

## Museum and Cultural Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting via Zoom video conference on Thursday July 22, 2021.

### Members Present:

Ivan Martinez  
Jocelyn Condon  
Colleen Byron  
Angela Buer  
Theresa Schlechty  
Nick Willis  
Melvin Van Vorst  
Katelyn Armbruster  
Annalisa Alvrus

### Members Absent:

Alycia de Mesa-Weeden

### Staff Present:

Cindy Ornstein  
Sarah Goedicke  
Randy Vogel  
Dyan Seaburg  
Alison Stoltman

Nick Willis moved to start the meeting and Colleen Byron seconded. Nick Willis called the meeting to order at 4:06pm.

**Public Comments:** There were no members of the public present.

### Introduction of New Board Members:

New board members Katelyn Armbruster, Colleen Byron, and Annalisa Alvrus briefly introduced themselves to the board. The rest of the board then introduced themselves to the new members.

### Take Action: Elect a Chair for FY 2021-2022

Nick Willis nominated Alycia de Mesa-Weeden to serve another term as Board Chair. There were no other nominations. Melvin Van Vorst motioned to vote on Alycia as Board Chair and Colleen Byron seconded. The Board voted unanimously to re-elect Alycia de Mesa-Weeden as Board Chair for FY 2021-2022.

### Take Action: Elect a Vice-Chair for FY 2021-2022

Melvin Van Vorst nominated Nick Willis to serve another term as Board Vice-Chair. There were no other nominations. Melvin Van Vorst motioned to vote on Nick as Board Vice-Chair and Colleen Byron seconded. The Board voted unanimously to re-elect Nick Willis as Board Vice-Chair for FY 2021-2022.

### Approval of Minutes from the May 27 Meeting:

Jocelyn Condon moved to approve the minutes and Katelyn Armbruster seconded. Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes from May 27, and they will be posted on the city's website.

### Take Action: Approve Creative Economy Fund Award Recommendations:

For the benefit of new Board members, Cindy Ornstein gave a brief history of the Creative Economy Fund program and how it is normally administered. Sarah Goedicke explained that the department took in applications and the Board approved awards for FY 2020-2021 but organizations were unable to use the awards because the theaters remained closed the entire year. This year, it was decided that the department would grandfather in awardees based on the percentage of their award last fiscal year. This means that an organization that was awarded 50% of their requested amount last year would receive 50% of their requested amount this year. This would greatly reduce administrative burden for organizations that have been greatly affected by the pandemic by removing much of the application process. Organizations were asked to submit a description of their program, a program budget, an organizational budget, and a copy of their quote from Event Services to confirm their eligibility for their award. Sarah presented a summary of each group's planned programming along with their requested amounts and awarded amounts. The proposed awards totaled \$26,054. With no questions from the Board, Angela Buer motioned to approve the Creative Economy Award Recommendations. Theresa Schlechty seconded and the Board voted unanimously to approve the Creative Economy Award Recommendations, totaling \$26,054 of in-kind grant funding.

### Take Action: Decide on Board meeting format for FY22

With the pandemic situation still in flux, the Board discussed how they would like to meet during the fiscal year. Ideas brought forth were to continue with online meetings the entire year, plan for a hybrid schedule with the right to go all virtual depending on the pandemic, and to return to in-person meetings. Nick Willis motioned to have the Board create a hybrid plan, planning for two in-person meetings this fiscal year but reserving the right to hold all meetings virtually depending on the pandemic, and Angela Buer seconded. The Board voted unanimously to go with the hybrid plan, planning

for two in-person meetings to be determined at a later date, with the right to make those virtual if deemed necessary by the Board.

## **New Topics Discussion**

Nick Willis asked that Public Art be added to the September agenda as a discussion item. Nick gave a summary of the Board's prior research to the new Board members.

## **Arts & Culture Department Update – Cindy Ornstein**

Cindy Ornstein stated how she is proud of how the department has handled COVID. Overall participation has been good, which is a sign of pent up demand from the public. Financially, the department seems to have weathered fairly well, with quite a few layoffs enabling that. Arts & Culture has rehired staff or rehired positions, with only four full time positions lost across the department in addition to some part time positions.

The department ended last year with a deficit but this year has already made up the lion's share of that deficit. The rest of the deficit will be made up with the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) MAC received in the amount of \$2.8 million. While this was awarded to MAC, it will displace funds that can now be used to benefit the entire Arts & Culture department.

With ASU coming to downtown Mesa soon, we are working on partnerships across the department with ASU. Additionally, Alice Cooper's Hard Rock Teen Center, also known as The Rock Mesa, had a soft opening and some of the departments program staff had the opportunity to tour the facility. This is the second Hard Rock Teen Center in the valley. There will be exciting opportunities to collaborate with them.

