**SEATTLE ARTS COMMISSION**

Minutes

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, October 10, 2023

In-Person @ Path with Art

**Commissioners present:** Vanessa Villalobos, Kayla DeMonte, Holly Jacobson, Leslie Anderson, Athena Scott, Yeggy Michael

**Staff in attendance**: Gülgün Kayim, Allie Lee

**Guests:** Chris Swenson, Theresa Kouo, Alicia Teel, Megan Kiskaddon, Tom Florino, Champ Ensminger, Budi Mulyo, Tor Dietrichson,

**Call to Order, Introduction, Land Acknowledgement (4:18)**

**Public Comment:**

* No public comment.

**Co-Chairs Report**

**Briefing: Vanessa Villalobos**

* SAC has been collaborating with the Seattle Film Commission (SFC) on the recommendations for the public benefits package for [the amendment to fund SIFF to reopen Cinerama which passed Seattle City Council](https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/siff-funding-reopen-cinerama-approved/281-00b26fec-6364-4c2d-8e28-d4cc4875d3ed)
* SAC has been trying to connect with the work of the Indigenous Advisory Council. We feel it is important for them to be aware of issues of cultural space and there may be potential connection points with the FED committee.
* SAC is currently low on membership. Active recruitment is needed and encourages all to get the word out. Please nominate people from community and let the group know.
  + City boards and commissions application link: <https://www.seattle.gov/boards-and-commissions>

**Downtown Activation Plan Progress Presentation  
Briefing: Alicia Teel (OED)**Office of Economic Development (OED) External Deputy Director Alicia Teel gave a slideshow presentation on the progress of Mayor Harrell’s Downtown Activation Plan work. Strategy consultant Kinetic West team was also present. Highlights:

* DAP zone includes Belltown, Chinatown-International District (CID), Commercial Core, Denny Triangle, Pioneer Square, and the Stadium District.
* The 7 pillars of DAP are:
  + Make Downtown safe and welcoming
  + Transform Downtown into a lively neighborhood where most people can afford to live
  + Create a unique Downtown retail experience
  + Make Downtown a place where people want to work and that reflects the future of our economy
  + Celebrate Downtown Seattle’s arts, culture, sports, and entertainment
  + Make Downtown a top destination for Seattleites and visitors year-round
  + Create a healthy, resilient, and green Downtown
* Launched in June 2023.
* Overview of early initiative progress (residential, retail, workers, culture, tourism, green)
* Introduction of “Space Needle Thinking” – innovative spirit of Space Needle
  + Mercado: market for Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color
  + Makers Campus for Experimental Learning
  + Downtown Arts, Culture, and Entertainment District
  + Year-Round Play

*Contracting with Kinetic West and Third Way Creative on cultural strategies.*

* Community engagement – the success of DAP relies on ensuring the City’s priorities reflect those of the Seattle community.
  + Continuous feedback through public engagements and feedback form
  + Continuing to build awareness and excitement around Downtown Activation to maintain momentum going into the Fall and Winter
  + Focus audience segments – families, downtown residents, downtown workers, first floor retail small business owners
* Progress and accountability
  + “Downtown is you” [website](https://www.downtownisyou.com/)
  + Downtown recovery [dashboard](https://www.seattle.gov/office-of-economic-development/dap-dashboard)
  + Good News Downtown Weekly Newsletter

**Questions & Comments:**

* VV – What is the timeline?
  + AT – Looking at 1-3 year for short to mid-term goals and 5-10 years for long terms goals such as the Space Need Thinking strategy. 2024 will be about stakeholder engagement and testing out seed funding
* YM – Are businesses that were impacted by Covid being approached for support?
  + AT – OED has programs through our small business division/navigation team providing technical assistance. We also have a community wealth building team looking at tenant improvement, retail matchmaking, and tracking equity metrics.
* HJ – In terms of connecting with the broader arts and culture community, what would you like from SAC? What is SAC’s role in this?
  + AT – Providing feedback on what resonates with you and what you want to see prioritized; what feels workable in terms of the strategies presented; who else do we need to talk to in community
  + HJ - Downtown didn’t have a sense of belonging for community for a long time, and need to incorporate more community voices
* GK – Between ARTS and OED budget for DAP, there is a lot of room for collaboration.
  + Seattle Center is also thinking about what concerts and events to bring to it
* HJ – What about affordable housing? Artists are being pushed out to the margins
* VV – SAC is trying to build relations with Councilmembers. Can OED facilitate conversations around what outreach could look like that could go to each district? There is a sense of not belonging because folks are being pushed out of downtown. In our relationship building with Councilmembers we want to continue to ask what does outreach really mean and challenge them to create a unified identity with investments, like the Waterfront.
  + GK – Randy is working on the waterfront activation plan with Friends of Waterfront and intentionally tackling this very issue; maybe we can invite Randy to speak to this plan.
  + AT – We are also intentionally trying to include youth.

