



CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

MEETING

June 13, 2018

6:00 P.M.

Cultural Affairs Arts Center

9 West Henry Street

MINUTES

Present:

Commissioners:

Darren Bagley-Heath, Brea Cali, Lisa Clark, Barbara Essig, Andrea Hall-Houston, Patrick Kelsey, Courtney Papy, Sue Ruby, Tanet Taharka-Meyers

City Staff:

- Eileen Baker, Director of Arts, Culture & Historical Resources
- Llana Samuel, Marketing Coordinator, Arts, Culture & Historical Resources
- Luciana Spracher, Director of Municipal Archives & Records Management and Acting Clerk of Council
- Veleeta McDonald, Special Projects Coordinator, Community Services Office

Public:

LaToya Brannen, Ruby Hall, Amanda Hollowell

Absent:

Commissioners: Esther Buchsbaum, Linda J. Evans, Janice James, Willia Johnson, Alix Lancy, Antwan Lang, Kareem McMichael, Linda Wilder-Bryan

I. Determination of Quorum/Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Brea Cali, Chair. There was not a quorum at the start of the meeting and approval of the minutes was postponed until later in the meeting.

II. Announcements

Commissioner Cali announced that on May 17th, the Arts, Culture & Historical Resources department released a call for proposals for the 2019 City of Savannah Cultural & Arts Investment Program. The deadline is June 29th and she asked that commissioners encourage organizations to apply.

Commissioner Cali stated that Commissioner Buchsbaum is in rehabilitation and passed around a card for commissioners to sign.

III. Cultural Program Assessment and Reports

SAVANNAH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Commissioner Kelsey attended seven functions, during all of which the City was well recognized and surveys distributed. Mr. Kelsey stated were problems with one performance at the Lucas Theater, *Diego El Cigala*, it started late, there were audio problems, and there was no intermission.

Overall, it was a very good festival.

Commissioner Essig attended several performances of the festival and reported they were well attended. Commissioner Clark went to twelve events and overall they all were very well attended. She particularly was impressed with the Music Explorers program.

It was noted by several commissioners that the festival volunteers at one of the concerts held at Ships of the Sea events did not manage the use of audience smart phones during the performance.

TELFAIR MUSEUM OF ART

Commissioner Bagley-Heath attended the Moses-Jackson Center workshop which was a STEAM outreach to the W.W. Law Center. He reported that the young people were extremely engaged in the project. There were about twelve children participating.

Commissioner Kelsey attended a Pulse Festival's performance *Metropolis-Syntheses*. Mr. Kelsey noted that there were too many people at the start of the program and that most had left before the performance had ended.

Commissioner Cali attended the Pulse opening lecture and noted that the City was recognized, there were surveys, and they are consistent with programming. She attended the lecture of the Carrie Mae Weems exhibit. She stated that the events was a good opportunity to hear the artist share her experiences and opinions.

SAVANNAH BLACK HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Commissioner Hall-Houston attended the lecture and panel “Savannah Public Conversation” she noted that it was not well attended. She explained that it was scheduled for the same time as the LINKS INC, New Beginnings exhibition. Commissioner Essig stated that this year the Festival charged an entrance fee to the Civic Center for Grand Festival Day. She noted that the Grand Festival Day had great performances, a lot of out of town vendors, and a lot of youth activities. She was not sure how they collected evaluations.

Commissioner Cali attended on the Grand Festival day, but there was not a great amount of people at the time that she attended. The top floor of the Savannah Civic Center was under construction and she had to wander around to find events. Many of the vendors had already closed down when Ms. Cali attended, however the barbershop in the arena was very popular.

Commissioner Kelsey attended the New Beginnings, the LINKS exhibition held at 9 West Henry Street. Mr. Kelsey noted that the visual art exhibition opening was well attended by middle school and elementary school artists, teachers and board staff.

