



**CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION
MEETING**

December 12, 2018

6:00 P.M.

**Savannah Civic Center, Bryan Room
301 W. Oglethorpe Avenue**

MINUTES

Present:

Commissioners:

Darren Bagley-Heath, Brea Cali, Linda J. Evans, Andrea Hall-Houston, Patrick Kelsey, Antwan Lang, Kareem McMichael, Kristopher Monroe, Courtney Papy, Sue Ruby, Tanet Taharka Meyers, Linda Wilder-Bryan

City Staff:

- Rebecca Brown, Contract Coordinator Arts, Culture & Historical Resources
- Llana Samuel, Marketing Coordinator, Arts, Culture & Historical Resources
- Sarah Pinson, Arts Program Coordinator, Arts, Culture & Historical Resources
- Veleeta McDonald, Special Projects Coordinator, Community Services
- Taffanye Young, Chief Community Services Officer

Absent:

Commissioners: Esther Buchsbaum, Janice James, Willia Johnson, Alix Lancy, Lisa Clark

I. Determination of Quorum/Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Brea Cali, Chair. Quorum was met and the October 18 meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Commissioner Kelsey to modify the October 18 meeting minutes to state that the City Priorities subcommittee distributed a proposal to be discussed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Evans and unanimously carried. Another motion was made by Commissioner Evans to approve the October 18 meeting minutes with the correction. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kelsey and unanimously carried.

II. Announcements

Commissioner Cali announced that City Council voted to name the new cultural arts center the Savannah Cultural Arts Center and encouraged the commissioners to look at the press release and the graph included.

Ms. Cali announced that there are four new and one returning commissioner for 2019.

Commissioner Cali also announced that this meeting was her last meeting as Chair and as a commissioner and thanked the commission for working with her.

III. Cultural Program Assessment and Reports

DEEP Inc.

No commissioners in attendance went to programs by DEEP Inc. Commissioner asked Ms. Brown to remind organizations to contact commissioners about events and programs.

KING-TISDELL COTTAGE FOUNDATION

Commissioner Taharka-Myers attended the Prison Reform lecture on October 24 at the Beach Institute.

Ms. Taharka-Myers stated that the event venue was ¼ full and the demographics were as follows: 20% young adults, 50% 21-59, 30% 60+. She added that the program met the city priorities of neighborhood revitalization and poverty reduction. The lecture was well organized, successful in highlighting culture and artistic traditions, and the size of the location was perfect for the amount of attendees. Ms. Taharka-Myers also noted that she learned the state of Georgia has the largest prison system in the country, and that she wished there were more people in attendance to hear what was being discussed.

The city was recognized on publicity materials received and verbally before the speaker started.

TELFAIR MUSEUM OF ART

Commissioner Bagley-Heath attended Telfair Museums' Fourth Grade Tours of Monet to Matisse and observed 60 children from Hess K-8 taking tours. He thought it was fabulous to see the engagement among the students and noticed lots of participation in the discussions. Both docents were communicating at age-appropriate levels as well.

Commissioner Evans attended the *I Have Marks to Make* exhibition program on December 9 at the Jepson Center. Ms. Evans briefly explained what the exhibition is about and noted that the City was recognized verbally as well as in

marketing materials. She pointed out that in previous years, the auditorium had been packed but it wasn't as full this time--maybe due to weather. The demographics observed were: 3% aged 0-5, 5% 6-13, 12% teens, 20% young adults, 35% adults, and 35% seniors.

Ms. Evans said that there was a nice mix of ages, races and abilities in the space, however, the auditorium in the Jepson Center isn't the most accessible for people and it was painful to watch people try to find seating. Surveys were collected and priorities met included neighborhood revitalization and poverty reduction.

The event was said to be well organized, clearly presented and youth were present as both exhibition participants, audience members, and performers. Some strengths were the marketing and community collaborations and the weakness was the venue.

Commissioner Taharka-Myers attended the Monet to Matisse Free Family Day in October at the Jepson Center and noticed activities on each level of the venue as well as lots of families and diversity. Surveys were collected and there was good youth involvement. Thirteen areas were set up for students to draw and there were about 70 participants in the Artzeum area engaging in exhibits there.

