

Waukegan Park District
Jack Benny Center for the Arts
Cultural Arts Advisory Committee Meeting
March 30, 2017
12:00pm meeting
Jack Benny Center
1911 N. Sheridan Road, Waukegan, IL 60087

I. Call to Order

Pat Foley, Park District Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 12:06pm

II. Roll Call & Introductions

In attendance were George Bridges, Park District Commissioner; Pat Foley, Park District Commissioner; Claudia Freeman, Superintendent of Cultural Arts; Ty Rohrer, Cultural Arts Supervisor; Bryan Escobar, Cultural Arts Specialist; Elizabeth Fallon, Department Support Aide; Harry Came, President of the Waukegan Historical Society; Jane Waller, Waukegan Arts Council.

Due to the lack of a quorum, no official board business was conducted.

III. Review, Discuss, Decide

A. Updates on the State of the Arts and Humanities in America – Claudia Freeman

- National Level: There have been two proposals to eliminate the NEA and NEH with \$18 million in cuts in domestic funding to the arts. Arts Advocacy Day was March 20 in Washington D.C. and leaders in the arts in IL met with IL representatives. Encouraging feedback came from these meetings. Handout give talking points when contacting your representative about arts funding.(NEA Quick Facts sheet, NEA Chairman Statement on FY18 Budget, About the NEH)
- State Level: State funding for the arts is down 20%, proposal to close state museums, contact your representative to advocate for museums using talking points from handout. (10 Reasons Why Closing IL Museums is Senseless)

B. Departmental 2017/18 Goals and CAD Programming Updates – Claudia Freeman

- Expanded, Enhanced & New Programs:
 - Arts Park will increase to 100 programs offer this summer
 - Music in Washington Park will collaborate with WAC
 - Compass Creative Dramatics is growing with two camps
 - Visual Arts programming increasing with Wire Sculpture and 3D Art Class
 - Jazz Dance and Musical Theater Dance classes will be added this summer.
 - Maker Space program will be a space, located in JBC, where people can learn to create using principals behind STEAM marrying technology to the arts. It will begin with creating the space with the purchase of computers, laser printer, laser cutter, and 3D printer and then creating the programs. Potential collaboration with school classrooms is being explored.
 - Pat Foley suggested contacting high school teachers, Pat Cosgrove and Judy Klein for additional resources
 - George Bridges suggested exploring further how to get the kids to this location as well as other appropriate and accessible locations. And envisions this to be a great after school drop-in program.
 - Claudia Freeman informed the group that she is working with CAG on grants that would also include funding for transportation.

- Rebranded Life Skills to #Adulting to help young people learn skills that use to be taught at home such as sewing & cooking
- The History Walks will be worked into the GO Waukegan healthy life style initiative.
- Christmas in July will be reformatted in 2018 after taking a year off in 2017.
- Summer Solstice Drum Circle on June 20 at 11pm at the lakefront.
- Tanabata celebration will continue in July.
- An Eclipse viewing party is being planned in August.
- There is an ongoing process of reviewing all programs to best meet the needs of the community.
- Capital Improvements for FY 17/18
 - New floor and blinds in back stage room to prepare for Maker Space
 - Concert Piano Benches
 - Popcorn Machine
 - Interior Painting and Drapes in Lilac Cottage
 - Digital Pianos for group piano lessons
 - Inflatable Movie Screen
 - Restroom renovations at JBC and new water fountain
 - Museum window repair
 - JBC basement water proofing
- C. Listening Groups Presentation – Bryan Escobar
 - Two Listening Groups were set up this month to get feedback from patrons. Both groups were asked to respond to what they liked, disliked, and would like to see in the future.
 - All season ticket holders and donors were invited to the first group. This group, overall, was happy with the arts programming but expressed missing the Bowen Park Theater productions and don't attend downtown Waukegan theater. All said that they see low audience attendance as a regional issue with the belief that younger generations are not attending at the same rate as generations in the past. When food was combined with a show they see higher attendance.
 - The second group was made up of parents of dance students. This group liked that there was a lot offered and it was easy to find out about in the brochure. They were interested in more dance, youth theater performances and programs that families can do together. They liked the ideas of a puppetry program and Maker Space.
- D. Growing students/growing audiences – What to Do?
 - Discussion of low audience attendance at many events not just performing arts and how to get people to attend your event. Suggestions included developing key people who then invite people to the event, which may include a pre, or post event get together. Utilizing social media, which may not always give you results. Discussion about print versus social media.
 - George Bridges requested that the group examine and highlight what is already being done and create a “look what you missed” to go along with announcing the next event utilizing social media.
- E. Questions/comments/concerns and what's happening in the local arts scene
 - Claudia announced that Greg Petry will be retiring June 30, 2017
 - A review of local art events include the WAC Dance Showcase, The Wiese's Art show in Kenosha, Poetry Open Mic, WSO Concert, new History Exhibit

- Jane Waller asked the group for suggestions on best venue for the WAC Jazz Night

IV. Closed Session – There was no Closed Session

V. Meeting Adjourned at 1:25pm

Next meeting August 31, 2017 – Please mark your calendars for the next meetings (5th Thursday of the month) March 29, 2018 and August 30, 2018.

