Evanston Arts Council Meeting
Tuesday, October 15, 2019, 6:30 p.m.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, 2404

Members Present: James Deeb, Judith Cohen, Gay Riseborough, Toby Sachs (Vice-chair), Beth Adler (Chair), William Jones, Maasai Amewa, Indira Johnson, Lisa Corrin

Members Absent: Jamal Ahmad, Angela Williams

Staff Present: Paulina Martínez (Assistant to the City Manager)

1. Call to Order and Declaration of a Quorum
The meeting was called to order at 6:39 p.m.

2. Public Comment
No public comment.

3. Approve Meeting Minutes from September 10, 2019
Ms. Adler moved to remove “cocktail party” from the minutes.”
Mr. Deeb and Ms. Riseborough moved to correct punctuation and spelling errors.

The minutes were approved unanimously as amended.

4. Consideration
A. Community Support Fund Guidelines
Ms. Adler recommended clarifying that the program will accept in-kind donations as part of the project’s budget.

Ms. Adler also asked for volunteers to look over the guidelines to get rid of the redundancy. Ms. Corrin nominated Ms. Riseborough and Ms. Cohen. Ms. Cohen indicated she would help revise the guidelines for redundancy.

Mr. Deeb said he thought it was logistically impossible to provide the demographic data without being intrusive and it is hard to collect for these purposes.
Mr. Sachs responded that perhaps what the group should do is to remove this for now, and have the Equity in the Arts subcommittee think about how to collect that data in a better way.

Mr. Deeb added that asking for approximate attendance is good, but we are asking for too much information.

Ms. Johnson said that the group should still ask questions about inclusivity. Ms. Corrin said just ask a question, instead of asking to check a box.

Mr. Jones suggested looking at example of reports by the Chicago Community Trust or the Joyce Foundation.

Ms. Adler recommended removing the questions about attendance and demographics from the final report.

Mr. Sachs recommended cleaning the guidelines up and tabling to the next meeting.

Mr. Deeb asked to strike word “high resolution” from the report form.

All members agreed to provide final comments to Ms. Martínez by October 22 via email.

B. Plaque for Mound

Ms. Adler moved to approve. Ms. Riseborough seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Purchase Proposal of Re-vive, Re-grow

Ms. Martínez explained to the Arts Council that artists, Vivian Visser, offered her Re-vive, Re-grow sculpture for sale at the price of $2,500 on top of the $5,000 paid for a 2-year lease.

Mr. Jones and Mr. Deeb expressed concern over the long term maintenance of the sculpture and the life expectancy. Ms. Johnson agreed.

Ms. Adler said the piece is not sturdy and will eventually decay.

Ms. Riseborough moved approve the purchase of Re-vive, Re-grow. No second. Motion failed.

5. Discussion

A. Main-Dempster Mile Mural

Ms. Katherine Gotsick introduced herself as the Executive Director of the Main-Dempster Mile (MDM). She explained the MDM commissioned a mural at Washington Street a couple of years ago, but it was hard to repair because of the condition of the viaduct wall. The MDM approached the original artist, Jordan
Nichol (a.k.a. “Pose”), to fix it, but he proposed a revolving mural instead at no cost to the group. In exchange, the artist asked to be given creative liberty. The MDM and Arts Council agreed, as long as it followed a “no paint” list.

Ms. Riseborough expressed concern about the issues with the mural. Ms. Gotsick said she was too, but asked the artist’s studio to work with EMAP to compare notes on wall prepping. Based on the feedback from EMAP, the artist agreed to prime the wall, which was not done with the first mural.

Mr. Amewa also raised concerns about the materials of the wall. Ms. Gotsick explained after one year a new concept will be painted. The MDM is paying for primer, but the artist is paying for everything else.

Ms. Cohen and other members expressed concerns over the phrase: “if you think you can do a thing your right” as it is grammatically incorrect in the design for the first rotating mural.

The general consensus was mainly favorable.

B. Arts Council Bylaws

Ms. Adler said she wanted to rewrite the mission to incorporate the outcomes of the Arts Council retreat that took place in March 2019. She suggested that any additional suggestions were turned in to Ms. Martínez by October 22 via email.

Mr. Deeb recommended adding a line that refers to geographic diversity.

This item was tabled to the next Arts Council meeting.

C. New Members Onboarding

Ms. Adler and Mr. Sachs explained that they had discussed creating an informal process to onboard new Arts Council members.

Mr. Sachs added that in his experience with other boards he has been paired with a “buddy” to orient him, and that it would be best if veteran Arts Council members volunteered to welcome the newcomers. Overall, this would be meant to be an informal process and on a volunteer basis.

6. Communications

A. Chairs Report

Ms. Adler mentioned that the Community Support Fund has money left over, thus asked the Arts Council members to encourage people with concepts or projects to apply.

Ms. Adler provided a brief update about the progress in the planning of “Bright Night for the Arts.” Mr. Sachs asked if some tickets will be free. Ms. Adler said we can reserve tickets for Family Focus and Identity Dance.
Ms. Corrin asked what has been the event cost. Ms. Martínez replied that last year a little over $3,000 were spent on food, which is the biggest expense of the event. Ms. Corrin suggested considering eliminating food and making the event free to allow all people to access the event.

Ms. Cohen said she understood the point, but disagreed because the general feeling of the event is of elegance. Mr. Sachs said he agreed on the way the event was perceived, and that is why it should change.

Ms. Corrin added that “Bright Night for the Arts” is the only event The Block Museum allows that is charges a fee. Alcohol is usually not allowed either.

Ms. Martínez indicated that if the Arts Council decided to make the event free, she could easily get quote for desserts, fruit, coffee, water, non-alcoholic cider, and other treats.

The general consensus of the group was to make the event free.

B. Public Art Subcommittee Report
Ms. Martínez reported that a piece of art at the west wall of the new Robert Crown Community Center was not going to be allowed by the engineers, as the building was not designed to have anything painted or hung from that wall.

C. Equity in the Arts Subcommittee Report
Mr. Sachs reported that the Equity in the Arts subcommittee was going to meet the next day for a second time. The group’s focus is to get trained, and Deputy City Manager, Kimberly Richardson, will lead the first round of training. He also added that the group secured a grant from the Evanston Community Foundation for further training through Enrich Chicago.

Mr. Sachs mentioned that the group is working with the Parks and Recreation Department to revive the Ethnic Arts Festival.

Ms. Adler and Mr. Sachs reported that they provided a brief progress report to the Human Services Committee.

D. Staff Report
Ms. Martínez provided a brief overview of the proposed budget.

Ms. Adler expressed concern about the community engagement process for the Robert Crown public art piece. She did not think the proposed process by the artists will get enough traction.
Ms. Corrin said “we chose the artist” and this is how she works. “We also don’t have a skilled curator that communicated between the artists and the council."

Ms. Adler said she wants to utilize Washington School. She suggested hiring a teaching artist, who can be paid from the community support fund. Mr. Amewa offered to help as the teaching artist. Mr. Sachs said the teaching artist can work even without Blessing present.

Ms. Adler, Ms. Riseborough, and Ms. Cohen offered to join artists, Blessing Hancock, at the tables where she will collect feedback from the community.

7. Announcements

No announcements.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paulina Martínez