

Liberty Arts Commission Meeting Summary

May 29, 2020

Present via Zoom Conference were Commissioners: Greg Duncan, Shane Immelt, Heather Jones, Anna Knackstedt, Katie McDonald, Bill Stilfield, Phil Young and Amy Steinbeck

Absent: Aaron Money

Staff Present: Jeanine Thill, Community Development Manager & Claire Rodgers, PR & Communications

The Zoom conference meeting (due to the Covid-19 Pandemic) was called to order by Chairman Immelt at 1:00 pm

Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the meeting summary from the March 12, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mc Donald. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Current Business

Bed Tax Budget – Commissioner Knackstedt reported that due to decreased tax revenues, all programming funded with the Transient Guest Tax has been reduced. After thoughtful consideration, The Tourism Committee allocated \$15,000 to the Sculpture Program in 2020. Commissioner Duncan commented we should be very grateful to get these funds, given the circumstances and the difficult decisions that had to be made by the Tourism Committee. Many projects didn't receive any funding. Commissioner Knackstedt said if revenues increase and more money is available later in the year, our projects might get more funds. Although the allocated amount is not enough money to fund the entire sculpture program, there are a variety of ways to proceed. Commissioner Duncan said there were informal discussions about what the priorities of LAC were in preparation the meeting with the Tourism Committee. Things that are permanent and have the broadest touch are priorities.

The grant program is important but those activities funded in the past have been more conducive to large audiences, which are not allowed currently with the pandemic.

The group felt that something permanent is important and hope that we could find a way to purchase a piece this year. The group discussed if there are pieces that we have now that could be extended more than 12 months for a reduced amount in an effort to work within the budget. The goal should be to avoid holes and maybe get one or two new pieces.

Commissioner Jones suggested that Staff reach out to the existing artists and see if they will extend their existing contract for \$600 for another 12 months. Also ask them their asking price and if it is negotiable. Chairman Immelt suggested that we jury the new sculptures submitted. Commissioner Duncan commented that we can run these things on parallel tracks. We can move sooner or later.

Vice Chair McDonald suggested we not go to 12 sculptures this year, as originally planned. The Commission agreed that we should have a goal to keep it at nine sculptures in 2020-2021. We need to be mindful of additional costs to adding more. Commissioners Wyman & Steinbeck would like to be on the jury.

Commissioner Duncan commented that when you put your comments into the system as a juror, everyone can see your comments. It is not a perfect system but it is better than some.

Staff asked for clarification on the stipend amount to extend the contracts. The Commission agreed to start at \$600. Commissioner Duncan said it is important how we frame it. This is an opportunity- we are trying to be creative and a contract extension is one of the brainstorms of the committee. Commissioner Wyman commented that we don't want to take advantage of the artist. Commissioner Stilfield said we may want to ask them first what they are thinking for a price. Commissioner Jones added are we treating the artists equally. We are offering to pay a fixed amount and would like to see who is interested. Right now we are exploring opportunities and a continuance fee for the existing artists. Commissioner Steinbeck said even if we extended some of the contracts, we would have a budget left to bring in other new pieces.

Commissioner Duncan said under normal circumstances we would do a public vote on a purchase piece. This year we might want to celebrate the accomplishments and not the process.

Commissioner Steinbeck asked if we are obligated to purchase a piece, Commissioner Duncan said we are not.

The art program in Liberty is very important and we want to continue with it.

Commissioner Duncan said someone approached him about grants. The person is working on a project that isn't programming but a cemetery monument for African Americans. Due to the lack of funding, this would have to be considered at another time.

Commissioner Duncan also wanted to emphasize that it is great that the Commission is being creative with the reduced budget, but that's not saying the Commission can put on a quality sculpture program for \$15,000 each year. It is important to protect the entire project. Grants and our other programming are still very important.

The Tourism Committee will meet monthly and make budget decisions. Ms. Rodgers added that if things return to normal in August and through the end of the year, it is likely that those funds will be used in 2021. She said that \$161k is the fund balance and \$50k is what was received thru the first part of March. The Tourism Committee is planning to save \$40k of this for 2021. They already had spent \$75k before Covid-19 occurred. If there is little revenue from now through December they will only have \$50k to spend in 2021. The total marketing budget in 2020 was \$ 34,300 which has been reduced to \$500/mo from here until the end of the year. Commissioner Duncan commented that the events that push people to our hotels are not happening such a tournaments at CapFed Complex. Vice Chair McDonald asked if that changes how we are thinking about next year, strategically. Commissioner Duncan said it is smart to be thinking about that, we will need to continue to be creative. Commissioner Jones said as we continue in this environment we may need to reconsider reducing the stipend to sculpture artists by \$500 or \$1000 as we go forward. Everyone is making adjustments in the new environment.

An extension clause may want to be considered in the next Call for Artists.

Staff presented a summary of LAC's original 2020 budget and the current status:

Programming/Original 2020 Budget/ Current Status:

Make Music Day / Orig. Budgeted Amt: \$3810 / Cancelled

Public Art Exhibits / Orig. Budgeted Amt: \$1700 / Funding Currently Not Available

Art Grants / Orig. Budgeted Amt: \$11,000 / Funding Currently Not Available

Sculptures (Orig. Budgeted Amts: 12 honorariums \$24k, Supplies \$8480 & Purchase Piece \$15k) / \$47,480 / Available to Spend \$15,000

Sculpture Maintenance / Orig. Budgeted Amt: \$6330 / Funding Currently Not Available, but can use a portion of the \$15k allocated if LAC deems necessary

Art Partner Reports:

Liberty Arts Foundation- Commissioner Duncan reported that the Foundation gets \$3 for every bag of coffee sold by Walt's. They are still looking at ways to add people to the board.

William Jewell- Commissioner Wyman said at Jewell is looking at safe way to enjoy the arts such as reducing by 30% at Peters Theatre. For music and choir is a struggle to determine how to do this. They have an artist scheduled in August for the gallery on campus. They have a full schedule through next September. No artists have backed out yet.

Corbin Theatre- Commissioner Stilfield said they hope to open up again in July. Financially, they are doing a little better than last year. Commissioner Dunan asked if they have considered a different venue such as in a Park. Stilfield said they will consider that.

Norterre- Commissioner Steinbeck said they are looking at other artists for the gallery at Norterre. Steven Carol backed out since they can't have a reception.

New Business:

Anna said the TGT Committee is looking to meet July 6th.

Adjournment - Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Young, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Wyman. The meeting adjourned at 2:09 pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 11th at 12:30 via Zoom