

Waukegan Park District  
Jack Benny Center for the Arts  
Cultural Arts Advisory Committee Meeting  
May 8, 2014  
12:00 pm meeting  
Lilac Cottage  
1911 N. Sheridan Road-Waukegan, IL 60087

I. Call to Order

Commissioner Bill Sarocka called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm. He welcomed and thanked everyone in attendance. Commissioner Foley (Board Liaison) is unable to attend the meeting.

II. Roll Call

In attendance were Commissioner Sarocka, Commissioner Bridges, Claudia Freeman, Ty Rohrer, Debra Carl, Roxanne Swanson, Meg Golgenboom, Myra Gaytan, Lisa May, Dave Johnson, Jason Clark, and Jo Dooley. Due to lack of a quorum, no official board business was conducted.

III. Review, Discuss, Decide

- A. Advisory Members introduced themselves. Bill Sarocka, Board of Commissioners – Waukegan Park District; George Bridges, Jr., Board of Commissioners – Waukegan Park District; Theodora Anderson, Waukegan Park District- Manager /Community Relations; Lisa May, 7<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman and neighbor to Bowen Park; Meg Golgenboom, Waukegan Historical Society; Roxanne Swanson, Waukegan Symphony Orchestra member and Violin/Piano teacher at Jack Benny Center; Myra Gaytan, University Center; Debra Carl, Cultural Arts Specialist; Dave Johnson, Waukegan Band Foundation; Claudia Freeman, Superintendent of Cultural Arts; Jason Clark, Artistic Director of the Bowen Park Theatre Company; Jo Dooley, longtime member of Concert Call and part owner of A-Major Music; Ty Rohrer, Cultural Arts Museum Supervisor
- B. Update on Cultural Arts Programming and Summer in the Parks – Superintendent Freeman reported that are working with the Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership and are offering bilingual classes that are being held at the theatre and Lilac. A survey was conducted at the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra Young People’s Concert. We found out that people don’t really know about us or about our free programming. Also most people don’t know that children 18 and under are admitted to our concerts for free. The focus group as discussed in the strategic plan/goals for 2013/14 turned into what we called “an input group” and a wide selection of people were invited but few attended. Some of those in attendance come to much of what is offered while others did not even know about the Park District brochure. In the conversation it was stated for proper communication with our community, we have to do everything: press releases, Face Book, fliers, brochure, e-mails, and newspapers. This is something that we all know. The

participants said that we were doing things right and the only thing to improve on was communications.

Commissioner Bill Sarocka stated that it takes 20 contacts for people to know who you are and for them to do anything.

Cultural Arts Specialist Debra Carl reported on the *Free Programs* page in the brochure there are 60 free programs. 27 are Recreation Department 33 are Cultural Arts plus the 36 Arts Parks which do not fit on the page brings us to 69 free programs offered this summer. The programs start with the Ray Bradbury's "Dandelion Wine" Fine Arts Festival on June 7. Arts Park will be at almost every park with a playground. Bowen Blues is on the third Wednesday. Poetry is on the third Friday. This is the make it or break it year for Poetry, it is the third year and if the numbers do not pick up it will be morphed into something else maybe with music and at the Washington Park band shell. Movies are on the second Friday. This year there are 4 movies with the last one being a back to school movie on the fourth Friday in August. This movie is the International Children's Film Festival and is really 20 short movies from all over the world. Last time I had mentioned we were working with Compass Creative Dramatics for theatre programming, we did a spring break half-day workshop with 4 children who then put on a thirty-minute performance. Those four students are also signed up for the summer theatre experience.

Cultural Arts Museum Supervisor Ty Rohrer: talked about upcoming history related events. At the museum two exhibits will be up in the summer, *History of the Courthouse*, and *Waukegan: Then & Now*. More guided walking tours have been incorporated into this summer's schedule. The Discover Bowen Park will continue along with Historic Homes of Sheridan Road and Waukegan and the Movies. A new activity this summer will be the History Adventure Week.

Superintendent Freeman talked about the Comcast Literary Arts and Digital Photography Lab and passed around a book of the children's pictures. She mentioned the workshop she attended May 7 with the Local Arts Network through the Arts Alliance Illinois and Illinois Arts Council discussing community stories and Creative Placemaking. She will present a report at our next meeting. In March she again represented the 10<sup>th</sup> Congressional District at the National Arts Advocacy Day in Washington DC and presented information that had been compiled by the Arts Alliance Illinois staff on National Endowment for the Arts and Illinois Arts Council money in the 10<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Senator Link's district and Representative Mayfield's district. The Waukegan Park District Strategic Plan is completed and there will be meetings to help plan the next one.

