Matthew Richter, Otts Bolisay, Kelly Davidson

Guests: Mayor Jenny Durkan, Reese Tanimura (SMC), Dominique Stephens (MO)

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

Approval of Minutes:

Dawn moved to approve the commission minutes from April 2020. Sarah seconded. Approved.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Updates

- Chieko: 4Culture is extending the deadline for the Cultural Relief Program. Individuals and organizations can apply until 6/5. Please email questions to Chieko.
- Reese:
 - Youth internship opportunities are posted at Northwest Folklife: <https://www.nwfolklife.org/ccwdinternships/>
 - Northwest Folklife Festival goes virtual 5/23-25: <https://www.nwfolklifestreaming.org/>

Mayor Jenny Durkan Meet & Greet

- Mayor Durkan appreciated the commission for their community-centered work during our public health crisis. She acknowledged the systemic inequities that our city is experiencing, that our arts organizations are deeply hurt, and that the City is rooting its operations in equity to build back and build better. Mayor Durkan believes that we can reimagine our city and build resilience through arts and culture.
- The SAC asked how racial equity plays into recovery and providing support to vulnerable communities. Mayor Durkan responded that it is the guiding principle of the City's operations. People of color are bearing a disproportionate burden of COVID-19, both public health-wise and economically. So not only do we provide immediate relief to the most impacted communities, but as we rebuild, we must intentionally build an economy that is more inclusive and shift the burden to those who can afford it more. The Cabinet is building a recovery taskforce looking

specifically at racial impacts and how to build an economy that works for more people, more fairly and more justly.

- The SAC asked what the Mayor's goals for Mayor's Arts Awards are this year. The Mayor responded that she would like to find ways to do it and feels that showcasing artists is important during these times as people are looking for things that bring them together.

Data Presentation: Economic Impact of COVID-19

Briefing: Mytoan Nguyen-Akbar

Mytoan overviewed data collected from Office of Economic Development (OED) COVID-19 survey. This was a region-wide survey and the City is connecting with other art agencies across WA to be a connection point in terms of data so we can reduce survey fatigue for our community. Presentation slides were shared to the group prior to the meeting via email. Highlights:

- Most events have been canceled
- Half of the creative businesses that responded were gig workers
- Information was based on large arts representation of data sets collected in the last two weeks of March
 - Acknowledges the uncertainty in data, underreporting, and that the results might be different with POC analysis
 - There is overlap between certain categories, for example "creative businesses" and "arts entertainment"
- Mytoan shared stories/quotes from POC gig workers/freelancers and arts non-profit orgs
- [Second round of the OED survey](#) is now live through 5/21
- There will be a comprehensive report
- Future opportunities for data collection
 - We need a better understanding of disproportionate rates of relief and loan access by race
 - We need a better understanding of what artists and arts organizations need to resume their livelihoods, by each stage of Gov. Inslee's stay at home orders.

SAC Questions/Comments:

- Cassie – What does the data mean for reopening decisions/strategy, and what does reopening look like amidst disproportionate rates of relief and impact and hate on Asian/Asian Americans/communities of color?
 - Mytoan - That will be addressed in OED's next steps. Seeing this data mapped in a dashboard will tell us impact by neighborhood and communities. Also, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) is working on an intake form/survey to capture incidents of non-emergency hate/bias incidents
 - Dominique - King County is also working on this data:
<https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/data/race-ethnicity.aspx>
 - Mytoan – The current data is not in publishable form. Once three rounds of surveys are complete, there will be a comprehensive narrative to be shared out with recommendations.
- Mytoan – We can use art as a tool to build inclusion (for example, Monyee Chau's work in the CID)

- Meghan – The survey shows artists are the first and hardest hit. We need to look to this group and creative cornerstone groups to figure out what recovery should look like.
- Shelia – What comes after the data?
 - Advocacy for the sector. The arts sector was hit earliest and will probably be the last to recover. We want to use this data in our advocacy framework and figure out where/how to provide resources. We also want to think about what we can do right now to build resiliency equitably, in a way that aligns with our values.

Director's Report

Briefing: Randy Engstrom & Calandra Childers

1. We hope that by the end of June there will be a federal relief package for our needs. Cabinet conversations have started on recovery and rebuilding a civic narrative that leans into our social justice values and figuring out what policy/programmatic interventions need to happen in that space. Thinking about:
 - What community wealth building looks like at scale, what the Cultural Space Agency would look like
 - Infrastructure projects that set up the future economy we need and center communities that have been historically left out
 - WPA model
 - Inclusive creative economy
2. Budget update – The City/ARTS will face a reduced budget in 2021 and beyond, and by mid-June ARTS will need to submit a reduced budget to the City Budget Office. ARTS staff have been internally and collaboratively discussing budget strategies and also seeks input from SAC on the following questions:
 - Value of maintaining the current number of grants, at lower levels; vs. fewer grants at maintained or higher levels (aka – do we become more competitive or more impactful)
 - Value of dollars out the door vs. technical assistance, professional development, and other kinds of support (aka – highest and best use of limited funds)
 - Flexibility of programs (creating wide open opportunities) vs. targeted interventions that respond to specific racial equity outcome goals

SAC Comments:

- Cassie - re: Mytoan's data presentation, there is a high need for flexibility when it comes to cash flow – the data is an indication that POC communities are impacted even harder and will take longer to recover. Would like to see money out the door because individuals and organizations need to have the flexibility to use cash right now. This needs to be centered in community led POC organizations. There are also historically redlined communities in our city/communities of opportunity – use this as a lens for investment as well. Previously there was talk about the potential reallocation of civic partners funds – maybe this is an opportunity to take that to the next step – being able to look into the civic partners investments and redistribute with a racial equity lens in mind all the more.
- Steve – Bail out funds aren't enough and won't last in the long term for individuals and organizations. How do we invest in community to build capacity amongst themselves longer term in exciting ways, and center communities of color (in terms of who gets access to those

opportunities)? Maybe coming out of COVID-19, we can think about redirecting resources to impacted API communities.

- Sarah – There is truly limited access on the horizon for art participation. Concerned about how organizations are going to bring in the funds and who they are prioritizing when there are fewer seats and fewer people coming through their doors. Worried that if we don't lead with our values of messaging, we are tolerating some of the decisions already being made by people in our community and organizations. Feels it is important that, even if we add flexibility into using the racial equity lens, that we place that as part of the messaging of the City, which will help some of the thought processes of organizations.
- Priya – the City has been a convener for many arts organizations and sets the tone of what Seattle prioritizes. We need equity to be central to everything and set an example for organizations.

Chair's Report

Briefing: Priya Frank & Quinton Morris

- There will be advocacy opportunities for plans we are hearing about; ARTS decision-making and putting commissioners' names behind things that could benefit from SAC participation.
- The ARTS budget priorities letter is due at the end of the month.
 - We have existing initiatives, and now we are changing the messaging to be in response to COVID-19. We need our creative community to be the foundation of our recovery strategy.
 - The commission owns the letter, so any thoughts on direction are welcome
- Co-chairs welcome feedback on the 2020 Mayor's Arts Awards. Please email Quinton on suggestions/ideas.
 - There are mixed feelings about the Mayor's Arts Awards. Do we have an adapted version of it, or do we redirect resources to community rather than selected artists? Is this our come back moment?

Meeting adjourned at 5:30pm.