

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: April 13, 2010

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: City Council Chambers, Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cheryl Hayden, Barbara Hedlund, Robert Lewis, Ilona Matkovszki, Patricia Sammann, Mary-Ann Winkelmes

MEMBERS ABSENT: Geoffrey Bant, Robin Hall, Sarah Ross

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Carrino, Economic Development Division Manager; Michelle Brooks, Assistant City Attorney; Anna Hochhalter, Public Arts Coordinator; Tony Weck, Recording Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Don Willi, Jennifer Monson, Brenda Koenig, Frances Harris, Nicole Pion

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

The Urbana Public Arts Commission was called to order at 4:41 p.m. by Acting Chair Patricia Sammann. Anna Hochhalter took roll and a quorum was declared present.

2. CHANGES TO AGENDA

Ms. Hochhalter requested that item d. under the agenda heading of Communications (2009 Urbana Arts Grant Recipient Report: Jennifer Monson, Mahomet Aquifer Project) be moved such that it take place before item a. under the same agenda heading (2009 Urbana Arts Grant Recipient Report: Folk and Roots Music Festival). There was no objection and the aforementioned agenda item was so moved.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the March 9, 2010 meeting were reviewed by the Commission. With no changes proposed, Mr. Lewis made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Hedlund seconded the motion. All Commission members present were in favor of approval and the minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

- **2009 Urbana Arts Grant Recipient Report: Jennifer Monson, Mahomet Aquifer Project**

Ms. Hochhalter introduced Jennifer Monson, a choreographer whose project, The Mahomet Aquifer Project, was funded in part by a 2009 grant from the Urbana Arts Grant Program. Ms. Monson thanked the Commission for its support of her project and gave a brief report on the same. At the conclusion of the report Ms. Sammann asked if there were any questions from the Commission regarding Ms. Monson's report; there were none.

- **2009 Urbana Arts Grant Recipient Report: Folk and Roots Music Festival**

Ms. Hochhalter introduced Brenda Koenig, Frances Harris and Don Willi, members of the board of directors for the Folk and Roots Music Festival. The 2009 Festival was funded in part by a grant from the Urbana Arts Grant Program. Ms. Koenig, Ms. Harris and Mr. Willi thanked the Commission for its support of the Festival and gave a report on the same. A video was shown, highlighting the Festival's events. At the conclusion of the report Ms. Sammann asked if there were any questions from the Commission. Ms. Hedlund asked if there would be a 2010 Folk and Roots Music Festival. Ms. Koenig replied that the 2010 Festival was in the planning stages and was set to take place in September.

- **2009 Urbana Arts Grant Recipient Report: IMC Film Fest**

Ms. Hochhalter introduced Nicole Pion, a representative of the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center. Ms. Pion gave a brief report to the Commission on the 2009 Independent Media Center (IMC) Film Fest, which had been funded in part by a grant from the Urbana Arts Grant Program. Ms. Pion's report included a slideshow which highlighted the events of the 2009 Film Fest. At the conclusion of the report Ms. Sammann asked if there were any questions from the Commission; there were none.

- **2009 Urbana Arts Grant Recipient Report: Lori Caterini, River of Leaves**

Ms. Hochhalter introduced Lori Caterini, whose project, "River of Leaves", was funded in part by a grant from the Urbana Arts Grant Program. Ms. Caterini gave a brief report to the Commission on her project, which included photographs of the installation of ginkgo leaves in Crane Alley, downtown Urbana, an account of the artist vision supporting the work, and how it was accomplished. At the conclusion of the report Ms. Sammann asked if there were any questions from the Commission. There were no questions, however, Mr. Lewis set forth the idea of the leaves being blown into the alley from the roof of one of the adjacent buildings.

- **Presentation by Staff: Monthly Progress Report**

Ms. Hochhalter presented the City staff's monthly progress report to the Commission, outlining current projects, projects with partners, and upcoming events.

For an update on current projects, she reported the following:

- The Gallery District Incentive Program was receiving continuing inquiries and business participation. Ms. Hochhalter noted that the most recent business participant was *Shared Space: Artist Co-op*, located at 123 West Main Street.
- With regards to the Urbana Arts Grant Program, the 2009 projects were reported as being underway and final reports were being submitted, such as those from the Folk and Roots Music Festival, Lori Caterini, the IMC Film Fest, and Jennifer Monson. Ms. Hochhalter reported that 2010 applicants had been informed of their award status and agreements were being finalized with grantees.
- With regards to the Urbana Sculpture Project, Ms. Hochhalter reported that staff had provided an update at the recent Southeast Urbana Neighborhood Business Meeting on the status of the Philo Road sculptures. Additionally, it was reported that staff was finalizing agreements and installation with the remaining three artists for the Philo Road and Green Street installations.
- With regards to fundraising, it was reported that City staff was working with the City's Legal Division to clarify the process by which the Commission can raise funds. Ms. Hochhalter noted that additional information was to be provided in a staff memo to the Commission, to be discussed later at this meeting.
- With regards to the City Building Exhibit Space, the Artist of the Corridor Spring 2010 was installed. Ms. Hochhalter noted that the work would be on display for the quarter (March through May) and that other artists interested in exhibiting in the City Building should submit a letter of interest, résumé, and digital images of artwork to her.
- With regards to the UPTV Arts Program, it was reported that this project was being handled by the appropriate Commission subcommittee and City staff.
- With regards to program grants, it was reported that City staff was working on an application for the Illinois Arts Council Program grant. Ms. Hochhalter noted that the deadline for the aforementioned grant had been extended to April 20, 2010. Additionally, it was reported that the City's application to the National Endowment for the Arts Access to Artistic Excellence grant was not selected for funding this year.
- With regards to marketing, Ms. Hochhalter reported that she was regularly updating the Public Arts Program's Facebook page, which as of this meeting had 253 fans, up from 174 as reported at the March 2010 Commission meeting. Additionally, she noted that an advertisement for the Urbana Public Arts Program had been included in the News-Gazette's *Design an Ad* program on March 30th, and that staff was updating the Arts Guide and the Public Arts Program brochure.

