

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on May 28, 2015.

Members Present:

Nancy Aposhian	Melissa Sue Johnson
David Dean	Dr. Robbi D. Venditti
Merlin Ellis	Karina Wilhelm

Members Absent:

Dilworth Brinton, Jr.
Steve McCance
Margaret (Peggy) Wilson
Robert Valverde
Alyssa Yingling

Staff Present:

Cindy Ornstein
Rob Schultz
Tom Wilson
Sunnee O'Rork
Jean Kaminski

Guest

Marian Dean

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, Chair, participated via phone; Merlin Ellis served as Chair for the meeting. Mr. Ellis called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Merlin Ellis called for any corrections/additions to the minutes of January 22. There being none, David Dean made a motion to approve the minutes of January 22, as written, and Melissa Sue Johnson seconded. The Board members present unanimously approved the January 22 minutes; they will be posted on the City's website.

Public Comments: David Dean's wife, Marian, was present, just to observe.

Discuss and Consider: Creative Economy Fund Awards for 2015-2016 – Cindy Ornstein

Cindy Ornstein distributed a proposed summary of the 2015-2016 Creative Economy Fund Awards. The Creative Economy Fund awards in-kind support for the rental of space at Mesa Arts Center. Applications were very competitive and awards ranged from 80 percent (%) to 30% of the requested amount based on the panel's scores. Every application was scrutinized carefully and scored, using a 1–5 rating scale with 5 being excellent, 4 good, and 3 fair. Given the number of proposals that scored well, every applicant was awarded something. It seemed fairest to provide 80% funding as the highest award level, enabling each worthy organization to receive support.

Ms. Ornstein reviewed the summary with the Board. (See Exhibit A.) There were several new applicants – Jàcome Flamenco, Mesa Art League, Phoenix Children's Chorus (here a few years ago, but not back since then), and Tempe Community Chorus, Ltd. Returning applicants included Class 6 Theatre; CYT Phoenix (Christian Youth Theatre); East Valley Children's Theatre; Mesa Encore Theatre; Mesa Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration, Inc.; Metropolitan Youth Symphony; Salt River Brass Band; Southwest Shakespeare Company; and The Phoenix Symphony.

The Board unanimously supported the proposed awards. Applicants will be notified by June 1.

Discussion and Participate in a Strategic Planning Exercise – Cindy Ornstein

Cindy Ornstein distributed a document that asked the Board members present "What is your personal vision for where you want Mesa Arts Center to be in five years? What will be different?"

Responses included:

- being the home of artists; partnering with PBS to televise events;
- a renaissance jazz festival site (or something like that);
- student/community participation in creating art pieces that remain on campus; development of downtown area;
- more diverse;
- have East Valley Satellite venues;
- have a developed cultural district with easy access; activate campuses (MAC and Museums);
- add dining/night club atmosphere – space to hang out; more on-line social media presence; dynamic websites;
- increase social presence into downtown;
- entrance more inviting;
- increased identity for Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum – lost sometimes because its downstairs – improve entrance area by making it more inviting; more international artists;
- more sporting activities like the "Fun Run" car event;
- participate in larger events like Super Bowl, marathons, etc.;
- add holiday events in downtown;
- TVs in libraries advertising and promoting events;
- more 24/7 activities – always something happening;

- more people living in downtown area;
- path connecting Museums and Mesa Arts Center;
- more things like yarn bombing that invites community engagement.

Ms. Ornstein thanked the Board for their input and will add their responses to the continuing Strategic Planning discussions; staff is working to create a final Strategic Plan document.

Staff Reports

i.d.e.a. Museum – Sunnee O’Rork

- Since opening as the i.d.e.a. Museum in February 2014, the Museum continues to sustain great attendance (anticipate around 100,000 at the end of this fiscal year) a 65 – 70% increase over the previous year.
- The “Build It! Family Day featured two performances by East Valley Children’s Theatre, a LEGO cityscape display by Cactus Brick, and a presentation by Shawn Hardina from East Valley Robotics. There was also a cardboard city and edible superstructures in the Atrium.
- The black light room has been changed to “Alice in Wonderland” for the upcoming exhibition, “Once Upon A Time.”
- “Once Upon A Time” opens on June 11 and there will be a daily story time in the gallery. The Museum is asking anyone who is interested in reading a story to come forward, select their favorite story, and read it to the children.
- Ms. O’Rork represented the Museum as a judge at the FIRST Robotics National Championship Competition at the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, MO. She also attended the annual American Alliance of Museums conference in Atlanta, GA, and was invited to attend the Reach Advisor’s Museum Research Collaborative session there to share the Museum’s transformation success.
- The Museum participated in the successful Southwest Maker Fest and was opened free from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. with 1,583 attendees. The Museum was involved in the “young maker” area of the festival.
- The Museum has been looking at their Emergency Preparedness because of their growing attendance. Staff has received training in the use of a defibrillator and fire safety training, as well as acquiring new walkie-talkies.
- The Museum held their first fundraiser as the i.d.e.a. Museum. *BRIGHT i.d.e.a.s* took place on May 9, with 120 attending. Rocket Scientist Amber Gell was the featured speaker who shared her experience working on the Orion Spacecraft and her research on microgravity. Ms. Gell also presented to 135 4th and 5th graders at Crismon Elementary and presented “It’s NOT Rocket Science,” with her friend Jamie Skukel from the Space Foundation to area teachers. At the event, the Museum presented John Whiteman with the first Bold i.d.e.a. Award. The Museum plans to present the award each year to those who have supported ideas in the community and have brought them to life.
- i.d.e.a. Museum has a growing volunteer program that has enabled them to participate at 40 plus outreach events this year. Right now they have 100 volunteers representing \$130,000 in savings to the City of Mesa.