## **Staff Reports**

### Mesa Arts Center (MAC) Update on Programs and Operations – Cindy Ornstein, Ilyia Riske, & Randy Vogel

Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) exhibits are being extremely well-received and are up for 2-3 more weeks. The exhibits focus on indigenous artists and themes. Normally, summer is slower for MCA but not this year. The museum has seen regular visitation every day.

Studios classes have been fairly robust throughout COVID, even with the online classes this past year. In-person classes sold out most classes. The fall session is the first back to full capacity and the full range of classes offered. The first day of registration for classes (about 280 classes) sold \$25,000 more than the previous year (about 480 classes) – a total of \$95,000 in sales! Sales continue to be robust.

Randy Vogel gave an update on the theater building renovations. MAC is currently in process of replacing seats, flooring, carpeting, and paint in some areas of the theater building. Staff is pleased that renovations are on track to be completed in time to reopen the theater building as planned. Ticket sales this year have sold 40% of available seats vs. selling 25% of available seats at this time in the 2020 season. A recent industry study shows that 89% of theater goers/audiences are vaccinated, which is much higher than the national rate of vaccination. MAC's first Performing Live show is on October 3, 2021. The first event in the theaters is a rental, Mesa Encore Theatre, starting September 1, 2021. New Food & Bev staff are starting next week.

On Saturday, September 25, 2021, Mesa will have a welcome back celebration, which celebrates Mesa coming out of COVID, Mesa's first and second responders, and companies that helped with the Feeding Mesa program. The celebration will include MAC activities, Downtown Mesa Association hosting a Brewfest and Taste of Mesa, two major national acts in Mesa Amphitheatre for free to the community, a festival at the Convention Center's main parking lot, a children's area with family activities, and a local circus.

Two other major MAC events coming up are MAC's Season Kickoff: *Wonderland* on Friday, September 10 from 6-10pm and Día de los Muertos will return on Saturday and Sunday, October 23 from 10am-5pm and 24 from 12pm-5pm. Both events will be in person again this year.

### Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) – Alison Stoltman

AzMNH held three summer camps this year in hybrid models with in-person activities and at-home virtual experiences. All camps sold out and the museum served 96 kids. The museum continues to increase capacity incrementally. The week ending July 4 ended with just under 3000 visitors and \$4k in revenue even though AzMNH had returned to full price admission on July 1. Two new exhibits opened on July 1. The museum store is also doing very well and having record

breaking sales numbers. The new exhibits and summer camps drew a lot of media attention over the past couple months. Telemundo wants to return and do a 30-minute segment at the museum.

AzMNH welcomed two new staff members recently in visitor services and education but still has more positions to hire. The AzMNH Foundation has been incredibly supportive this year and met their goal in the fundraising campaign for one of the new exhibits, raising about \$56k total, including a match from the City Manager's Office.

The museum is partnering with ASU to give students real-world experience by having the students design lighting effects for the new exhibit spaces. The lighting project at the museum has finally been completed.

#### i.d.e.a. Museum – Dyan Seaburg

The new Museum Administrator, Jarrad Bitter, will start on August 2. There will likely be a welcome reception for Jarrad sometime in September. The department has been so grateful to have Dyan Seaburg in the interim. The Robo Art opening preview reception was held on June 30 with 113 guests. The exhibit opened to the public on July 1 and will run through January 2, 2022. This exhibition has been well-received. i.d.e.a. Museum continues to see strong attendance and is increasing capacity with positive response.

The Atrium renovation has been delayed due to contractor issues but is moving forward and likely to be done around the end of August/early September. The renovation will have additional water features, fairy garden, musical flowers, and a dinosaur. The museum held a summer camp that also sold out and was extremely well-received.

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

Colleen Byron asked if there were any upgrades made to the ventilation systems in Arts & Culture facilities. Cindy Ornstein said MAC was built with great ventilation that pulls air out rather than pumping air in, and plasma air filters were added to both museums.

Colleen Byron asked if staff were familiar with Tetra String Quartet and Cindy Ornstein affirmed that they are, and Sarah Goedicke stated they are currently working on a series with the i.d.e.a. Museum.

Nick Willis said he saw the Robo Art exhibit and joked that he had to explain what a furby was to his niece.

***The next scheduled meeting date is September 23, 2021, via Zoom video conference.***

There being no further business, Nick Willis moved to end the meeting and Ivan Martinez seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:24pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Cindy Ornstein, Director  
Arts and Culture Department