



MEETING MINUTES

Evanston Arts Council

Tuesday, January 22, 2013

6:30 p.m.

Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes Street Studio 106

Members Present: Anne Berkeley, co-chair; Heidi Bloom, co-chair; Helen Axelrood; Carole Bass; Rina Gitlin; Fran Joy; Dino Robinson

Members Absent: Manuel Aleman, Greg Allen, Rev. Kurt Condra, Lisa Degliantoni, Rebeca Mendoza, Nan Stein, Jacqueline Williams

Staff Present: Jeff Cory, Cultural Arts/Arts Council Director; Jill Silverman, Secretary II Cultural Arts Division

Declaration of Quorum

A quorum was not present due to last-minute cancellations. Members agreed to hold an inquorate meeting.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 4, 2012

Meeting minutes of December were held for approval at next month's meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Julie Phelan, Evanston resident, expressed concern for the future of the Noyes Cultural Arts Center. She said the Center is a part of her family's daily lives and that she would prefer to see the building remain self-sustaining with adequate available studio space to support a diverse range of artistic disciplines. She noted that Piven's proposal would expand their current footprint in the building by nearly three times. She reported that Piven Theatre Company's recent financial statements show that the organization's operating expenses have been in the red by tens of thousands of dollars in each of the past four years. She questioned whether Piven is in a sound enough financial position to make the necessary loan payments on this project. If Piven were to default, the cost of the loan would be absorbed by Evanston taxpayers. She asked if the Arts Council is planning to take a position on Piven's proposal for Noyes. Ms. Berkeley replied that the Arts Council doesn't feel that it has enough information fully evaluate the proposal. Ms. Berkeley noted that Ms. Phelan's concerns are shared by many of the tenants in the building as well as several members of the Arts Council. Ms. Phelan asked where City of Evanston Arts Camp programming would be held if the Piven proposal is approved. Mr. Cory said the original plan was for Arts Camps to be held off-site in 2013, with the expectation that details on the Piven proposal would have been finalized before the end of 2012. Reaching an agreement has taken longer than anticipated, however, so a final decision has not yet been made on the location of Arts Camps in 2013. The City Manager told the Noyes Tenants Association that the group would have an opportunity to review any agreement between the City and Piven before

it is presented to City Council. Ms. Berkeley suggested that Ms. Phelan consider writing to members of City Council to share her concerns.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Arts & Business – Mr. Cory reported that a handful of nominations were received for the Arts & Business Committee’s Leadership award, which will be presented at the Mayor’s State of the City Address and Awards for the Arts Luncheon on March 8, 2013 at Hilton Orrington.

Arts & Education – Ms. Jill Silverman reported City staff has installed 14 frames in rooms 2402 and 2404 at the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, with an additional six frames to be added. Ms. Nan Stein plans to install a District 65/202 student show based on Esma Codell's Seed by Seed, which is currently on display at ETHS. Ms. Axelrood has been in contact with Ms. Pam Baumgartner, ETHS AP arts teacher, who will help to coordinate this effort.

Community Relations – Ms. Bloom said the next Cultural Connection Lunch has been postponed. She looks forward involving new members of the Arts Council in the planning of the lunch events.

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Cory reported the NEA-funded Downtown Performing Arts District study has been posted on the City of Evanston’s website. The evanstARTs working groups hopes to integrate information from this study into a coordinated effort to expand Evanston’s capacity to provide adequate venues and support for the arts. At this point there is no new information to report regarding proposed transition at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ms. Berkeley distributed a preliminary list of action steps developed through the evanstARTs community meetings, and asked Arts Council members to review the list to select goals for inclusion in a **Two-Year Work Plan** that will be presented to the Rules Committee on Monday, March 4, 2013. One topic of discussion was creating a consistent identity for the Arts Council. Mr. Dino Robinson said he believes that building upon the current branding of the Evanstonartsbuzz.com website would be better than starting over with a new web domain name. He said that the site could be re-launched with a promotion of new features. Ms. Bass said that the Cultural Arts Division summer pocket calendar is very useful and might be expanded to being printed biannually to include local theater events, gallery openings, etc. Ms. Gitlin feels it is important to fortify the City of Evanston’s relationship with Northwestern University. Ms. Bloom noted that while working with the Northwestern University Theatre and Interpretation Center, she learned that NU is very interested in working together with the Arts Council. Ms. Fran Joy expressed a perceived need for better communication and promotion of events, both online and through other means. She said she hadn’t heard of Evanstonartsbuzz.com until now. Mr. Robinson said a major issue for minority groups is that they continually feel marginalized. Some residents in minority communities believe a downtown Performing Arts District would perpetuate that disconnect. Ms. Berkely mentioned that the evanstARTs working group is working on finalizing a written

report that will be presented to City Council on Monday, March 18, 2013. Ms. Berkeley said she is looking for 100% attendance by Arts Council members at the March 18 City Council meeting, to show support for the evanstARTs initiative.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Cory reported that City Council recently voted 6-3 against proceeding with construction of a new theater on Howard Street for City Lit Theatre. Some City Council members expressed concern that the project budget had increased dramatically compared to initial estimates, and also that an agreement with City Lit has not yet been finalized. The project may be revisited by City Council once these concerns have been addressed.

Ms. Berkeley noted the importance of Arts Council members keeping in close contact with Evanston arts organizations. She recommended that each Arts Council member be assigned as a liaison to one or two local arts groups, checking in with them on a regular basis to keep Arts Council members apprised of their activities. Members who have an interest in serving as a liaison to a specific organization should contact Ms. Berkeley.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Silverman
Secretary II, Parks, Recreation and Community Services