

Waukegan Park District

Cultural Arts Advisory Committee Meeting

May 2, 2019

12:00pm meeting

Jack Benny Center for the Arts

39 Jack Benny Road, Waukegan, IL 60087

I. Call to Order

Ty Rohrer, Manager of Cultural Arts at 12:05pm

II. Roll Call & Introductions

In attendance: Jay Lerner, Executive Director; Errick Beverly, Superintendent of Recreation; Mike Mayfield, Deputy Superintendent; Ty Rhorer, Manager of Cultural Arts; Debra Carl, Cultural Arts Specialist; Bryan Escobar, Cultural Arts Specialist; Elizabeth Fallon, Department Coordinator; David Motley; Martha Padilla-Ramos; Betsy Stiles; Mary Fran Troha; and Jane Waller

Being that there was no quorum of the board, no official business was conducted.

Ty opened the meeting, welcomed all, and let the committee know that the committee is in a transition phase as some long time committee members are no longer available and we are looking for recommendations for a few new committee members.

III. Review, Discuss, Decide

A. Cultural Arts Facility Improvements

- Jack Benny Center for the Arts
 - Bathrooms are under renovation and should be complete in May
 - New ADA compliant handicap accessible outside doors were installed
 - Interior painting will be completed this year
 - Sound proofing of the Dance Studio will be completed this year
 - New flooring has been working out great
- Museum
 - Exterior work on the museum was completed to restore it to 1870 standards
- Committee Member Comments:
 - Enjoying the new uses available for the Theatre backstage area
 - How is the Visual Arts Center being utilized?
 - Private studio rentals and a few programs
 - Errick Beverly added that the park district is looking at options for utilizing the building in other ways taking into account the limited parking and accessibility
 - Jay Lerner added that the park district attempted to purchase the adjacent house when it was for sale but the seller went with another offer and that all facilities are getting a complete review this year

B. Recap of Fall/Winter Cultural Arts Program Offerings

- Night of Monologues coordinated with Dr. Harlene Shipley was a huge success with two sold out performances and many first time patrons to the Jack Benny Center Theatre

- Private Music Lessons have increased 33% in registrations since lowering fees to \$17.50 per hour
 - All Dance programs are now conducted in the Dance Studio and since this change classes have been maxed out and all classes offered have been running
 - Caroling was a new program this winter and all who attended had a lot of fun
 - Land of Lincoln Photo Contest had 20 photo entries by 12 photographers. The contest was well received and everyone is looking forward to another photography contest event
 - Committee Member Comments:
 - MaryFran Troha commented that the Candidate Debates and Forums held in the Jack Benny Center Theatre hosted by the League of Women Voters were great events bringing new faces into the facility and a great use of the Theatre
 - Martha Padilla Ramos asked about demographics of program participants.
 - Debra responded that participant demographic data is tracked and it roughly mirrors that of Waukegan
 - Martha Padilla Ramos asked why there aren't videos on the website?
 - Errick responded that videos are posted through social media for the community to view
 - Betsy Stiles asked if we need to receive photo permissions when using participants image?
 - Debra Carl responded that photo permissions is built into the waiver signed by all program participants
 - Errick Beverly added that most families are okay with this and only in Special Recreation are there any concerns
- C. Preview of Summer Arts Program Offerings
- Movies in the Park is expanding from 3 to 8 movies this summer. The movies will be shown on a variety of nights to help us determine for future summers what might be the best night for the program. We will partner with a GO Waukegan Glow Walk event on July 17 at Bevier Park. The overall movie theme this summer is Classic Disney Movies.
 - Music at Washington Park is back on Thursdays in August
 - Arts Park is scheduled with over 50 public events. There will be a few private events as well at Staben House, Beacon Place, and Roberti House
 - Arts2U is a newer initiative. We will send instructors to other organizations to provide art classes. It has been piloted at the Boys and Girls Club with Drawing Classes and Group Piano will be starting soon.
 - Dance in the summer has expanded. There will be a variety of Dance classes including Ballet for children and adults along with dance exercise classes and a new partnership with Cory Ratliff and ALATS Dance from Sign of the Dove Church to offer their dance program at the Jack Benny Center for the summer.
 - Committee Member Comments:
 - Martha Padilla Ramos asked how are the Movies in the Park promoted?
 - Debra Carl responded that they are promoted in the brochure, throughout the summer at events including Arts Park, and signage in the neighborhoods prior to each movie

D. Dandelion Wine Fine Arts Festival

- This is the 20th Anniversary of the festival on June 1 and we have a new t-shirt design which will be posted in a community store with American Outfitters. This is the first year there will be a wine vendor. There are about 20 artist vendors so far. The Waukegan Symphony Orchestra will play a Pops Concert at 11am and the Concert Chorus will be singing a cappella American music at 2pm. It's a great event to kick off the summer.

E. Waukegan Symphony Orchestra (WSO)

- Vadim Mazo is the final guest conductor and will conduct the concert on May 12 at 7pm. He has commissioned a piece for the concert titled *Waukegan Promenade* to honor the 45th Anniversary of the WSO.
- 7pm concert time is a new time frame for the WSO and are trying it out as a time slot
- June 1 Alexander Platt will conduct again for the Dandelion Wine Festival concert.
- June 9 the search committee will meet to discuss the finalists.
- The WSO members have been volunteering to play in ensembles in small venues to get more exposure for the WSO. On May 3 they will perform at the Special Recreation Rec Rally at the Field House.

F. History Programming

- As of May 1 there have been 219 school outreach programs which is going to beat last year's record
- All 4th graders in the school district had the opportunity to visit the museum and special Lincoln Exhibit
- Continuing to work on the Oral History Project with 3 interviews completed this year with 2 African American families and 1 Latino family participating. Transcripts of these interviews will be compiled this summer.
- Walking Tours are back this summer with a new Harbor Tour and a new Parking Lot Tour which will reveal what was there before it was a parking lot and highlight the importance of historic preservation.
- Juneteenth Celebration will be June 15 and will include a special African Americans in Waukegan exhibit.
- History2U is a new program rolling out this summer to summer camps which will have a goal of teaching kids about careers in history and by learning how to create and care for exhibits
- Waukegan's Top 50 History Events exhibit and tournament won a Superior Achievement Award from the Illinois State Historical Society (ISHS). The exhibit had over 5000 engagements in the tournament style competition to pick Waukegan's top history event. The exhibit can still be viewed online.

IV. Discussion – questions, comments, concerns

- Martha Padilla Ramos asked if the Waukegan Park District history staff could provide CEUs for Waukegan school teachers for professional development.
 - Ty Rohrer responded that this is a potential and in the works
- MaryFran Troha commented that it is so impressive the amount programs and variety of programs that are offered which engage a large cross section of the community and also let the committee know about the High School musical production of the *Music Man*
- Jane Waller commented that the passion from the staff is wonderful, and believes the programs add to the overall positive experience of living in Waukegan. If Waukegan

becomes a destination location that will be great but more importantly we want the people of Waukegan to love living in Waukegan.

- David Motley expressed appreciation for Ty taking over as chairperson of the Waukegan Arts Council (WAC)
- Betsy Stiles commented that she is always so amazed at all that is going on in our community.

V. Closed Session – No Closed Session due to a lack of a quorum

VI. Meeting Adjourned at 1:00pm

Next Meeting: November 7, 2019