

MINUTES

Cultural Services Advisory Committee

Eugene Public Library, Singer Room

February 6, 2019

Noon

PRESENT: Buzz Kawders, Diane Retallack, Harriet Merrick, David Van Der Haeghen, Kelly Johnson, Kari Westlund Committee Members; Isaac Marquez, Theresa Sizemore, Mindy Linder, Vicki Infinito, Rich Hobby, Colette Ramirez Cultural Services Staff; Rene Grube Executive Director.

MINUTES APPROVAL

October 16, 2018 minutes were approved with no edits.

MINUTES

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Colette spoke about community programs having a debrief and evaluation of Fall programs. They reviewed what the community really identified with and started refining vision statements. She distributed a handout with the Community Programs vision, principles and mission statement and discussed how their work creates a more resilient community by building connections and elevating the cultural sector. Their next steps are a plan on a page, and one of the focus areas is finding the fun and joy.

Colette explained the largest takeaway from the evaluations was this tale of two cities. Community members still have this perception and real issues with public safety downtown, however, there are more people downtown than ever before. This is helpful insight for programming and ensuring public safety is there as much as possible.

DOWNTOWN WINTER PROGRAMMING

Mindy reviewed the Downtown Winter Programming. They are finding ways of reaching out into the community, activating the public streets and contributing to a sense of place in the downtown core. They've heard observers say "only in Eugene!" and the idea is that ideally these experiences will be a catalysts for other spontaneous activities to occur.

They have 3 different contracts for 7 different projects between January and April. Through these contracts they have hired and engaged more than 70 artists in January alone.

Mindy described the projects which include:

The Umbrella Project with ArtCity- Artists are tasked to design and illuminate umbrellas and display them downtown with no less than 5 people and no more than 10 people at a time. This will culminate with an auction in March in Kesey square. Proceeds will support the 15th Knight supporting homeless middle and high school youth.

Ring Play – A sidewalk art project that can only be seen in the rain. Nearly a dozen pieces were installed all around downtown, and at least three of the works were sponsored by businesses.

Harmonic Lab – transformed vacant downtown properties with video projections on their storefront windows. Each property owners and/or brokers are excited about the transformation of their spaces. The project inspired nearby businesses to do more of these window displays.

Tropical Contemporary – Developed a rain machine that works with the rain to create music. They are also doing the Snorkel Safari with performance artists during lunch time, and Finding the Light, an after dark performance about the changing of seasons. This will all culminate in a Puddle Disco on April 5th in Kesey Square.

PUBLIC ART MANAGER

Isaac spoke about the search for the new Public Art Manager. He discussed how the reputation of Eugene's cultural sector and arts is growing. The job was posted and they received 108 applications that made the minimum requirements.

Colette explained that the volume of applications speaks to the work in the cultural sector and the city of Eugene as a whole. They worked with HR and decided to post internationally. They are looking for an expert in the field and someone who can elevate the work. They want someone who is a visionary leader and a great team player. Interviews will be held at the end of February, and they are hoping to bring someone on in April.

CSAC Q&A

Kari spoke about how the Ability International summit is coming up in November. There is a growing market that needs accommodation. Colette has a meeting set with this group to discuss 20x21.

Kelly discussed how the ABAE is working with Lane Arts Council and Cultural Services to move forward with the application to be designated as a UNESCO Creative City. They are applying for the media arts designation.

Diane talked about an upcoming concert that ECC is doing in February, If You Fall I Will Carry You. They are creating a video about first responders. She asked if anyone had any first responder connections, as they are trying to work with and honor them. Renee agreed to connect her with the Chief.

Buzz complimented Colette and her team and said two things really stood out to him. First, we don't play into Eugene artistic stereotypes and provide things beyond country fair. The work is bringing people out and involving people who may have felt on the outside. Second, the artistic solutions to problems and the ability to turn something negative (rain) into a positive (art) is remarkable.

EXECUTIVE UPDATE

Renee spoke about hiring the new Library Director, Will O'Hearn. She explained that the library is doing some creative programming in collaboration with Cultural Services and Recreation such as laser tag over spring break. The goal is to see more of those types of events going forward.

She discussed community milestones happening downtown, such as acquiring the butterfly lot for the City Hall. The hope is to have it done by 2020 or 2021.

The city also signed an agreement to develop the riverfront. This will provide market rate housing, restaurants, and a riverfront park site. They are also working on proposals for development of the steamplant. They are taking public comment at an open house at EWEB and through surveys online.

