

ARTS INFORMATION EXCHANGE BREAKFAST FORUM

Meeting Minutes

SEPTEMBER 22, 2012 / 9:30 AM

Surprise City Hall Community Room
16000 North Civic Center Plaza
Surprise, Arizona 85374

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Margaret Lieu, Vice-Chair of the Surprise Arts and Cultural Advisory Commission. Ms. Lieu introduced Surprise Mayor Sharon Wolcott who opened the forum with a brief welcome message challenging all the West Valley Arts Leaders to work together and collectively in order to make big things happen. She advised that earlier this week there was a kickoff meeting for the "Compass Study" which is a corridor investment study looking at the entire corridor of Grand Avenue from downtown Phoenix all the way to Surprise, and how we are going to reinvest and revitalize that corridor in which the Arts must play a role in order to make it realize the full vitality. She further shared that that investing and revitalizing in our past with a respect towards the culture with which it began will help to revitalize the Grand Avenue Corridor. She concluded by asking all Arts organizations to try and help bring attention back to this historical corridor which once was truly grand which can be grand again if we all shoulder this wheel together. Ms. Lieu recognized Surprise City Councilmen Mike Woodard and Jim Biundo who were in attendance and asked all attendees to briefly introduce themselves and what organization they represent. Attendees at the meeting were:

Margaret Lieu – Vice-Chair, Surprise Arts and Cultural Advisory Commission
Susan deJong – Surprise Arts and Cultural Advisory Commission
Kathie Morgan – Surprise Arts and Cultural Advisory Commission
Sharon Wolcott – Surprise Mayor
Mike Woodard – Surprise City Council
Jim Biundo – Surprise City Council
Jaime Dempsey – Arizona Arts Commission
Constance McMillan – West Valley Art Museum
MJ Johnson – West Valley Art Museum/City of Peoria
Desiree Christopher – West Valley Arts Council
Connie Whitlock – What's Happen'n Art Movement (WHAM)
Corinne McAuley – What's Happen'n Art Movement (WHAM)
Jan Dallai – What's Happen'n Art Movement (WHAM)
Dana Anderson – What's Happen'n Art Movement (WHAM)
Linda Strauss-Lewis – Goodyear Arts and Culture Commission
Norma Cunningham – Goodyear Arts and Culture Commission
Jessica Rosenberg – Goodyear Arts and Culture Commission
Dianne Cripe – City of Goodyear, Public Art Specialist

Gerald Lewis – Goodyear resident
Jessica Koory – Glendale Arts Commission
Elizabeth Medina – Glendale Arts Commission
Mojgan Vahabzadeh – City of Glendale Public Art Program
Heather Donaldson – City of Surprise, Administrative Specialist
Paul Frie – City of Surprise, Community and Recreation Services Division Manager
Andy Cepon – Surprise resident

Ms. Lieu addressed attendees and advised that today's theme is Community and Collaboration because it is for the community that we each do what we do, and if we did not collaborate we would not exist. She said that as the economy struggles and funds are lessened we find ourselves needing to be more creative in the way that we operate, and for us to be successful advocates we need to be able to convince others of how important the arts are especially when it comes to building quality of life for our cities as well as the economic impact that the arts can have in our communities.

Desiree Christopher, West Valley Arts Council, presented on the Economic Prosperity IV Study which examined the economic impact of the nonprofit arts and culture industry. She advised that this study was the largest and most comprehensive of its kind ever conducted including 182 study regions in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In 2010 \$61.1 billion was spent nationally with \$8.6 million spent in the West Valley in comparison to \$2.1 million spent in 2000. In 2010 audiences spent \$74.1 billion nationally with \$6.2 million spent in the west valley compared to \$1.3 million spent in 2000. In 2010, 137 volunteers donated 6,138 hours in the west valley. Ms. Christopher presented the following five take-aways from her presentation:

1. \$135.2 billion industry - \$15 million in WV
2. Supports 4.1 million jobs – 539 in WV
3. Generates \$22.3 billion in government revenue - \$6.2 million in WV
4. Attendees spend \$24.60 per person (beyond admission) - \$15.36 in the WV
5. WV growth from 2000 to 2010 is remarkable!