Sunnee O’Rork distributed three flyers – Once Upon A Time, Summer Workshops an Events, and Robotics Summer Camp – see Exhibit B.

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- The Museum received and installed three new dinosaurs for the refurbished Dinosaur Mountain, with a public opening on April 9. An Albertosaurus (a relative of T-Rex), a Nasutoceratops, and a Mymorrapelta all move and roar and are delighting visitors adding to the Museum experience.
- The Museum held their Beer ‘N Bones gala on April 24 with 800 people in attendance tastings bugs and all sorts of fun stuff – the event doubled attendance and net revenue from last year’s event.
- Mesa Grande continues to build audiences, particularly in school visits. The materials for the digging pits/archeology pits are about to go in the ground and staff is working with Engineering on expanding the parking lot and are looking at a security system.
- Tom Wilson and Jerry Howard traveled to Chicago to pick up donated objects from Mexico and South American. The donations were given as a result of the *Ancient Americas* exhibition that opened last fall. They collected 22 items valued at approximately \$165,000. Added to the items they came to collect, they received three additional last minute donated items. There was some question about one of the pieces authenticity and its value; the donors thought it was not a valuable piece. A number of tests were done on the piece and discovered it was authentic and worth approximately \$25,000. When the donors heard it was authentic and its value, they said “it’s yours.”
- The Museum’s Foundation and Guild are in the final stages of merging and anticipate being one organization by the end of June.
- Yvonne Petersen, Volunteer Coordinator, who has been with the Museum for approximately 20 years, is retiring. In the last 10 years, the Museum’s Volunteer Program has had over 160,000 volunteer hours for a value to the City of \$3.5M.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- Artspace has obtained the services of an architect, have drawings ready, prepared a landscape design, and have 3D animation drawings. The project will be on Hibbert, just a block from Mesa Arts Center. The architect selected is ART (Architectural Resource Team) of Phoenix.
- Americans for the Arts will hold their annual national convention beginning on June 10 in Chicago. As Rob is on the Arts Education Council, he was one of the Councilmembers to select the recipient of the National Arts Education Award, Eric Booth, the first ever teaching artist to receive the award. Arizona's Lynn Tuttle, State Education Department, was the runner up.
- Summer Arts Classes begin next week and go through mid-August; Summer Arts Camp also begins June 1, and for the first time, MAC will offer nine weeks of Summer Arts Camp.
- The City's July 4 Celebration of Freedom will be held on Saturday, July 4, from 6:00 – 10:30 p.m. around the Convention Center. The Museums will be involved providing kids hands-on activities. A muralist has been commissioned to do a mural on the side of the Marriott hotel again this year. Last year's attendance was estimated at 42,000.

Mr. Schultz distributed a brochure about Artspace – see Exhibit C

Director's Report – Cindy Ornstein

The Mesa Arts Center Season Preview was held May 14. A new "sizzle video" was presented along with happenings for the 10 Year Celebration. The Season-Kick off on September 11 will begin the 10 year Celebration – the theme for this year's kick-off event is "Latin Street Party" and the Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum exhibitions will feature major Latino artists from the collection of Cheech Marin. A festival café environment will be created with spaces to gather, socialize and people watch. The party atmosphere will feature street performers and street artists. The public party will feature Los Lonely Boys performing in a free outdoor concert to cap off an incredible evening, and artists from Ballet Hispanico will lead a Latin Social Dance Experience on an outdoor dance floor.

Ticket sales the night of the Members Preview were 30% over the previous year's Member's event.

Nancy Wolter retired as the Development Director after 30 years with the City of Mesa. MAC has engaged Arts Consulting Group to conduct a nation-wide search. Ms. Wolter will work as a contracted employee through the transitional period.

Southwest Maker Fest held its second event and it was a great success. Ms. Ornstein, co-founder of Southwest Maker Fest, is on the committee as they continue to grow the event each year.

The last Target 3 for Free event will take place in June. Target will no longer continue as the sponsor; however, we continue to look for a new sponsor. For now, we hope to bring back the event on a quarterly basis.

Ms. Ornstein distributed a flyer that outlines the Creative Catalysts initiative supported by a grant from the Flinn Foundation. See Exhibit D.

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

David Dean: accompanied students and saw the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Luv and Musee de l'Armee in Paris; an exciting and wonderful experience.

Melissa Sue Johnson: attended the Southwest Maker Fest and watched the Tesla Coils making the music – amazing; attended Celebrate Mesa 2015 at Pioneer Park, very cool as well.

Nancy Aposhian: attended the opening of "Build It" at the i.d.e.a. Museum and had a blast.

Karina Wilhelm: took her kids to "Build It" twice and they loved it; her daughter attended with her second-grade class on a school field trip – they had a great time. Attended spark! Mesa's Festival of Creativity – brought a co-worker who was impressed – loved the artist's demonstrations, was fascinated with the glass blowing; took a friend to the Phoenix Art Museum.

Merlin Ellis: accompanied his son on a field-trip to the Musical Instrument Museum. His son enjoyed playing around with the 16' bass on display. On their way to Six Flags in CA over spring break, they stopped in Florence, CA, to visit with an old friend and visited the Chen Art Gallery. Among their exhibitions, they had a collection of amazing prints by Picasso.

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti: attended Beer 'N Bones and thought it was the event of the year – also attended the opening of the new dinosaurs – cool and fresh event.

The next scheduled meeting date is July 23, 2015, 4:00 p.m. at the i.d.e.a. Museum

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Ornstein". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Cindy Ornstein, Director
Arts and Culture Department