Waukegan Park District
Jack Benny Center for the Arts
Cultural Arts Advisory Committee Meeting
March 30, 2017
6:00pm meeting
Jack Benny Center
1911 N. Sheridan Road, Waukegan, IL 60087

VI. Call to Order

Claudia Freeman, Superintendent of Cultural Arts, called the meeting to order at 6:-02pm

VII. Roll Call & Introductions

In attendance were Pat Foley, Park District Commissioner; Claudia Freeman, Superintendent of Cultural Arts; Ty Rohrer, Cultural Arts Supervisor; Bryan Escobar, Cultural Arts Specialist; Elizabeth Fallon, Department Support Aide; Jo Dooley, A Major Music; Dave Fletcher; Dave Johnson; Bucky Halker; MaryFran Troha

Due to lack of a quorum, no official board business was conducted.

VIII. Review, Discuss, Decide

F. Updates on the State of the Arts and Humanities in America – Claudia Freeman

- National Level: There have been two proposals to eliminate the NEA and NEH with immediate cuts of \$18 million in domestic funding. Arts Advocacy Day was March 20 in Washington D.C. and leaders in the arts in IL met with IL representatives. Encouraging feedback came from these meetings that the IL representatives value art education and the NEA. Handout give talking points when contacting your representative about arts funding. (NEA Quick Facts sheet, NEA Chairman Statement on FY18 Budget, About the NEH)

G. Departmental 2017/18 Goals and CAD Programming Updates – Claudia Freeman

- Expanded, Enhanced & New Programs:
 - Parks & Play is expanding this summer
 - Arts Park will increase to 100 programs offer this summer
 - Music in Washington Park will collaborate with WAC
 - Compass Creative Dramatics is growing with two camps
 - Visual Arts programming increasing with Wire Sculpture and 3D Art Class
 - Jazz Dance and Musical Theater Dance classes will be added this summer.

- Maker Space program will be a space, located in JBC, where people can learn to create using principals behind STEAM marrying technology to the arts. It will begin with creating the space with the purchase of computers, laser printer, laser cutter, and 3D printer and then creating the programs, which would consist of classes, workshops and open studio time. Potential collaboration with school classrooms is being explored.
 - Claudia Freeman informed the group that she is working with CAG on grants that address Environmental Education and would also include funding for transportation.
 - Rebranded Life Skills to #Adulting to help young people learn skills that use to be taught at home such as sewing & cooking
 - The History Walks will be worked into the GO Waukegan healthy life style initiative.
 - Christmas in July will be reformatted in 2018 after taking a year off in 2017.
 - Summer Solstice Drum Circle on June 20 at 11pm at the lakefront.
 - Tanabata celebration will continue in July.
 - An Eclipse viewing party is being planned in August.
 - There is an ongoing process of reviewing all programs to best meet the needs of the community.
 - Ty shared information about new program to capitalize on school end of year picnics in Bowen Park called Bowen Park Day. This would give students various experiences to learn about Bowen Park, the History Museum and the Jack Benny Center and would include tours, workshops, recreation, and environmental education.
 - Capital Improvements for FY 17/18
 - New floor and blinds in back stage room to prepare for Maker Space
 - Concert Piano Benches
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 - Restroom renovations at JBC and new water fountain
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- H. Listening Groups Presentation – Bryan Escobar
- Two Listening Groups were set up this month to get feedback from patrons. Both groups were asked to respond to what they liked, disliked, and would like to see in the future.
 - All season ticket holders and donors were invited to the first group. This group, overall, was happy with the arts programming and felt lucky to be in a town that had many arts opportunities but expressed missing the Bowen Park Theater productions and don't attend downtown Waukegan theater. All said that they see low audience attendance as a regional issue with the belief that younger generations are not attending at the same rate as generations in the past. When food was combined with a show they see higher attendance.
 - The second group was made up of parents of dance students. This group liked that there was a lot offered and it was easy to find out about programs in the brochure. They were interested in more dance, youth theater performances and programs that families can do together. They liked the ideas of a puppetry program and Maker Space so that their kids have opportunities to create.

- MaryFran Troha suggested the idea of a Theater Bus in the Parks to encourage young imaginations and potential theatergoers.
- Pat Foley suggested a theater experience for kids at Dandelion Wine
- Dave Johnson suggested using successful programs to piggy back off of to introduce theater programs.

I. Growing students/growing audiences – What to Do?

- Discussion of low audience attendance at many events not just performing arts and how to get people to attend your event. The group discussed social media and also using successful programs to get more information out about other events.

J. Questions/comments/concerns and what's happening in the local arts scene

- Claudia announced that Greg Petry will be retiring June 30, 2017
- A review of local art events include the WAC Dance Showcase, The Wiese's Art show in Kenosha, Poetry Open Mic, WSO Concert, new History Exhibit
- Claudia informed the group about the Learn to SwimSmart initiative from the Waukegan Parks Foundation offering free swim lessons to all second graders and Kiefer supplying swimsuits
- Pat Foley announced the Grand Marshal for the American Independence Parade will be The Waukegan Women's Club who are the founders of the Waukegan Park District.
- The group continued the discussion of local and state arts funding cuts and suggested a link on the Waukegan Park District website and newsletter to contact local, state and national representatives to "Help Save the Arts." Jo Dooley asked to have this information shared with her and she would add it to A Major's website.
- Dave Johnson gave very positive feedback on the Young People's concert
- The group all would like to be contacted when help or volunteers are needed to see where they can assist.

IX. Closed Session – There was no Closed Session

X. Meeting Adjourned at 7:26pm

Next meeting August 31, 2017

Please mark your calendars for the next meetings (5th Thursday of the month) March 29, 2018 and August 30, 2018.