Ms. Taharka-Myers was unable to view the Monet to Matisse exhibition due to a long line but noted that the security staff did a good job of counting how many occupants were in the gallery. The city was recognized in marketing.

Ms. Taharka-Myers also attended the Owens-Thomas House Community Day in November and was overwhelmed to be in the space with the history of it. It was her first time visiting and she stated it was easier to flow through one site than the other. The Slave Quarters exhibition lines were too long for her to enter and she saw lots of children in attendance.

There were outdoor performances and refreshments available. The event was very interactive and effective in meeting educational goals, but she did not see surveys being collected. Ms. Taharka-Myers added that staff could have been a little more interactive and giving feedback on the actual site.

SAVANNAH PHILHARMONIC

Commissioner Taharka-Myers attended the Philharmonic in the Streetz event on November 18 at Greenbriar Children's Center. She saw about 75 attendees and stated that the venue was $\frac{3}{4}$ full despite being moved indoors due to weather.

Ms. Taharka-Myers noted that students enjoyed the performances. Youth engagement was off the charts, and there were performances outdoors after the

rain cleared. The DeRenne Middle School band also performed and the City was recognized.

SAVANNAH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Commissioner Evans attended the Musical Explorers program on December 6 at the Lucas Theatre. The musical genres covered were soul, country music, and African music from Mali. The venue was packed to capacity, which was 1,100 and a majority of the attendees were kids. She was unsure about survey collection but did receive an invitation to the event as well as an email reminder and phone call. The city was recognized on all publicity materials and with a verbal announcement at the event.

Ms. Evans noted that the arrival, seating and dismissal was some of the most well-coordinated work she had ever seen and that she was greeted by music festival staff. Goals met were neighborhood revitalization and poverty reduction.

Commissioner Bagley-Heath also attended on December 7 and agreed with Ms. Evans' comments. He added that it was fabulous to see the knowledge of the kids and that he learned new things being in the audience which showed how effective the program was.

Commissioner Cali introduced Ms. Taffanye Young, Chief of Community Services, to the commission after the program reports.

Ms. Young greeted the commission and announced that she hoped to have staff moved in in January and a two-day opening celebration.

She also added that the City Manager would like her to create a Public Arts ordinance and that she is looking at some examples from Florida but would like the commission's help. Ms. Young explained that the ordinance would include a public arts committee among other factors, such as a public art fund and working with private organizations. She pointed out that she would need assistance in farming out the whole thing and addressing challenges such as getting locals to the downtown area. She said she was looking forward to 2019 and thanked the commissioners for their work.

Commissioner Cali announced that the first vote of the night was a continuation of the previous meeting's conversation about the attendance policy. She gave commissioners a few minutes to review the attendance policy draft.

Commissioner Wilder-Bryan asked whether commissioners could attend another event than what they are assigned to in case of scheduling conflicts. Ms. Cali said yes.

Commissioners Bagley-Heath and Cali clarified that there needed to be 3 written evaluations submitted every six months and Commissioner Hall-Houston asked whether evaluations can be submitted online. Ms. Cali said yes, added that evaluations can also be sent directly to Ms. Brown or brought as a hard copy to meetings and submitted later. Ms. Brown said she will resend the link for submitting online evaluations.

Commissioner Bagley-Heath said it would be helpful to have a commissioner's calendar that is color-coded to see which events are coming up. Ms. Cali noted that she believed contracted organizations are responsible for contacting commissioners about events and Ms. Brown added that there used to be a calendar but there was a lot of inconsistency.

Commissioner Evans asked how the Chair can dismiss a commissioner from their position if they are appointed by the Mayor. Ms. Cali answered saying that the City Council's policy will override the Commission's policy once it is passed and stated that the Clerk of Council said the Chair does have the right to set the attendance policy and to remove commissioners. The Chair is required to notify the Clerk of Council about removals.