- C. Community Engagement: Theodora Anderson discussed the branding project from last year the organizations the proposal was sent for an RFP hadn't done this type of project with communities with a large Latino population. At the Waukegan Public Library community engagement meeting, the conversation dealt with the

question: “how relevant we are to the community?” It was stated that the park district needs to talk face to face with the community. Groups were formed focusing on the faith community, Latino organizations, non-profit groups, the media, and senior staff. All meetings will be completed at the end of June to then present a report at the July 8 board meeting. The three things that want to be accomplished by these meetings are 1) how to best communicate 2) partnerships and 3) needs of the community. *Communication*: we have to use the brochure and the New Sun. The Park District to “be a bridge”. *Partnerships*: North Shore Gas is allowing us to put fliers into the gas bills. Safe House would like to get its people outside but they are scared to go out so they wondered if we could provide a safe place. Some churches are looking at doing an ecumenical service in the parks. *Needs of the community*: There is something for everyone, scholarships are available if needed, and we are willing to put together a program if it falls within our mission.

- D. Waukegan Parks Foundation: Theodora Anderson discussed the foundation stating that the by-laws are 95% complete and stated that the foundation cannot proceed until we have selected the directors. We are looking for 9 total and two have already accepted becoming board members. The make up of the foundation needs to be an odd number between 5-13. The Park District is looking for people who want to govern. Many foundations look at placing donors or volunteers into their board but having people who want to govern-lead the organization is very important. David Johnson: that is admirable that you are doing that but the execution of it is difficult because at least at first the directors will be the ones doing the work.
- E. Centennial Celebration” December 26, 2016 will be the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Waukegan Park District. Most activities will take place in 2017. We want to get people to share their stories of the parks and programs. The theme will of course be a “One-Hundred” theme. There will be a few ways of collecting stories and pictures including a submission form on the website. Jason Clark: recommended that the Comcast Photography students take pictures of people enjoying the parks.
- F. Advisory Comments
- David Johnson: We have done a much better job of getting the Gold Medal award information out there into the public.
- Teddy: we could show the 3-minute video next time.
- Myra: The website is very user friendly and she has referred to it several times. Put stuff we want seen and that is coming up on the front page.
- Lisa: The Live Green Festival was cool.
- Claudia: ACX Alebrijes student exhibition was of fantasy animals kicking off the Week of the Child.
- Bill: Try to access the kids at the Lake County Sports Center (Lovinger) there is a lot of traffic that goes through there. Maybe a booth or a display.
- Teddy: Also try the Sports Park.
- Roxanne: Talk with the WSO director about another Halloween celebration.

Jason: Dandelion Wine is great but it is here. What about doing another Bradbury Literary Walk. That got people out and lots of walk-ups and interest in it maybe do every 2-5 years. He loved participating in it. Maybe get High School students involved and have 10-minute scenes at each location. He is currently working with Paul Henkles who is the new Waukegan High School theatre teacher.

Claudia: This could piggyback off Ty's current walks and would be similar to an Oakwood Cemetery Walk.

Jason: we can use the same scenes from year to year. Faith has paperwork from when she was teacher. Maybe the same day as the Waukegan Public Library's Ray Bradbury's Storytelling Festival.

Claudia: The Arts Park van is new to us this year. Elmer did the stickers for the windows. The number of Arts Parks doesn't include the block parties and events.

- G. Next meetings will be on December 4, 2014. Please look at your calendars so that we might get a bit more time to produce the minutes to present to the park board. Does the third Thursday work for anyone? Myra shook her head "no" when Wednesday was mentioned. The second Thursday is the Latino Coalition so that will not work. Freeman thanked everyone in attendance.

IV. No closed session

V. Meeting adjourned by Commissioner Sarocka at 1:13pm.

Waukegan Park District  
Jack Benny Center for the Arts  
Cultural Arts Advisory Committee Meeting  
May 8, 2014  
6:00 pm meeting  
Lilac Cottage  
1911 N. Sheridan Road-Waukegan, IL 60087

I. Call to Order

The meeting to order at 6:11 pm. Everyone was welcomed and thanked everyone in attendance. Commissioner Foley (Board Liaison) is unable to attend the meeting.

II. Roll Call

In attendance were Claudia Freeman, Ty Rohrer, Debra Carl, Theodora Anderson, Betsy Stiles and David Motley and T. Due to lack of a quorum, no official board business was conducted.

III. Review, Discuss, Decide

- A. Advisory Members introduced themselves. Theodora Anderson, Waukegan Park District- Manager /Community Relations; David Motley, Director of Communications –City of Waukegan; Betsy Stiles- community member; Debra Carl, Cultural Arts Specialist; Claudia Freeman, Superintendent of Cultural Arts; Ty Rohrer, Cultural Arts Museum Supervisor

B. Update on CAD Programming/Summer in the Parks

Superintendent Freeman: We are working with the Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership and are offering bilingual classes that are being held at the theatre and Lilac. Participated in National Arts Advocacy Day in Washington D.C. Working with an individual to host a Puerto Rican Festival in Bowen Park on July 19, 2014. Waukegan Park District will be working on Master Plan and Open Space. A survey was conducted at the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra Young People's Concert. We found out that people do not really know about our free summer programming and the Cultural Arts Division. Many people do not know that children 18 and under are admitted to our concerts for free. The focus group in the strategic plan was re-thought and became an input group with a wide selection of people invited but few attended. Three children and four adults participated in the input group. Some come to a number of our programming while one did not even know about the Park District brochure. The discussion was primarily focused on communication and as a park district and cultural arts division -we have to do everything: press releases, Facebook, fliers, brochure, e-mails, and newspapers. They said that we were doing things right and the only thing to improve on was communications.