Mr. Kelsey attended the dance performance at the Johnny Mercer Theater. He stated that the contemporary dance was great, but the technical production was not so great. He stated that the Savannah Civic Center is a horrible venue. He noted that the audience did not know how to respond to the performance breaks of the dance production. He stated the BHF volunteers were diligent in obtaining audience intercept surveys.

There was a discussion among the commissioners regarding the various types of surveys utilized by the Savannah Music Festival and the Savannah Black Heritage Festival. Commissioner Essig expressed that the Savannah Black Heritage Festival is very ambitious as they are doing something for the whole month of February and they are getting the word out well in advance. The City logo is also very prominent on their materials.

SAVANNAH PHILHARMONIC

Commissioner Papy attended the Savannah Shines collaborative program Philharmonic in the “Streetz” and stated that the City was acknowledged, though she did not see any surveys. The youth element was really strong, as this was a lower school music program. Commissioner Essig stated that she didn’t even know this neighborhood existed (Edgemere –Sackville) and found the event to be well attended and very diverse. Ms. Papy noted that there was information available about health services and community services.

She stated that the park site was set up with tents and chairs for the audience. The program was engaging for children.

Commissioner Bagley-Heath stated the program was very good, engaging, and in a good location; and attended by families.

Commissioner Essig returned to the topic of the Savannah Music Festival, commenting on the Music Explorers Program. When she attended, she found the venue filled to capacity, with high energy, lots of schools participating, well organized, clearly presented, and a very effective educational program.

DEEP, INC.

Commissioner Papy attended the Transformative Community Workshop. During it they acknowledged the City, however this is not normally open to the public because it is a focused group educational program. The workshop served twenty-five youth identified through the juvenile justice system and is geared at training leadership skills.

Commissioner Cali reminded commissioners to be proactive reaching out to the organizations assigned to them. Commissioner Ruby stated that she thinks the organizations need to do a better job announcing events.

Commissioner Kelsey attended DEEP Speaks at Garrison school and stated that it was a moving evening.

KING-TISDELL COTTAGE FOUNDATION

Commissioner Papy attended lectures and stated they did a good job at surveys and acknowledging the City. She noted that the Beach Institute is working to prove that they provide valuable services.

IV. Chair Report – Brea Cali

Commissioner Cali announced that she will be sending out a survey to commissioners for options of dates and times for a meet-and-greet to be held in September. Commissioner Ruby reminded members that there are two Jewish holidays in September. A location has not yet been determined.

Commissioner Cali announced the new subcommittees:

- *Youth Advisory*: Janice James, Andrea Hall-Houston, Darren Bagley-Heath, Tanet Taharka-Myers
- *Public Art*: Courtney Papy, Brea Cali, Sue Ruby
- *City of Savannah Priorities*: Patrick Kelsey, Janice James

She encouraged all subcommittees to speak via email and telephone and let her know how she can help.

Minutes Approval

Commissioner Cali declared that there was now a quorum and the minutes could be considered. A motion to approve the minutes of April 11, 2018 was made by Commissioner Papy, seconded by Commissioner Kelsey, and unanimously carried.

V. Weave-A-Dream Committee Report – Courtney Papy

Commissioner Papy reported that there were no pending applications. The most recent recipient is Urban Hope, which received \$2,000 for a summer camp being held June 4th through July 27th. The Weave-A-Dream guidelines have been revised. The committee is working with the new Marketing Coordinator to prepare better communication tools for the program. She asked all the commissioners to encourage applications. Commissioner Kelsey asked if students were not eligible to apply for the funds for the art fair in Calhoun Square. Commissioner Papy stated that school programs are not eligible to apply. Ms. Baker stated they will review the guidelines.

VI. Director's Report – Eileen Baker

Ms. Baker announced that the 2019 Cultural Investment applications will be reviewed on either August 11th or 18th.

She introduced Llana Samuel, the Marketing Coordinator in the Arts, Culture & Historical Resources department, and Veleeta McDonald, Special Projects Coordinator working for Taffanye Young, Chief Community Services Officer.