Commissioner Cali amended the policy to state that no less than six written evaluations will be submitted to the Arts, Culture & Historical Resources department per calendar year. Commissioner Lang made a motion to accept the attendance policy with Ms. Cali's amendment, Commissioner Bagley-Heath seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously carried.

Commissioner Cali asked Commissioner Kelsey to put forth his concerns on the vote for a Chair and Vice Chair.

Commissioner Kelsey recommended a nomination be set forth and a vote taken for the Chair position due to conflict between the commission bylaws and previous City of Savannah ordinance.

Commissioner Cali asked whether everyone would like to nominate and vote for a Chair and Vice Chair position and Commissioner Papy asked whether everyone was comfortable holding an election for Vice Chair. Commissioner Monroe moved to elect a Vice Chair, Commissioner Wilder-Bryan seconded, and the vote passed.

Commissioner Cali announced that the nominations for Chair are Coco Papy and nominations for Vice Chair are Linda Evans, Darren Bagley-Heath, Barbara Essig and Tanet Taharka-Myers. She added that commissioners could also write in a name.

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

Commissioner Papy reported that the deadline for Weave-A-Dream applications has passed for 2018 and that applications will open again in 2019. She announced that the current balance is \$20,906.06 and that organizations that received investment in 2018 were Urban Hope, at \$2,000. Their final report has been submitted. Ms. Papy also announced that Open Savannah requested \$2,000 in funding but was not approved due to mission alignment. Two other organizations were interested in applying but neither made the deadline. Ms. Papy added that efforts will continue to try to make Weave-A-Dream more accessible.

V. Chair Report – Brea Cali

Commissioner Cali announced a list of achievements by the commission in 2018 which were as follows: meeting attendance increased from 2017 by 3%, the operations manual was updated, the commission had one guest speaker, and three new subcommittees were created.

The Youth Advisory Subcommittee have been diligently working towards creating an advisory board of youth to gain their perspective on cultural activity in Savannah. The members of the CAC Youth Advisory Board will range between the ages of 13-21 and a minimum of three applicants will be selected from each district (City Districts 1-6 and the 2 at-large districts) for a total of 24 participants. The selection process for youth advisory members will occur via an application process. The inaugural Youth Advisory Board will fulfill their roles during the 2019 calendar year.

The Proposed Mission Statement: The Cultural Affairs Commission Youth Advisory Subcommittee and Youth Advisory Board exists to evaluate current programming and advise of the relevance of current programs from the perspective of young people in Savannah. The CAC Youth Advisory Board will work to develop future initiatives and strategies for programming aimed at youth and young adults with the guidance of the Youth Advisory Subcommittee members.

The Public Art Subcommittee began preliminary conversations with the Metropolitan Planning Commission to bridge the gap between the MPC and the Dept. of Arts, Culture & Historical Resources, the subcommittee plans to help facilitate a local Market Day hosted by the Waters Avenue Neighborhood Association in conjunction with the City of Savannah Office of Business Opportunity, tentatively planned for spring 2019. Development has begun on a beautification program involving temporary installations utilizing chain link fences, dumpsters, concrete flower pots, and electrical boxes with the first applications to be released in 2019.

The subcommittee will launch a lecture series in 2019 as an opportunity for the community to learn about the viable economic benefits of public art. Lecturers have been invited due to their unique experience at the cross section of public art and commerce as well as their primary residence being Savannah, Georgia. A total of four lectures will take place throughout the year and are intended to be free of charge and open to the public.

Preliminary conversations have begun with: Clinton Edminster, Board Member of CAT on the beautification of bus stops within the City of Savannah. With Nick Deffley, the Director of the Department of Sustainability; specifically as it relates to incorporating artistic points of interest along the Truman Linear Park. As well as with Peter Shonka, the Director of Arena Development; specifically as it relates to incorporating artistic points of interest throughout the walking and biking trails and the recreational areas related to the new arena.

The City of Savannah Priorities Subcommittee have begun to discuss how to approach the task of identifying gaps in current arts and culture programming as well as the areas within the arts and culture fabric currently funded by the city which yet remains unaddressed. These discussions resulted in a proposal currently sitting before the commissioners for their consideration and to take measurable action in 2019.