Cultural Arts Specialist Debra Carl: On the Free Programs page in the brochure there are 60 free programs. 27 are Recreation Department 33 are Cultural Arts plus the 36 Arts Parks which do not fit on the page brings us to 69 free programs

offered this summer. The programs start with the Ray Bradbury's "Dandelion Wine" Fine Arts Festival on June 7. Arts Park will be at almost every park with a playground. Other free activities were also discussed. Discussion of the Comcast Literary Arts and Digital Photography Lab took place and attendees passed around a book of the children's pictures. This is the make it or break it year for Poetry in the Park, it is the third year and if the numbers do not pick up it will be morphed into something else maybe with music and using the visibility of the Washington Park band shell. . This year there are 4 movies with the last one being a back to school movie on the fourth Friday in August. This movie is the International Children's Film Festival with approximately 20 short movies from all over the world. We continue to work with Compass Creative Dramatics for theatre programming; there was a spring break half-day workshop with four children who then put on a thirty-minute performance. Those four students are currently signed up for the summer theatre experience.

Cultural Arts Museum Supervisor Ty Rohrer: Discussed upcoming history related events. The museum will have two exhibits up in the summer, *History of the Courthouse*, and *Waukegan: Then & Now*. More guided walking tours have been incorporated into this summer's schedule. The *Discover Bowen Park* will continue along with *Historic Homes of Sheridan Road* and *Waukegan and the Movies*. A new activity this summer will be the History Adventure Week.

David Motley: asked if there would be a re-printing of Ed Link's *Waukegan: A History*. Rohrer: responded that at this time there would not be additional printings of the book.

- C. Permission was asked to move the Community Engagement and the Foundation reports from Theodora Anderson up since she had another commitment. Those in attendance approved. The branding project from last year the companies the proposal was sent to did not provide a solid response because they have not worked with communities with a large Latino population. Dr. Harris of the 1<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church participated in a community engagement meeting. Tried finding groups that had the same make up as the community but this did not work. Groups were formed to focus on groups with in the community such as the faith community, Latino organizations, the not-for-profit groups, media, and senior staff...All of the meetings will be done by the end of June to present at the July 8 board meeting. The three things that want to be accomplished by these meetings are 1) how to best communicate 2) partnerships and 3) needs of the community. Communicate: we have to use the brochure and the New-Sun. Partnerships: Safe House would like to get its people outside but they are scared to go out so they wondered if we could provide a safe place. Some churches are looking at doing an ecumenical service in the parks. Needs of the community: There is something for everyone, scholarships are available if needed, and we are willing to put together a program if it falls within our mission. Wants to talk to "Millennials." Stated that the average age of in Waukegan is 30.
- Betsy Stiles: stated that it is important that Dr. Harris see that something happened from the meeting. Teddy: promised to deliver results.

D. Waukegan Parks Foundation

The by-laws are 95-97% complete. She gave a targeted deadline for September 1, 2014. Foundation we cannot precede until we have selected the directors we are looking for 9 total. It has to be an odd number and between 5-13. We are looking for people who want to govern. Currently, directors are being selected. Two have been selected and we are in the process of finding seven more.

E. 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary - December 26, 1916

Most activities will take place in 2017. We want to get people to share their stories of the parks and programs. A “Hundred” theme will be in place. There will be a few ways of collecting stories and pictures including a submission form on the website. WPD is especially looking for family/friends photographs in the parks. Motley: recommended using Instagram to start building an archive of pictures in the parks. Stiles: Asked if there will be costumes as part of the festivities. Ty: responded that Oakwood Cemetery Walk that year would feature the Park District story. The planning committee has also discussed costumed re-enactors at some of the events that year. Betsy: recommended that we incorporate old children’s toys and games

F. Advisory Comments

David: said he appreciates the consistency of our flyers and commended the CAD for their Facebook postings. Stated, “we are opening doors not just turning the sign and waiting for people to come to us.” Stated that he has not seen a more impressive community calendar than what Waukegan produces each year.

Betsy: discussed the option of hosting a Cultural Arts Showcase where segments of past performances could be shown on television/YouTube/etc. Was discussed that this is difficult due to copyright.

David: recommended that we create more YouTube content for people to be able to learn more about Waukegan during their leisure.

G. Next meetings will be on December 4, 2014. Freeman thanked everyone in attendance.

IV. No closed session

V. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.