**Director’s Report   
Briefing: Gülgün Kayim**

* High level overview of ARTS 2024 budget proposal
  + Key highlights – extend Hope Corps, support creative economy and activate King Street Station, one-time support to arts and cultural orgs recovering from the pandemic., support for ongoing grants
  + More City budget info here: <https://www.seattle.gov/city-budget-office/budget-archives/2023-2024-proposed-mid-biennial-budget-adjustments>
  + SAC is working on a budget response letter to Council
  + Council Budget Public Hearing Dates – 10/18 (W) 5pm and 11/13 (M) 5pm. Link to more info on the budget process and how to participate: <https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/select-budget-committee#participate>

**Questions & Comments:**

* VV – The demand has increased but there has been no increase in grants for the past decade. Need continued commitment to grants / support for grassroot artists.
  + GK – The 2M (Hope Corps and KSS activation) is one-time funding but there is 260K to support ongoing grants.
    - VV – With that large amount of funding, how are we making sure that we are also funding the creative process and that the funding is not just tied to workforce, social justice, etc.? Of the 2M, what amount can actually mean something for just creativity?
    - GK – It can mean a lot especially regarding downtown activation, permissions, supporting KSS 2nd floor, youth, etc. There is a lot of potential.
* HJ – Is the DAP funding separate?
  + GK – OED and ARTS each have separate buckets of money for Downtown Activation. The DAP presentation earlier from OED is funded through OED’s bucket. ARTS presented to the Mayor on how KSS is an unrealized asset/potential cultural hub and the investment needed to allow activation to happen.
* YM – re: activating spaces – there is a need to find permanent spaces for artists in the city.
  + GK – OED is doing the work on filling storefronts and finding space. ARTS’ work/role is to ask the question on how to occupy those spaces, how to make it sustainable for artists, and how to train artists to sustain businesses. OED and ARTS have different roles but should work collaboratively.
  + GK – we also have a collaborative relation with the Cultural Space Agency
* TF – What is being done collectively to create creator and maker spaces in the city/urban centers? The work and intention is great but it is a labyrinth to navigate and pull this together.
* VV – The Facilities and Equitable Development (FED) Committee of SAC discusses and advocates for issues around cultural space; one of our Councilmembers had an interest in doing an inventory of all vacant spaces as a starting point– such information usually sits with consultants and agencies. It would be great for corporate partners to share this type of information – encourages to attend SAC or committee meetings to connect.
* VV – Also interested in seeing how we can spread the wealth and invest in areas beyond downtown area

**Committee Updates   
Briefing: Committee Co-Chairs**

* PAAC – Recommended approval of the Chief Sealth Trail Project; discussed the draft public art roster proposal, encouraging greater equity in the new 2024 roster; received an update on the Ballard Sculpture Garden installation where the work is being reimagined by the artist; and was given a concept design presentation by artist Toka Valu on the Alaskan Way Protected Bike Lane project.
* FED – Not present.
* CIC – Getting aligned on the CIC workplan and working with Partnerships, Education, and Grants Manger Ashraf Hasham; working on plan for membership recruitment; and planning a meeting with Interim Director Kayim.

**Other Items**

* [**Seattle Film Commission**](https://www.seattle.gov/council/meet-the-council/sara-nelson/seattle-film-commission) – three members of the Seattle Film Commission attended the meeting. Their names/areas of representation are:
  + Tom Florino (representing commercial producers or production companies)
  + Champ Ensminger (representing post production companies and personnel)
  1. Budi Mulyo (representing immersive tech)
* OED Film Program Manager Chris Swenson introduced the Seattle Film Commission, gave an overview of Seattle International Film Festival’s [purchase of Cinerama](https://www.siff.net/press-releases/pr-cinerama-announcement) and [the amendment to fund SIFF to reopen Cinerama which passed Seatle City Council](https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/siff-funding-reopen-cinerama-approved/281-00b26fec-6364-4c2d-8e28-d4cc4875d3ed), and gave an update on the status of the Film Commission and Arts Commission’s collaborative work on the community benefits agreement.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30pm.