The proposal is to conduct needed research through, in part, surveying of taxpayers and arts and culture organizations, to gather data highlighting arts and culture perspectives, challenges, barriers, and inventorying current programming and covered target markets. The proposal will result in the identification of gaps and, perhaps, other concerns to try and remedy for the purpose of strengthening the arts and culture industry in the City of Savannah. The Subcommittee envisions the final report, which would be submitted to the City of Savannah's Mayor and City Council, becoming a catalyst for a long-term master plan to help guide public policy well into the future.

Twelve proposals were reviewed as part of the 2019 Cultural and Arts Investment Program. With a total of \$635,000 recommended investment for 2019. The approved 2019 Budget for Cultural Contributions including outside organizations, WAD & Technical Assistance is \$680,400.

Another accomplishment announced was that the first Meet & Greet was held and two Savannah Cultural Arts Center tours took place.

Lastly, meetings were had on behalf of the Cultural Affairs Commission with: MARC - which is the Multi-Agency Resource Center in Savannah, GA, a joint project of the county's Juvenile Court system, local law enforcement and the school system. With Nancy Pearson - City Councilwoman in Portsmouth, NH who

was instrumental in developing strong community support for arts and culture, and with Lee Snelgrove - Executive Director of One Columbia for Arts and History in Columbia, South Carolina - who has successfully facilitated thriving arts and culture programs within the community on behalf of the City of Columbia.

VI. Contract Coordinator's Report

Ms. Brown announced that City Council approved the 2019 budget which includes all the recommendations for 2019 organizations. She also announced that she followed up with eligible WAD applicants that didn't apply and some of their reasons for not doing so were: manpower, time, waiting on financial documents from CPA, waiting on other funders and missed deadlines.

Ms. Brown reported that there are 4-6 interested WAD applicants and that she will notify the commission as soon as the application is posted.

Commissioner Kelsey asked whether Ms. Brown's feedback was for the WAD program or Investment fund and Ms. Brown clarified that she meant WAD.

Ms. Brown announced that the results of the commission votes for Chair and Vice Chair was Coco Papy as Chair and Linda Evans as Vice Chair.

Mr. Kelsey asked about the research on those who did not apply for the Cultural Investment fund and Ms. Brown said she will go back through her records to check as that information was not requested.

Mr. Kelsey noted that the information was requested in April 2018 during a meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair and that he hoped to get the information before the next round of Investment fund applications.

Ms. Evans asked how they would know who to canvass and Mr. Kelsey answered that they would have expressed interest. Ms. Brown stated that she has notes on those who did not apply for the investment fund from the City of Savannah, but didn't compile them because she thought only Weave-A-Dream data was requested.

Commissioner Monroe asked for clarification on Mr. Kelsey's question and Mr. Kelsey answered that he asked in April for information on why some eligible applicants weren't following through on applying for investment funds from City of Savannah. He knows anecdotally some don't do it because of the time involved. A meeting was held in April to discuss those concerns and it was asked to compare our application process to other like cities and he did such and can provide the information if anyone is interested. The only other application that was as complicated was Atlanta. In April it was discussed and agreed upon that

after the investment fund had been reviewed and approved and put forth to city council, the commission would look at data from those who didn't apply.

Ms. Cali clarified that Ms. Brown has the information but hasn't compiled it for the meeting and Ms. Brown asked to get Mr. Kelsey's notes on those who did not apply and their reasons for not doing so. Mr. Kelsey replied that he did not have it because it was understood that the City would go back and get that data.

Commissioner Cali stated that she was going to open up the floor for general discussion and asked whether anyone had time for 2019 goal discussions. Commissioner Kelsey replied that he would like to discuss the proposal to be put forth.

Ms. Cali stated that there is an opportunity for the Youth Advisory subcommittee to work with the Public Art subcommittee especially about the bigger initiatives of the arena and the Truman Trail. She said she'd love to encourage a conversation about digitizing for the future. The commission thanked Ms. Cali for her hard work.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting of the Commission will be held on January 9, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Bryan Room at the Savannah Civic Center.