

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, on Thursday, March 28, 2019.

Members Present:

Karina Wilhelm
Tara Phelps
Dilworth Brinton, Jr.
Jocelyn Condon
Ivan Martinez
Melissa Sue Johnson
Ronna Green

Members Absent:

Michelle Streeter
David Dean
K. Alycia Perry
Nancy Aposhian

Staff Present:

Cindy Ornstein
Rob Schultz
Sunnee O'Rork
Tom Wilson
Sarah Goedicke

Karina Wilhelm, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:08 pm.

Public Comments: No members of the public were present.

Approval of Minutes from the September 27 Meeting: Karina Wilhelm

Karina Wilhelm, Chair, called for any corrections to the minutes of September 27. No one had corrections – Dilworth Brinton moved to approve the minutes and Melissa Johnson seconded the motion. Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes from September 27 as written and they will be posted on the city's website.

Introduction of New Board Members

Tara Phelps: Tara is a lifetime native of Mesa, mother of five, and recently ran for state legislature.

Ronna Green: Ronna is getting used to retired life, retired from a career in insurance, and is looking forward to working with the arts.

Discussion:

No items for discussion.

Staff Reports

i.d.e.a. Museum – Sunnee O'Rork

Sunnee shared some news flashes with the Board. Southwest Maker Fest was in February and that was a blast, just under 1,000 attendance in i.d.e.a. museum for that day (there was free admission). We had a special activity called Artreach in the Atrium, led by intern Ashley Polls, that featured steam activities. Junkyard Jungle opened – the blacklight room is an Amazon Jungle complete with snake and jaguar. 185 members and VIPs attended the opening and we celebrated our 40th birthday with cake. The Education Department hosted a drop-in story telling workshop in collaboration with Benedictine University and students from Rising Youth Theater – stories were recorded in the story booth and will be used in a performance piece for family day in April.

i.d.e.a. joined AzMNH for "I Love Science Day" and were represented at Scoutarama, as i.d.e.a. is participating in a new cub scout merit program to get a badge. Dilworth Brinton, Jr. stated that the people from i.d.e.a. were great and they did an excellent job, gave some insights on LDS church leaving scouts which will greatly affect the scout groups and Scoutarama for next year. He recommended contacting Mesa directly to avoid fees in the future.

Recently received \$5,000 from The Season for Sharing Access for All Program and will be launching a big project with Maury Consulting to conduct a marketing study.

Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) – Tom Wilson

Tom reported on the success of the museum. Attendance and revenue are both up over 20% from last year and they are having a great month. The museum has beat March 2018 numbers already and are on pace to beat their all time March record. Tom also alluded that the museum may be on pace for a \$1 million-dollar year.

The museum had their volunteer appreciation breakfast on Saturday, March 24. They have about 289 volunteers, who contribute about 22,000 hours per year (the equivalent of 10 full-time workers). The volunteers are extraordinarily talented and dedicated, and it would be impossible to run the institution without them. With about 500 school kids in the museum each morning and the enthusiasm from volunteers, staff at the museum feel very inspired.

Mesa Arts Center (MAC)/Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum (MCA) – Rob Schultz

MAC held its Volunteer Appreciation Event dinner a couple weeks ago and the Mayor was able to attend and say some words. About 160 volunteers attended. MAC has about 400 total volunteers who usually provide over \$900,000 per year in assistance. MAC can't run the theaters without volunteer ushers and owe much to them.

Staffing updates – MCA Curator Patty Haberman retired mid-February. After conducting a national search, Associate Curator Tiffany Fairall came out on top and MCA is now hiring for her prior position. The Associate Curator position opens on Friday March 29 with the hope of hiring by late April. Shawn Lawson, former Special Events/Volunteer Manager, retired in November and her position was broken into two roles: Special Events Manager and Volunteer/HR Liaison. Christina Haase was promoted to Special Events Manager, now hiring for her prior position of Membership Coordinator. Volunteer/HR Liaison will hopefully be hired soon. Search is currently underway, Rob is acting as interim with volunteers.

MCA will have their Summer opening on May 10 in conjunction with 2nd Friday, with five new exhibitions. Both AzMNH and i.d.e.a. museums will be open for a free night on May 10 as well, from 5-10pm.

Director's Report – Cindy Ornstein

It's great to be able to promote qualified internal candidates and reward hard work. The Membership Coordinator position is now open through April 5.

