

WINONA FINE ARTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

April 7th, 2020 (By Zoom Digital Meeting)

Present by Zoom: Roger Boulay, Caitilin McCoy, Theresa Remick, Alessandra Sulpy, Carrie Frederich, Rebecca Sims

Absent: Ben Strand

Staff: Lee Gundersheimer, Steve Sarvi

Guests: Sarah Johnson, Creative Laureate (at 6:30pm)

Item I: Meeting called to order by Boulay at 5:32 p.m.

Item II: Approval of agenda: A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Frederich, seconded by Remick. All voted aye.

Item III: Approval of minutes: A motion to approve the previous month's minutes was made by Frederich seconded by Sulpy. Remick and Sims abstained. The remainder voted aye.

Item IV: Financial Statement-

Gundersheimer presented new report. 24,300 in total revenue for FAC was the start of the year. Of that 4,650 remains unallocated. A brief discussion occurred to state that it was important to consider the Poetry Walk may need to dip into those remaining funds. A request for more pricing information from the Stamping company and Engineering was made.

\$3,823 additionally remains in the Blue Heron Fund, a separate line of another budget. McCoy motioned acceptance, Sims seconded and all present voted aye.

Item V. New Business

A.) Amending the Creative Laureate Position description with pay schedule.

Discussion occurred. Sulpy felt a portion early to help CL with supplies, etc. Remick reminded that this fee was not for supplies but for a stipend. She suggested supply funds could be requested from the City. It was determined by discussion important to pay some percentage early. Boulay suggested 50% at the start of the term, and 50% third quarter of each year the term. Motioned by Boulay, seconded by McCoy. All present voted aye.

B.) FAC 2020 Goals and Grants

Boulay began: What shall we do as a commission for the year? Frederich re-stated her idea from last month about meeting more often to help generate more activity from the commission. She added though that might have to wait given what has happened with the pandemic. McCoy concurred more frequent meetings seemed important. Remick reminded that the additional work could be better performed by sub-committees, rather than formal meetings. Progress might be made faster in that mode. Boulay asked Sarvi is there a precedent with other groups for frequency. Sarvi: Some groups meet twice a month such as the Council, some only as needed. He too suggested smaller committees as a possible solution. Added that to work it takes trust, but the group the meeting more than once a month might be impractical and unwieldy (even just from the public meeting and announcements standpoint.) Frederich said perhaps solving the “what are the goals” would lead to the answer. Sarvi suggested involving others from the community to work with the smaller committees.

Boulay then suggested could the FAC buy watercolor sets for every schoolchild in Winona to make some kind of immediate impact. It would preclude grants with the limited funds. Or should we wait to see what is the best use of funds to see what sectors most need it. It might make sense to use the Blue Heron Fund now. If not now, when?

Remick asked what about turning such an effort into a fund raiser to raise funds to help replenish and then artists can also be given grants. Frederich worried about the health concerns about distributing materials to families worried about who has touched the materials. Her work with Second Saturday at MMAM has the same concerns. Remick is working on creative modules at St. Mary’s but that might not give kids something to do without parental assistance. Selpy suggested 10 dollars for sidewalk chalk, and \$5 could be for the materials and \$5 to replenish grants funding. Remick thought the Creative Laureate could help with teaching art classes in the chalk work. Boulay followed up with could two or three teachers be hired to be part of this initiative. Boulay asked to make sure that whatever the Commission chose to do there should be a desire for a direct impact. Sulpy felt the idea of art kits could be targeted for all ages= some for children, others for teens, some for adults. Remick suggested to commit to paying some artists and then a finite number of packets. Selpy suggested that some packets should be available at no cost. The whole program could be by donation. Sarvi suggested the Library and Visit Winona to partner with. Remick felt the FAC should be the focus of the effort, and Frederich agreed. Boulay reiterated that we should do whatever has the greatest immediate impact. He asked does the FAC want to generate a certain amount of art packets to the community? He asked to have a sub committee to form to move on this quickly. Boulay, Sulpy, and Remick agreed to serve to create an FAC arts packet. Gundersheimer brought up the City’s past concerns with taking donations especially cash. Sarvi said that should not be a concern right now.

Sarvi made the following point: RAA and other organizations have been putting out postings, and the FAC should be doing that too. Gundersheimer reported that he has been doing that but should make sure the FAC page was sharing in those postings too.

