

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular hybrid meeting via Zoom and at i.d.e.a. Museum on Thursday January 26, 2023.

Members Present:

Katelyn Armbruster
Kerry Lengel
Greg DeSimone
Theresa Schlechty
Melvin Van Vorst
Angela Buer
Colleen Byron
Annalisa Alvrus
Nick Willis
Brad Peterson

Members Absent:

Ivan Martinez

Staff Present:

Cindy Ornstein
Mandy Tripoli
Sarah Goedicke
Jarrad Bittner
Simon Tipene Adlam
Alison Stoltman

Nick Willis called the meeting to order at 4:05pm.

Public Comments: No members of the public were present.

Approval of Minutes from the November 19 Meeting:

Colleen Byron moved to approve the minutes from November 19 as presented and Melvin Van Vorst seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes from November 19 as written and they will be posted to the city's website.

Arts & Culture Department Update – Cindy Ornstein

Arts & Culture is deep into the budget process for the next fiscal year and will present capital improvement projects (CIP) and budget requests to the city manager in the coming two months. Staff feel good about the base budget and the department has a number of requests for additional needs. Some things will be paid for with existing available department funds, some paid by new revenue, and a few things the department is requesting the city fund from the general fund.

The department is officially under contract with Arts Consulting Group for the executive search for Cindy Ornstein's replacement. Deputy City Manager Natalie Lewis is leading that process and it looks like we will have a robust search committee. This is the same company that led the search for Simon Tipene Adlam's position. This board will have the opportunity to meet the finalists for this position.

Things are very busy and have been quite a whirlwind since the beginning of the calendar year. Staff are working on a naming policy for the department as there is no hard and fast policy currently in place. This plan will be brought to city management for approval once it is drafted.

A strategic planning firm has been selected but cannot be announced until after council approval, but staff will share that information as soon as possible. This board will also be involved in the strategic planning process. i.d.e.a. Museum's strategic planning will be first, followed by AzMNH and then MAC, as MAC has the most recently updated plan and i.d.e.a. Museum will find this useful in supporting their renovation and capital campaign project.

Staff Reports

Mesa Arts Center (MAC) Update on Programs and Operations – Cindy Ornstein, Illya Riske, Randy Vogel, and Mandy Tripoli

Festival season is coming up soon and the Día de los Muertos committee seeks to fill three positions. This is a two-year commitment, and these people should be dynamic and highly engaged. Currently, staff are looking for someone from Mesa Public Schools to join the committee. It is an exciting time to join the committee, as MAC has a new festivals manager who wants to make the event even more community voice-based, and the committee will be taking on an even more active role.

MABEL participated in the MLK parade this month and Cindy walked with staff. It was cold and miserable weather. MABEL will participate in the upcoming I Love Mesa Day, along with both museums.

Studios classes started this week and sales continue to be robust with demand through the roof. MCA's winter opening will be February 10. This board will be invited to the VIP event at 6pm, celebrating the opening of the 44th Annual Contemporary Crafts Exhibition.

MAC Foundation just had its annual gala featuring Smokey Robinson last Saturday and it was an enormous success in every way. Attendees had a great time, there was a great vibe and lots of excitement, and it was the highest-grossing gala in MAC history making about \$122,000 in net revenue. These are key funds that support engagement, access and education programs. Randy shared that CBS Sunday Morning will include coverage of our event on February 5 because Smokey Robinson is receiving a major award from the Grammy Association and the B roll was shot at MAC. The MAC logo should be visible in a few shots.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra performance was last Sunday and was amazing. They are ranked the 5th greatest orchestra in the world and top three in the US.

Performing Live continues to do well and add exciting new shows. MAC is approaching \$4 million in ticket sales and Randy Vogel thinks we may see sales in excess of \$5 million by the end of the fiscal year. That would make this year the biggest revenue season ever for Performing Live. Randy is working on the new Performing Live season and MAC will kick that off in April/May. MAC will host the NFL Soul Gospel Show on February 8, featuring Patti LaBelle and the NFL Players Gospel. This is an official Super Bowl event.

