



MEETING MINUTES

Evanston Arts Council

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

6:30 p.m.

Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes Street Studio 106

Members Present: Anne Berkeley, co-chair; Heidi Bloom, co-chair; Greg Allen; Helen Axelrood; Carole Bass; Rev. Kurt Condra; Lisa Degliantoni; Rina Gitlin; Fran Joy; Dino Robinson; Nan Stein

Members Absent: Manuel Aleman, Rebeca Mendoza, Jacqueline Williams

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

Declaration of Quorum

With a quorum present, co-chair Anne Berkeley called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES of date of previous meeting

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the December 4, 2012 & January 22, 2013 meetings be approved. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Judy Kemp has been a part of the working group for the evanstARTs project. The working group reached out to the community to learn their aspirations for the arts in Evanston. They coordinated numerous public meetings as well as an online survey. The preliminary results were gathered and reported back to the community in two separate meetings. The two most important ideas were to have strong leadership and central plan with coordinated infrastructure. Ms. Kemp introduced the working group's vision.

"Evanston is invested in fostering a dynamic, accessible and culturally rich arts community. Creativity flourishes in a welcoming collaborative environment that encourages life long participation in the arts by residents and visitors alike."

In order to move forward they will present this report to City Council on March 18, 2013. Ms. Kemp asked that everyone please attend this meeting. They expect to have a huge representation of community members that care about the arts. They have created a "support the arts" button which will be available to all. Mr. Allen noted there are many different arts related issues occurring right now. How will evanstARTs be a part of those? Ms. Kemp relayed they need to first get the support of the City Council. When they have done that they will work to create next steps.

Ms. Fay Kaiser, Noyes Cultural Arts Center tenant, spoke about the proposed changes to the building. Ms. Kaiser said she represents 70 percent of the building residents who

are opposed to the Piven Theatre proposal. She explained the original mission statement of Noyes promised a work space for a diverse group of artists at a discounted rate. In turn the tenants would be responsible for sharing their artistic talents through community service (15% above and beyond their annual rent) providing free instruction and scholarships to low income families. She explained the Piven plan would seriously limit rental opportunities for emerging and seasoned artists as well as reduce the amount of community service provided to the community. She noted the building has already lost nationally- and internationally-known artists. Ms. Berkeley was under the impression that the purposed amount of space being taken over by Piven would leave no current tenants without space. Mr. Cory said that has not yet been determined. Ms. Kaiser added you can't just rearrange artists with no consideration for lighting and ventilation. Their other concern is Piven's financial statements. The tenants have reviewed the last few years of tax returns to find Piven in the red. How are they going to be able to pay back the loan? Why is Piven being given such a deal? Mr. Robinson would like to review materials in relation to the original Noyes mission statement and any related issues that led to the development of the Noyes Center, as well as any changes to the original concept throughout the decades. Mr. Allen asked whether the Noyes building was sustaining itself prior to this discussion. Mr. Cory responded that the City Manager had expressed concern that the while building income was adequate for covering operating costs, it was not sufficient to meet capital needs. Ms. Berkeley noted some of the theater groups in the building are not adverse to the Piven plan; Next Theatre Company has publicly endorsed the proposal. Mr. Allen said this proposal is the exact model of what should first be incorporated into an overall cultural plan through evanstARTs. Mr. Allen said his main concerns are sustainability, the level of transparency in this process from the start, and the financial capability of Piven Theatre Workshop. He also questioned why mission statement of the Noyes Cultural Arts Center in terms of diversity has fallen by the wayside. Ms. Berkeley said she is also concerned about Piven's financial capacity, but she sees a benefit to having an upgraded space.

STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Cory reported on two public art projects in the works: a proposed mural by the Youth Job Center Evanston, and the Ten Thousand Ripples project initiated by Evanston artist Indira Freitas Johnson. Ms. Johnson attended the Public Art Committee meeting last week to share information about the proposed temporary exhibit of ten Buddha heads throughout Evanston. The Public Art Committee has approved the installation. Mr. Robinson moved to endorse the project, Mr. Allen seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The scheduled presentation of the Arts Council's **Two-Year Work Plan** to the Rules Committee was postponed from March to May to allow for incorporation of ideas from the evanstARTs report. Ms. Berkeley addressed the first objective of **improved communications** and suggested that each member of the Arts Council select an arts organization and/or an alderman with whom they would serve as a liaison and provide a brief monthly update at each Arts Council meeting. Mr. Allen volunteered to serve as

liaison to the Noyes Tenants Association. Mr. Cory suggested that the Arts Council consider scheduling monthly or bimonthly informal social outings at cultural events in Evanston, as a way to get to know each other better and to visibly demonstrate engagement with and support for the arts community. Arts Council members thought this was a good idea. Mr. Cory reported progress on transferring the **evanstonartsbuzz.com** calendar into a Google calendar format. He reported City staff expects to complete the transfer this week. Ms. Berkeley asked Mr. Robinson to be the point person for any graphic arts or branding opportunities. Mr. Cory said he would work with Dino on website enhancements. Ms. Bloom asked for assistance with organizing the **Cultural Connection Lunches**. Rev. Condra and Ms. Joy said they would help. The following committee assignments were made: Arts & Business Committee – Ms. Bass, Ms. Gitlin, and Ms. Joy; Community Relations Committee – Mr. Aleman, Mr. Allen, Ms. Axelrod, Ms. Bloom, Rev. Condra, Ms. Degliantoni, Ms. Joy, Ms. Mendoza, Mr. Robinson, Ms. Stein, and Ms. Williams. Ms. Stein reported that she has been working with Ms. Pam Baumgartner, fine arts teacher at Evanston Township High School, to organize a display of the **Seed by Seed District 65/202 exhibit**. Ms. Bass and Ms. Degliantoni offered to serve as liaisons for the NU Theatre and Music Departments. Ms. Berkeley wants the Arts Council to review the guidelines and application process of the **Cultural Fund Grant Program**. Mr. Cory reported that the available grant pool has fallen from \$36,000 a few years ago to \$11,000 this year. Given the limited funds, it might make sense to target the support toward smaller organizations. Mr. Robinson is interested in learning more about the grant program and may be interested in helping with a review of the program. Ms. Degliantoni suggested that the Arts Council consider pursuing private donations. Ms. Bloom announced this year's Cultural Fund panel review will take place on March 2. Mr. Allen and Ms. Joy will attend the meeting. The Arts Council will consider assisting the City with assessment and coordination of various proposed arts facility projects including Howard Street, Noyes, Downtown, and the Evanston Art Center. This will be discussed further after the evanstARTs report presentation.

NEW BUSINESS

The election of Arts Council officers for 2013 was conducted. Ms. Berkeley and Ms. Bloom were nominated to continue serving as committee co-chairs, and Ms. Stein was nominated to serve on the executive committee as member-at-large. The slate of officer was unanimously approved.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Cory reported the State of the City Address and Mayor's Award for the Arts luncheon will take place on Friday, March 8 at Hilton Orrington. The recipients are Ms. Penny Rotheiser and RHINO Poetry. The Arts & Business Leadership Award recipient is Autobarn. Mr. Cory reported that the exhibit, *Dialogue Chicago: Taking Chances* will open with a reception on Sunday, March 10, at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center.

Mr. Robinson announced former Evanstonian and actress Tina Lifford is presenting two performances of *The Circle*: a benefit performance for Shorefront Legacy Center on Sunday, March 3, at Family Focus, and at Music Institute of Chicago on Tuesday, March 5.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jill Silverman
Parks, Recreation & Community Services