Commissioner Cali discussed that she had met with Ms. Samuel to discuss the perception of the Cultural Affairs Commission, Ms. Samuel will be spearheading efforts to raise awareness.

Ms. Spracher announced the recent winners of the Coastal Museums Association's (CMA) Awards of Excellence:

Excellence in Exhibition:

- Telfair Museums for *Complex Uncertainties: Artists in Postwar America*

Excellence in Education & Interpretation:

- Georgia Historical Society for "Live from the Archives: Georgia in the American Revolution"
- Juliette Gordon Low for "Over Teacups" and "Smart Cookies" Tours

Individuals of Excellence:

- Aletha Dunlavy for dedicated service as a volunteer to the UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant
- Kelly Westfield for dedicated service as an intern to the Davenport House Museum

Ms. Spracher discussed the role of CMA and its partner organization Savannah Heritage Emergency Response (SHER).

VII. Cultural Services Contract Coordinator’s Report – Eileen Baker
[Nothing additional to add to the Director’s Report]

VIII. General Discussion

Commissioner Cali opened the floor for general discussion.

Commissioner Kelsey asked for a final copy of the operations handbook. Commissioner Cali will double-check with Rebecca Brown regarding the final version.

Commissioner Cali asked Ms. Baker how many organizations have expressed an interest in applying to the City for a cultural investment. Ms. Baker stated between 11 to 14 applications were expected, about the same as last year.

Commissioner Kelsey discussed Georgia’s ranking of Arts funding among the nation. Arts Georgia has pushed out a listing of States arts funding levels and Georgia is ranked dead last among all states. Mr. Kelsey announced that next Friday, in Atlanta, there will be a meeting for State Arts advocacy strategies and he will be driving up if anyone else would like to go. Georgia Arts Network and Arts Georgia are the two statewide advocacy groups, though Georgia Arts Network is not very active.

There was discussion regarding a masterplan to communicate needs to City Council and how the Commission can convince policy makers that there should be incentives to entice artists and organizations to relocate to Savannah. Commissioner Cali broached the questions of what does it mean to support the arts and support the value of the arts.

Commissioner Papy suggested everyone attend the upcoming budget hearing to be visible and understand what’s going on. She stated that the commission needs to stress arts as an economic impact and part of the economic infrastructure.

Commissioner Essig spoke of the connection with tourism, and that we have rich artist opportunities and we need to promote our city through the arts.

Commissioner Papy reminded everyone there is good economic impact data in the arts document they already have. Commissioner Cali recommended pushing collaboration with other arms and agencies of the City. Commissioner Bagley-Heath suggested getting TLC and SEDA on board, as they have a better voice to influence City Council.

Commissioner Kelsey said that Michael Owens is very open to putting together an Artist Culture Council under that umbrella.

Commissioner Bagley-Heath recommended not creating another committee, but designating a line item budget.

Ms. Samuel said this is an image issue about why you need to value the arts; you need to get everyone together on the same page and brand the issue.

Commissioner Papy stated we need to have our story as the Commission clear.

Ms. Baker stated Savannah has an extremely high poverty rate and our residents are not often included in arts planning within arts and cultural organizations. Arts are an economic development tool and we need to do more to link creative initiatives with community development.

Commissioner Papy mentioned that she and Commissioner Cali had a great discussion with Manny Dominguez from the City's Business Development Office regarding the Waters Avenue corridor. Ms. Papy stated that we need to continue to reach out to other community partners and non-arts initiatives.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Public Comments

Following adjournment, members of the public asked if they could speak. Representatives of the Black Heritage Festival Planning Committee discussed their survey data and plans to present it to City Council. Ms. Baker said that they put the survey data out as public information.

The next scheduled meeting of the Commission will be held on Wednesday, August 8, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at 9 W. Henry Street.