Performing Live is having a very successful year in both revenue and quality of shows. The year will end on June 30, last show on June 29.

We had the Albesila installation at Pioneer Park in February. Karina and Ivan saw it and Karina asked how the Color + Light Party went. Despite the cold, about 9500 people went through Albesila and over 200 attended the Color + Light Party. The crowd was young, hip, and artsy and seemed to be people we would not normally see at Pioneer Park. It was nice to see we could get that kind of response. Most of the Color + Light Party tickets sold in the few days leading up to the event and on the day of the event, despite the bitter cold temperatures.

The Mesa Prototyping Project is going well. The three second-generation prototypes on Main Street are being heavily used, particularly the ASU project in the D-Lab Alley. There are also three street pianos out, which helped with the creation of a playscape adventure in Downtown Mesa. Tom Wilson said people are playing the pianos and multiple others on the Board agreed it was nice to see the pianos out. Also part of this first phase of the Prototyping Project are two residencies – one at Catholic Charities Care Campus and one with Artspace and Mesa Urban Garden – where artists have conducted walks to identify areas in need of intervention and workshops with their respective communities. A culminating community celebration takes place on April 13, signaling the end of the first phase of the project. The second phase will take the sites identified in the walks to use for a Request for Proposals to make prototypes to address community needs, to be installed in 2020.

Performing Live Season Preview will be on May 7 and there is an exciting season coming.

On May 17 from 5-7pm, there will be a celebration of the current session of Arts in Service. Participants will show art they made and there will be a reception in their honor. Continuing donor Boeing was so pleased with this program that they upped their grant to \$75,000. This program also received a \$51,000 grant from the Arizona Department of Veterans Services, that will allow us to continue this program in the fall. We would love to see this become a year-round program.

We are working on a designed version of our Strategic Plan to share with the public to make it easier to digest. We haven't presented this to the city yet and are looking for feedback from the Board. We may be updating the dates to 2019-2022, as it's a 3-year plan and we have not yet published it. Underlying messages of this plan are: we are all about community and dedicated to excellence/innovation.

Report on Conferences and/or meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only

Tara said she is part of a group that organizes group tickets for Gammage and group grew so large that Tempe Center for the Arts contacted the organizer about group sales. Cindy stated we would be very interested in working with them, our group sales discount is 10% and Cindy recommended inviting her to Season Preview.

Ivan remembered reading an article in Arizona Republic in November about the cost of Mesa Amphitheater and Mesa Arts Center to tax payers. Ivan asked for thoughts on how the Board can be advocates for us. Dilworth shared some thoughts on Convention Center and staff members shared some facts with the Board that they can use when discussing with others. Cindy recommended adding an item to next meeting where we share advocacy information.

Karina asked if there is collaboration planned with ASU since they are coming to Mesa. Cindy has been meeting with Jake Pinholster. MAC has plans to make sure the theaters are all fit for viewing film and we are considering a student film festival. Cindy also explained that ASU is planning to have a building where they can project onto the building. i.d.e.a. Museum is working with ASU students on augmented reality and building mapping to enhance their exhibits.

Ivan asked about engagement/relationship building between MAC and Artspace. Cindy said one of our Mesa Prototyping Project residency artist teams is from Artspace. There are some challenges as artists are solitary and busy, but we are working on having them over for an in-depth studio tour as a follow up to a welcome reception. Sunnee also plans to have the families over to the i.d.e.a. museum, can work with Tom Wilson to make it a museum night. In speaking about the challenges of engaging the Artspace artists, Cindy talked about how she and a couple MAC staff walked door to door to invite them to the Artspace residency events to try to connect the community to Artspace. Sarah created bags with a letter, button, and information on upcoming free events that was given to, or left for, the neighborhood residents.

Melissa mentioned she was speaking to a friend about AzMNH and described it as "the building with the dinosaur on it" and said that the museum has become a landmark. Tom Wilson stated that the dinosaur has also helped them have a very successful social media presence. Cindy mentioned that Sunnee is looking forward to i.d.e.a.'s expansion to help create a similar feel for the i.d.e.a Museum.

The next scheduled meeting date is May 23, 2019.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:13pm

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cindy Ornstein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative flourish at the end of the name.

Cindy Ornstein, Director
Arts and Culture Department

