



CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION MEETING

October 17, 2018

6:00 P.M.

**Arts, Culture & Historical Resources Office
9 West Henry Street**

MINUTES

Present: *Commissioners:* Darren Bagley-Heath, Brea Cali, Lisa Clark, Barbara Essig, Linda Evans, Andrea Hall-Houston, Patrick Kelsey, Kareem McMichael, Kristopher Monroe, Tanet Taharka Meyers

City Staff:

- Rebecca Brown, Cultural Services Contract Coordinator, 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

Absent: *Commissioners:* Esther Buchsbaum, Janice James, Willia Johnson, Alix Laincy, Antwan Lang, Courtnay Papy, Sue Ruby, 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. A motion to approve the August 8 meeting minutes was made by Commissioner Evans, seconded, and unanimously carried.

II. Announcements

Commissioner Cali thanked the commissioners for attending the Meet & Greet event in September and said she hoped they found it productive and that they'll continue the event as a good way to reach the public.

Ms. Cali also announced that the agenda will now include the Savannah Philharmonic's Picnic in the Park event for the cultural program reports.

III. Cultural Program Assessment and Reports

Deep Center, Inc.

Present commissioners did not attend Deep Center's programming between August and October 2018.

KING-TISELL COTTAGE FOUNDATION

Commissioner Evans attended the "Pilgrimage to Our Sacred Places: Commemorating the Civil Rights Movement" lecture by Dr. Doretha Walker, on August 22 at the Beach

Institute African American Cultural Center. She reported that there were about 30 attendees but she did not have her notes on the demographics.

Commissioner Evans noted that the City was recognized during the event and a reminder email about the event was received a few days prior to the lecture. She added that the program was good, the speaker was energetic and that it aligned with the neighborhood revitalization goal as there were attendees from various City neighborhoods.

TELFAIR MUSEUM OF ART

Commissioner Essig attended the “Monet to Matisse” exhibition at Telfair Museums after it opened to the public. She noted that the gallery was crowded with visitors and locals as well as elementary school groups on docent-led tours. Commissioner Essig also mentioned that it was unique to have the exhibition in town and that it was well organized and laid out so the gallery didn’t feel crowded. Commissioner Kelsey added that an email from Telfair Museums with fall programs was received on October 1.

COASTAL JAZZ ASSOCIATION

Commissioners Essig, Monroe, and Bagley-Heath attended the 2018 Savannah Jazz Festival from September 23rd to 29th.

Commissioner Essig attended all the events and reported that she was most impressed with the Latin Dance Party program on the Wednesday evening. According to Ms. Essig, evaluations were placed on attendees’ seats for them and the community responded really well to the event as the venue was at capacity. When she attended one of the Forsyth Park concerts that weekend, Ms. Essig noted that the City was acknowledged verbally, on banners, and in programs being handed out to event goers. The demographics at the event were comprised of mostly adults.

Commissioner Bagley-Heath attended programs on Thursday and Saturday night of the festival week, noticing that about 1,000 people attended the Thursday night’s event. He did mention that there was a lot of confusion as to whether the evening’s programs would go on or not due to inclement weather on Thursday. Mr. Bagley-Heath was impressed by the superb and very well-known acts and also noticed that the Saturday concert wasn’t as well attended as it could be because of bad weather and more communication issues. He reported that there were about 6,000 people in attendance with a good mixture of genres performing.

Commissioner Monroe attended programs on the Friday night and was impressed with the turnout despite bad weather. He thought the professionalism of the acts were great and reported a very diverse audience in terms of age, race, and gender.

Commissioner McMichael commended on the inclement weather-planning lacked clear communications.

Commissioner Clark added that marketing efforts this year was much better, especially on social media and that the event was well-organized as compared to years prior—with T.V. ads and print materials. Commissioner Evans added the brochure was very nice.

SAVANNAH PHILHARMONIC

Commissioner Essig attended the Orchestra Lab event and noted that it was $\frac{3}{4}$ full with about 6 schools' band classes. She reported that the orchestra lab event was well received and she was impressed with the way the young people observe and learn the material. All of the schools were present for the entire session and the program was well marketed.

Commissioner Bagley-Heath attended Picnic in the Park on October 7 at Forsyth Park and noted about 8,000 people in attendance. He mentioned that the quality of the program and the level of production was raised compared to the previous year thanks to a change in the audio-visual company. He did notice that less restrooms were available this year and that the restrooms had issues at the end of the night. The City was recognized and the signage efforts were much better as they made sure that walkways were properly communicated. The marketing efforts were great with television stations attending and a heavy social media presence due to the visually appealing light show.

Commissioner Monroe commends the organization for the light-room element of the Picnic in the Park, noting that the event and the light display received a lot of press.

VOTE

Commissioner Cali brought an attendance policy for the Cultural Affairs Commission to the floor for a 10-15 minute discussion. She announced that she and Commissioner Papy conducted a thorough review of attendance records over the past 3 years and that they showed an average attendance record of 64%. Commissioner Cali noted that while attendance has been improving, it could improve. She also added that City Council is considering an attendance policy for boards and commissions; she noted that the Cultural Affairs Commission should move forward and create their own policy for now.