Boulay spoke about the long term goal of local grants. Sulpy felt it prudent to revisit in June and July for those grants to start small and then work our way up. Frederich and Remick concurred. The decision to start committee work on FAC art packets and to try and collect donations for them was made. All concurred.

C.) Discussion of COVID Social Distancing arts initiatives- Gundersheimer brought up the WINONArts website covid sections and that Create in Place was an effort that could promote this Art Pack initiative. He also talked about the Please Stand By initiative to create streaming platforms for arts groups to use during the pandemic and possibly afterwards. He mentioned that talks had begun to hire Treedome and to support Mid West Music Fest's efforts at a streaming version of their festival with the small amount of funds (2K) that had been raised this year by WINONArts. Remick expressed concern that singling out groups to assist could be problematic. Gundersheimer stated that the hope was that the infrastructure of a streaming system could be a shared resource. Remick said that the \$25 a month that some services charge for streaming software did not seem to add up to a substantial allocation of funds. Gundersheimer replied that the service he is most interested in is \$50 per month and the administrative time involved in web site building and technical services would be the remaining costs, and would most likely well exceed the 2K available.

Item V: Old Business

A.) Font Design Decision

Boulay requested feedback. For reference the three WSU student font design groups who presented last meeting were: 1.) Creative Visionaries 2.) Devoted Design 3.) Hidden Path. The third group was deemed possibly too difficult to read. The second design was admired except for slight variations in the size of some of the characters. The first design was mentioned as favorable except for its perceived difficulty in stamping with the concrete due to gaps in some of the characters.

Sulpy thought that it might be a good learning tool for the group to possibly have to redesign to keep what is positive and fix what might be a problem. It was suggested that the stamp and concrete company should be consulted to see if it is possible to use such an intricate design. Sulpy motioned that the first font could be chosen with the caveat that a change might be needed and the group would be consulted. If that could not occur Group 2 would be the backup choice.

with adjustments to be made to the sizing of some of the characters. Frederich seconded and the motioned carried unanimously.

B.) Downtown Strategic Plan Task Force Input.

The list of Strategic Task Force members who have been invited was presented: Margaret Shaw Johnson as chair, Theresa Remick, Luke Sims, Vicki English, Greg Neidhard, Jovy Rocky, Eilleen Moeller, Jon Swanson, Sarah Johnson was asked to join and agreed to serve. Frederich felt that the group seemed complete and there might not be a need to expand it.

Boulay began a discussion of the need to possibly delay the strategic planning process. Gundersheimer reported as to why it was deemed important to continue with some delays knowing that a possibly very changed landscape might be part of the future goals. Sarvi commented that the plan is over a year in process and by then so much of what changes might be needed should be known. If in the Fall, a break in the planning process is necessary, it will occur. Johnson spoke about the how all of us, including the planners, need to be nimble and adaptive to change.

Boulay requested that the FAC request the Council to re-allocate planning funds for grants or other initiatives. Boulay's concerns where why engage a consultant now when we don't know what the arts and culture landscape will even be? Remick felt that the two were not mutually exclusive. Boulay stated why not use the money now for what it could do. Sarvi stated that he could not guarantee that there would be money for planning in the future, it is there and approved now. The study could help with granting and funding that may arise to adapt to the changed landscape and the City would have the important data needed to apply. McCoy felt it re-allocating funds might be putting a bandaid on the problem and leaving us with nothing for the next two years. Remick felt that we can't afford to wait- the planning process has taken years to accomplish. Frederich stated if we table everything during this pandemic, then nothing might get done. Boulay reiterated that he was opposed, that the plan should be tabled for now. A plan cannot be effectively written given the circumstances. No formal motion was made to request change.

Johnson also spoke of her desire for how to get mental health programs to help with the next steps of the pandemic response. Her "Steady Hands, Open Hearts" uploads might be a part of that effort. "Creativity Is Essential" was another. Gundersheimer stated that her section of the WINONArts website could be a reservoir for those efforts. Sarvi also suggested the Engage Winona sections of the City website and the Friendship Center.

Item VIII: Meeting Adjourned- At 7:44 pm, a motion to adjourn was made by Frederich Sulpy seconded. Meeting adjourned.