The Parks and Open Space bond and levy is in process for design input for Echo Hollow pool and Campbell Community Center.

Public safety system received 8.6 million in funding to address critical needs for public safety. They are looking at upwards of 22million for community safety. This affects all of us, our business and perceptions of our community.

The city is also working with county partners on homelessness and evaluating services for homelessness in our community. They are in process of putting together a team for recommendations for the county and city council.

HULT CENTER SORENG UPDATE

Isaac introduced the sub-committee that met to discuss the Soreng rate changes and opened up discussion for the members to speak.

Harriet started by explaining that the committee wants to be thoughtful and considerate about any changes and give organizations time to budget and transition without harm. They also want to make sure Hult costs get covered. The Hult Center is an aging building that requires maintenance and upkeep. The group looked at where the Hult fits nationally and locally among comparable centers. The Hult is at the bottom, and the Hult provides more services than other venues. The Hult needs to be self-sustaining and looking at the future. They need to be a healthy organization to nurture and incubate other organizations.

Kari discussed the comparisons that were presented to the sub-committee members. She explained how for her it was about a sense of equity and clarity. The current pricing is convoluted, and they want something more reasonable. She felt there is more fear than necessary. They arrived at a conclusion that makes sense, won't create too much burden on valued partners, and will be clearer to patrons about what PUF is used for. PUF is currently offsetting rent instead of building maintenance. Resident companies are having to incorporate the PUF into their ticket, and ticket buyers don't recognize there is a PUF. It's become a burden.

Theresa confirmed that they want to move PUF out so it is clearer to the buyer. Transparency of where the patron's money is going only helps the Hult use that money for the maintenance of the building.

Diane spoke about how rent is not the major cost for Resident Companies, but labor is. She stated that Resident Companies are invested in making changes in the hall, if PUF does go to that and reduces labor costs. Their biggest concern is what can be done to the hall to make it more usable.

Buzz spoke about how everyone agreed that they don't want to do anything that would result in a negative impact. He continued that Soreng is a space for an incubating process and helps groups grow in the community. It is important they have every tool available to them and using PUF funds towards it's intended purpose will provide more tools for them to be successful.

Harriet agreed that it's always good to reevaluate business processes to make sure everything is working. She thanked the staff for giving the subcommittee the opportunity to discuss the local groups.

Theresa thanked everyone that worked on the subcommittee. She spoke about how these changes are always a delicate balance, and they are taking that mindful approach to look across everything and ask all of the right questions.

HULT CENTER UPDATES

The Lion King

Theresa explained that The Lion King was the most successful production to come to the Hult in its history. It was two years in the making and required no less than four visits from the production to confirm the Hult could actually fit the show. It included a large rigging project, and will now be able to accommodate other Broadway shows in the future such as Hamilton. Theresa explained that they even retooled/refreshed the show halfway through, so the first week was different than the second week.

36,286 tickets were sold over 16 shows – nearly \$3 million in ticket sales. The ticket office did a fantastic job of not only working The Lion King, but selling Wicked as well. There were 8300 stage hand hours, over 300 custodial hours, 1400 usher hours and 170 volunteer hours.

Theresa distributed a handout to show growth in Broadway shows over the years. There is major growth right around 2018 when the kitchen came online. This growth helps feed the Hult budget and help local organizations.

JOJO ABOT

Vicki and Rich spoke about the first ever micro residency with JOJO ABOT. There were two immersive performances, two workshops and a musical performance at WOW hall. This was planned for over a year and allowed the Hult to really work with the artist. This was a first for both JOJO and the Hult, so it gave them both the ability to give each other feedback.

Both workshops were “sold out” at 50 capacity. The hope is that now the Hult can work with these groups for future workshops. They spoke about JOJO’s ability to speak about difficult subjects, and the positive feedback the Hult received about her workshops and performances.

The immersive performances were in the Soreng but entirely on the stage. Vicki spoke about the importance of changing things around and looking at the spaces in a different way. This was a big reason they put the final show at WOW hall. Vicki explained it wouldn’t have made sense at the Hult, and it was a great opportunity to work with the community. This also bought patrons to both places that might not have otherwise visited.

There was also JOJO’s art gallery that was open for a month and run in partnership with Lane Arts Council. 300+ people came out for the First Friday Art Walk opening.

Rich spoke about the amazing media coverage with articles in the Register Guard, Eugene Weekly, KLCC interview, and Eugene Magazine.

Vicki explained that they got the Hult endowment for this residency.

Meeting adjourned: 1:37pm