Jaime Dempsey, Deputy Director of the Arizona Commission on the Arts, gave a brief history of the Arizona Commission on the Arts including its history, focus and its mission: "We imagine an Arizona where everyone can participate and experience the arts." She reported that Arizona is ranked 50th in per capita state arts supports, and aggregate public funding for arts and culture organizations from municipal, county and state sources, as well as federal dollars delivered within Arizona totals less than \$4 million. Arizona arts funding has dropped from \$5.7 million to \$1.4 million and includes a decline in both local and federal arts funding. She reported that Arizona is home to 17,876 arts-related businesses which employ 56,112 people and that Arizona's creative industry accounts for 4.64% of all Arizona businesses. Direct expenditures by Arizona's arts and culture organizations and audiences total \$501,157,262 annually. Ms. Dempsey advised that arts are everywhere such as in social media: Tumblr, You Tube, etc., Flashmobs, murals, community arts and festivals. The arts support economic impact through

jobs, tax revenue, tourism development and a creativity-based economy. She spoke about the value of arts in education, civic engagement and cultural understanding. She concluded her presentation with trends in the art sector and where it's going including partnerships, innovative earned revenue strategies and a need for demonstrable community embeddedness and impact.

Ms. Lieu asked for each city and organization to share what they have done since the last breakfast forum to see where they have come together and what similarities they have and to share ideas.

Ms. Lieu reported that the City of Surprise Arts and Cultural Commission finalized and, with Mayor and Council, approved a 5 Year Strategic Plan which includes the elements of partnerships, events and activities, outreach and advocacy, public art, leverage of funding mechanisms and education. They granted funds in an amount totaling \$32,500 to the West Valley Conservatory of Ballet, West Valley Symphony, Arizona Opera, WHAM Art Association and the West Valley Arts Council for various projects and performances taking place in Surprise. They sponsored a Plein Air competition during the Art is Alive in Surprise festival hosted by WHAM where a total of \$3,000 was awarded to the winning artists whose paintings were acquired for the city's permanent collection. Funds were also granted to the Surprise Police Department for the launch of an anti-graffiti campaign where they partnered with WHAM to paint a mural on a restroom facility in Bicentennial Park, part of the Surprise original town site. A hanging system was also purchased for City Hall in preparation for works of art that will eventually hang within the halls. Ms. Lieu reported that this year the Surprise Arts and Cultural Advisory commission was unable to secure a budget in light of the economic climate, however they are still working hard do whatever they can for the City in terms of Arts and Culture. They have launched a 365 Calendar on the City website where all arts and cultural organizations can come together and advertise any activities they have planned. The Surprise Arts and Cultural Commission is also trying to strengthen the partnerships it has with other organizations and build regionalism by reaching out to other cities and organizations in the West Valley.

Linda Strauss-Lewis, Vice Chair of the Goodyear Arts and Culture Commission advised that Goodyear has an active 11 person Arts and Culture Commission in an effort to keep the arts front and center in their community despite the current economic challenges. They are organized into three sub-committees; public relations, fund raising and events and festivals. They are working on a multi-cultural arts festival scheduled for 2014 with the goal of bringing together an authentic cultural event comprised of the performing, culinary and visual arts in a joyous one day extravaganza. Ms. Strauss-Lewis advised that the Goodyear Arts and Culture Commission regularly updates the Goodyear Arizona Arts website with their recently completed public arts projects. She spoke of several public art projects within the City of Goodyear. She reported that one of the greatest tools their commission has found for arts advocacy is the annual G.A.I.N. event which is scheduled this year to take place on October 20, 2012 where the arts commissioners will take shifts throughout the day engaging the public, showcasing their many events, programs and public arts projects and where they increase their e-mail list of residents interested in the arts. She also reported on an Arts Interact program which engages

high school aged disabled students in art projects taught by teaching artists. The Goodyear Arts and Culture Commission recognizes that communicating with their constituency and potential new residents, companies and industries is critically important to Goodyear's growth and vibrancy. Ms. Strauss-Lewis spoke of a lecture series called Hot Coffee Cool Topics which is very well attended by people of all ages within the community. Ms. Strauss-Lewis concluded by saying that even with limited funds, with a hardworking commission and the support of Goodyear's City staff and local businesses the Goodyear Arts and Culture commission has and continues to produce quality community and outreach programs, projects and public art that ignite and excite the residents and keep the arts very much front and center in Goodyear.