For projects with partners, Ms. Hochhalter reported the following:

- Activities as a member of the 40 North | 88 West Board of Directors & Committees

- The status of the Martin Luther King, Jr. public art project in King Park with the Urbana Park District
- Activities as a member of the Urbana Business Association's Downtown Committee

For upcoming events, Ms. Hochhalter reported the following:

- That the date for the next Public Arts Commission meeting was set for May 11, 2010 at 4:30 p.m.
- That the 8th Annual Boneyard Arts Festival would take place April 15th through the 18th.
- "Art Work: A National Conversation about Art, Labor, and Economics" would take place on May 1st, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. at the Urbana Free Library Lewis Auditorium. Additional information on this event was provided separately.

6. OLD BUSINESS

- **Discussion of Public Arts Program Fundraising**

Ms. Hochhalter provided an introduction to this discussion and presented the staff report. It was noted that in the ordinance establishing the Urbana Public Arts Commission, one of the duties of the same is to research and seek additional funding to further expand public arts programs. Further, it was noted that City staff had been working with the City's Legal Division in order to determine appropriate approaches to raise funds for the Program. Ms. Hochhalter provided the Commission with examples of fundraising method employed by 13 other municipal programs, noting that the most common methods was to create a separate non-profit organization, known as a 501(c)(3), the main task of which would be to fundraise for the municipal arts program.

It was reported that the main question to be addressed in regards to this matter was whether or not there existed any legal restrictions to the fundraising activities of elected or appointed officials, or of City staff. It was determined that the City can receive tax-deductible donations for the Public Arts Program, but City legal staff advised against the soliciting of funds for a City program by elected officials, as this could be misconstrued as a form of bribe or quid-pro-quo situation. Legal staff also advised that insulating elected officials from the fundraising process would best prevent any appearance of impropriety. In addition, Legal staff also advised the Commission to distance itself from directly soliciting funds for the same reason.

Though it was stated in the staff report that the creation of a 501(c)(3) for the sole purpose of raising funds for the Public Arts Program may be a logical strategy for the future, it was noted that:

- To date, the City of Urbana has never created a non-profit organization to execute City business.
- The process of filing for 501(c)(3) status is arduous and has costs associated with it for legal services and accounting, and must be conducted in accordance with extensive IRS rules and regulations.

- The Commission is relatively new and is still working to implement all of its existing programming goals.
- The creation of a non-profit organization would require significant staff time.

Ms. Hochhalter set forth that an alternative to creating an incorporated non-profit organization would be to create a “Friends of the Arts” group, which would achieve a similar goal. This would be a volunteer group, the purpose of which would be to fundraise for the Public Arts Program. In this regard, it was advised that City staff not participate in the direct solicitation of funds for the same reasons that elected officials and members of the Commission should refrain from such activity.

An additional alternative was presented by Ms. Hochhalter, with an example given in the form of the “Share the Light” program implemented by the City of Columbia, Missouri. The Columbia program allows City utility customers to contribute to specific City arts projects through their monthly utility bill. It was noted that while Urbana does not have a municipal utility, there are other municipal bills that are sent to property owners in Urbana, such as the sewer benefit bill, that could be coupled with a brochure and a donation request.

In light of advice from City legal staff on the pros and cons of establishing a non-profit organization, it was the recommendation of City staff that the Commission seek alternative methods. Further, staff recommended the following:

- That the Commission create a “Friends of the Arts” group
- That the Commission create written proceedings for Public Arts Program fundraising
- That the Commission continue to explore a combined campaign program

Assistant City Attorney Michelle Brooks attended this meeting in order to answer any legal questions the Commission or staff might have. Ms. Brooks provided information to the Commission on the legal restrictions of fundraising by City staff and the Commission. Questions and comments from the Commission were addressed by staff. A general discussion of the matter by the Commission ensued.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Lewis made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Hedlund seconded the motion. With no further business or discussion, the meeting was adjourned by Ms. Sammann at 6:09 p.m.

Submitted,

Anna Hochhalter, Public Arts Coordinator