MAC has filled our Marketing/Public Relations position. Amanda Urrea has joined us from the ASU Art Museum and is doing fantastic. Our Development Director Renee Lopata will retire in March. We plan to devise an interim plan to give the new Arts and Culture Director/MAC Executive Director a chance to get their feet wet and hire their own Development Director.

Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) – Simon Tipene Adlam and Alison Stoltman

The holidays were very busy, with attendance up twenty percent. Thankfully, key staffing shortages have been filled. The museum is moving forward to prepare for school field trips in the spring. Staff are working on the budget for next year and fiscal forecasting, as well as an organizational redesign and policy/procedure updates.

AzMNH is a research facility and Dr. Bob McCord and Gavin McCullough recently returned from their work in Mexico. The museum will host a paleontology conference soon for paleontologists from Arizona and New Mexico at MAC.

Dr. Bob McCord will do the introduction for an upcoming National Geographic Live! presentation.

i.d.e.a. Museum – Jarrad Bittner

The museum is also looking at structure and policy/procedure updates. This upcoming weekend will be the last for the current rotating exhibit. The next one will launch February 16 with a VIP reception to which the board will be invited. Mural elements will be finished and unveiled with that exhibit. The next exhibit is all about the story of the seed and is the first show ever to feature strictly local artists. The museum is piloting an artist in residency program through the end of the fiscal year.

The i.d.e.a. Museum is preparing for its capital campaign and already has some high dollar donors secured even though the campaign has not officially launched.

Both i.d.e.a. Museum and AzMNH will be open free on I Love Mesa Day.

Discuss: Public Art – Nick Willis

The Public Art working group met on December 14 and discussed in-depth what could be done for the Dobson Library and what this board's role would be. The pace of things is dictated by the library and city at this point. New festivals manager Kevin Vaughan-Brubaker was a former public art manager for Scottsdale Arts and is drafting the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Dobson Library, Together Mesa project, and the new city hall artwork. The working group will reconvene again soon. There will be a lot to do, but there is not at the moment. The city wants this board to have representation on each community panel. Cindy expressed some concerns about staff capacity because a lot of these options are happening simultaneously and will bring opportunities to help to the working group meeting for conversation.

Nick stated that these projects are not a detour, but a stepping stone toward the board's goals related to public art. Nick asked for questions or concerns. Katelyn Armbruster asked Sarah Goedicke to send out a poll for the next public art working group meeting. Cindy Ornstein hopes the group can meet in the next month.

Kerry Lengel asked if we will reach out to the Dobson Ranch Association. Cindy said yes, the library intends to do community outreach, but those conversations haven't happened yet. The Dobson Library's grand opening is next week with a new Thinkspot. Kerry and Angela Buer volunteered to help with that outreach. MABEL will be at the upcoming Dobson Ranch neighborhood festival and that could also be an opportunity for outreach on this. Simon stated AzMNH can help with a few places moving forward, as they have been building relationships with local O'odham tribes and are happy to facilitate sessions with them. RFQs are open to artists generally, but we can actively recruit indigenous artists and any other artists to add to the pool of applicants.

Discuss any Projects, Initiatives, or Presenters of Interest & Report on Conferences and/or meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only

Nick shared that Melissa McCann from Rio Reimagined is doing work in Phoenix to get federal grants for improvements up to two miles away from the river. Nick sent an email to Cindy and Sarah and will reach out to Melissa to connect with MAC staff.

Theresa Schlechty shared that the Millet House, of which she is on the board, recently had three artists participate in painting a life-sized fiberglass horses which may be seen at the Super Bowl. This project was sponsored by Scottsdale Rotary Club. The name of the event is Stampede Stallion.

The next scheduled meeting date is March 23, 2023 and will be a hybrid meeting via zoom and in person at ASU Mix Center.

There being no further business, Angela Buer moved to end the meeting and Theresa Schlechty seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Ornstein". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Cindy Ornstein, Director
Arts and Culture Department