Mojgan Vahabzadeh, who manages the Public Art Program at the City of Glendale, addressed the breakfast attendees. She started off by briefly discussing Glendale's rough financial times and stated that there are possible cuts, including to the Art Program, on the horizon. The Glendale Public Art Program devises an art plan for the following fiscal year in May where Ms. Vahabzadeh works with the Arts Commission members and City Departments if there are any capital improvement projects. They have been very fiscally responsible, not investing major dollars into any kind of permanent public art but conducting activities that engage the community. They have funded a Glendale Fire Department Centennial Project as well as a mural project by Glendale local artist Martin Moreno and students from Las Artes de Maricopa. She advised that Sahuaro Ranch Park was just recently renovated and their commission funded one main entry monument and two smaller monuments completed by nationally renowned public artist, Laurie Lundquist. Ms. Vahabzadeh advised that their commission helped fund the Fusion Foundation to come into their centerline area and provide activities on the first Saturdays of every month from October through May, called Centerline Artwerks First Saturdays. She further advised that Glendale has had three Plein Air competitions in the last three years. Their Public Art Program partners with the Special Events office to provide interactive temporary art activities at many of the major signature events hosted in Glendale such as the Jazz & Blues Festival. Every year they have summer art camps for kids ages 6-13 where there are workshops conducted by teaching artists. Annually, per ordinance, the Glendale Public Art Program has a performing arts grant program where the commission decides how much the funding should be for each fiscal year. They used to have close to \$90,000 available to grant annually, however they have cut back to \$24,000. Last year the Glendale Public Art Program granted funds to ABT Performing Arts Association, Arizona Theatre Company, Ballet Arizona, Center Dance Ensemble, Childsplay, Inc., Free Arts for Abused Children of Arizona, Glendale Youth Project, Opendance, Phoenix Symphony Association and the Scottsdale Cultural Council. They have committed to maintenance of their public art pieces, routine maintenance as well as vandalism maintenance. The Glendale Art Program is hoping to develop a new 5-year Strategic Arts Plan during this fiscal year.

MJ Johnson spoke on behalf of the City of Peoria Arts Commission and the West Valley Art Museum. She advised that the Commission gives approval regarding projects and public art. They have many pieces of art that can be viewed in old town Peoria as well as two new sculptures that are in the process of being put in Centennial Park and another one that just went

up in the renovated Osuna Park. They are currently talking about obtaining some nice gateway entrance pieces to the City as well. They also currently have an Art Grant Program. She advised that there is quite a bit of information available regarding the Peoria Arts Commission on the City's website where there is also a copy of the Strategic Plan available to be seen. It was developed by an outside consultant out of California about three years ago. They have recently put out an RFP for a new piece of art to be placed in Pioneer Park with a \$100,000 budget. There is a celebration for the arts coming up this spring which will be a juried exhibition and competition for local artists in the area. The City of Peoria Arts Commission dovetails very closely with the West Valley Art Museum.

MJ Johnson advised the breakfast attendees that the West Valley Art Museum is still alive and is ready for the new concept of a museum without walls. They are ready to go out into the public and do some programming, lecturing, presentations, work with children, etc. She advised that festivals are such a user friendly venue for all of us. They are trying to revamp themselves. Ms. Johnson advised that the Museum's collection is in-tact, and they do have a gallery in the corner of the Peoria City Hall. They currently have an emerging artists show of some of their local newer artists many of whom are from the West Valley.

Connie Whitlock of WHAM advised that WHAM piggybacks and partners which is how they survive. They are an art organization that has been around for almost seven years who works with the City of Surprise, the West Valley Art Museum, West Valley Arts Council, West Valley Symphony, the Ballet Consortium anyone that has to do with the arts. They have 65 members who are predominantly visual artists, and they are partnering with other art organizations. They have been fortunate to find a few venues such as Adelante gallery and Birt's Bistro since they do not have a current gallery. They have had a few exhibits with Realtors and they invite other sister organizations to collaborate. They have moved into a building and are in negotiations with Adelante and the City of Surprise to make it into a community art center where they currently teach classes, there will be a gallery, rooms for lectures and possibly have West Valley Arts Museum bring a travelling show over. Ms. Whitlock advised that WHAM is a 501C3 nonprofit organization. She said they are working with Chamber of Commerce right now to try and create a business advocate community within the Chamber so that some of the businesses may be willing to support them whether financially or in-kind. WHAM put on Art is Alive in Surprise last April which they were asked by the City to do. Ms Whitlock advised that they were denied any funds this year, but they are still putting together a plan to try and pursue another festival because the community wants and needs it very badly, but WHAM does not have the money to put it on. WHAM wants to try and create a home-grown, grass roots festival and without any funds they will be unable to do so. As such, Ms. Whitlock is in negotiations to try and secure funds. Ms. Whitlock said the Surprise Arts and Cultural Commission has been a great advocate and supporter of WHAM, and asked all other commissioners present to please help and support small arts organizations.

Ms. Lieu closed the meeting and thanked all attendees for coming. She said that what we need to take away from this forum is the need to work together and generate ideas with each other and then maybe we can help make the West Valley an Arts Destination.

ATTEST:



Paul Frie, Division Manager
Community & Recreation Services

CERTIFICATION:

I, Heather Donaldson, Administrative Specialist for the City of Surprise Community and Recreation Services Department, Maricopa County, Arizona, do hereby verify that these are the true and correct minutes of the Arts Information Exchange Breakfast Forum held on September 22, 2012.



Heather Donaldson, Administrative Specialist