Ms. Cali mentioned the possibility of a twice annual review of attendance records by the Commission Chair and Vice Chair. The number of absences that would be the catalyst for filing a report is 50%. A letter would then be sent by the Chair to the member thanking them and excusing them from their position based on their attendance record and the policy voted on. The letter would be copied to the Mayor and Clerk of Council, who would remove the individual from the roster.

Commissioner Monroe asked what sort of policy the Council is considering and Ms. Cali replied that she did not know because they were currently working on it.

Commissioner Essig asked whether there had been a policy around life situations in the past. Ms. Cali answered that there has not been one since she has served on the commission. Commissioner Evans pointed out that there was something written somewhere that the Clerk of Council will review the attendance of the commission, however, Commissioners were not removed due to attendance.

Commissioner Evans asked for clarification as to whether this policy will work with what the City comes up with and which policy will take precedence. Ms. Cali stated there will be an opportunity to discuss the policy once City Council has created their policy.

Commissioner Evans mentioned there's a difference between a no-show and a no-response to the invitation to attend so that should be taken into consideration. Commissioner Essig asked whether there was a policy on anything to address an emergency, and Commissioner Taharka-Myers added there should be a process for individuals that provide an excuse for their absence and those who don't so it is documented.

Commissioner Kelsey agreed with Ms. Taharka-Myers on having a two-tiered excuse policy and said that those excuses should be approved by the Chair solely because nothing can be done without a quorum.

On the topic of evaluations and attending contracted programs, Commissioner Cali stated that the Commission is volunteer based so, they cannot demand a mandatory evaluation attendance policy. She added that they will make an interim policy and when the Council passes its policy, it will override the Commission's attendance policy. Ms. Cali noted all the feedback and will use it to put something together for the December meeting.

IV. Weave-A-Dream Committee Report – Brea Cali

Commissioner Cali reported the deadline for 2018 Weave-A-Dream applications is November 13, 2018 and the current balance is \$20,906.06. She also added that the 2018 recipient, Urban Hope Savannah, received \$2,000 for their Camp Urban Hope Fine Arts and a final report has been submitted.

Commissioner Cali announced Open Savannah requested \$2,000 and the committee voted against investing in their proposal because the application did not argue how their program fits into the arts and culture aspect of the Weave-A-Dream program's priorities.

Commissioner Cali also said that there are currently four interested applicants pending submission of their applications. Commissioner Kelsey asked for the names of the potential applicants and Ms. Cali informed him that the applications have not been submitted yet. Ms. Brown also confirmed that the applicants have not yet submitted their applications so she won't be giving their names out as she's in touch with them. Mr. Kelsey added that he wanted to know the names of applicants and Ms. Brown replied that she was encouraging them to continue to apply and would not reveal their names yet in the event that they do not go through with applying.

Commissioner Monroe asked whether there's an expectation that Weave-A-Dream will continue after 2018 and Ms. Brown replied that City Council would make a final decision at the last budget hearing at the end of December. She also added that the WAD recommendation will be submitted during the budget workshops.

Commissioner Bagley-Heath asked whether there would be any lobbying for Weave-A-Dream and Ms. Brown responded that the Cultural Affairs Commission's recommendations would be presented by City staff at the budget retreat.

V. Subcommittee Reports

Youth Advisory

Commissioner Bagley-Heath announced that the Youth Advisory committee is in the process of coming together with an application for the 13-21 year olds they would like to form a youth advisory. The subcommittee is also forming a mission statement and looking at the possibility of having the youth members perform a similar role to the Commissioners where youth can submit evaluations for events they attend. Applications won't be rolled out until March 2019 in order to make sure everything is in order.

City of Savannah Priorities

Commissioner Kelsey distributed a proposal to discuss conducting community research as well as collecting data to get their perceptions on what is out there and any gaps in communities not being served. After analyzing the data, they would decide whether a formal master plan is needed. Commissioner Kelsey requested any ideas and suggestions.

Public Art

Commissioner Monroe reported that their subcommittee walked along Waters Avenue to survey spaces for beautification opportunities. He also stated that they met with Clinton Edminster about working with CAT to beautify bus stops. Commissioner Evans asked whether people living in those areas will have some input and Mr. Monroe stated that they will.

VI. Chair Report – Brea Cali

Nothing to Report.

VII. Contract Coordinator Report – Rebecca Brown

Ms. Brown announced that the next commission meeting will take place at the Civic Center on December 12. She also announced that the Arts, Culture & Historical Resources Director position had been posted on the City's website.

Commissioner Evans asked whether there will be an opportunity for Commissioners or Arts and Culture community representatives to be involved in the selection of the Director as it is important that that role is tied into what's happening in the City. Ms. McDonald answered saying that Ms. Young normally doesn't involve anyone outside the City organization to sit in on the interview process. She added that Ms. Young has certain requirements she is looking for in the position, thus, the reopening of the position again. McDonald state that Ms. Young will select a panel to assist her but that's normally someone inside the City.

Ms. Spracher announced that her department will be hosting a show and tell event of their map collections on October 19th for Archives Month, in the Council Chamber.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting of the Commission will be held on December 12, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at the Civic Center.