



# ARTS COUNCIL MINUTES

## REGULAR MEETING

### JUNE 11, 2014

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#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm by Chair, Jane Ditzler at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center.

#### **Roll Call**

Members Present: Paulette Bufano, Jane Ditzler, Anna Gordon, Karen Kaser, An Tootill and Suzanne Zahniser. Absent: Linda Iwanyk, Mireya Lewin, Susan Szafir

City Council:

Council Member Jane Meyer Brahm.

Staff:

Amber Britton

#### **Appearances:**

*Lorri Falterman, Coordinator for Parks & Recreation Sculpture program*

*4314 E. Mercer Way, Mercer Island, WA 98040*

*McAllister Merchant, Facilitator for Parks & Recreation Clothed Model Painting program*

*13211 SE 49th Street, Bellevue, WA 98006*

Lorri Falterman stated that they are asking for Arts Council help in having the Community Center provide a room for art since the current art room has been rented on a full time basis to a for profit business. She felt that there has been a disturbing trend away from participatory arts by the Community Center in the past few years. Ms Falterman indicated that she has been meeting with staff and is currently working with staff to contact highly qualified regional and possibly national art instructors to enhance current art offerings to the community, however, an appropriate space is needed for these classes to take place. Specifically, they are asking that another room be provided for art programs at the Community Center.

Ms Falterman suggested that the Arts Council consider forming a subcommittee to oversee the arts center to:

- Work with Community Center staff to find new and interesting programs and instructors.
- Make sure there is an appropriate space available for art, and that storage for art equipment is provided.
- Help with promotion of art programs and generally insure that there is appreciation and understanding of fine arts by the staff.

Mr. Merchant commented to the Arts Council that he feels that the Community Center has done less and less to promote the art programs. He feels he has had to badger or complain to get any support from the Community Center. He stated that he was especially disheartened that they were not included in the discussions leading up to the decision that led to displacement of the art programs in the annex.

Staff member, Amber Britton, provided a synopsis of the history of the action that resulted in displacement of some of the art classes. The current art room is located in the annex building at the

Community Center. The balance of the annex is rented out to daycare providers on the island. As a result of the remodel at North Mercer Elementary, Little Acorn, who already rents space from the Community Center, lost daycare space at that facility. This resulted in a 'daycare crisis' on the island. Little Acorn requested that the City Council remodel the art room into a daycare space that they could occupy. The City Council granted their request. This displaced other programs currently being held in that space. The staff has been working to find new space for the art programs, and has been successful with most. Unfortunately, they have not been successful with the sculpture program to date. The sculpture group is a unique class in that it is messier, requires storage, and privacy for nude models. The sculpture group has requested that the Community Center remodel one of its current meeting rooms to accommodate art programs. The City Manager asked Parks & Recreation to look at other venues for moving the class. He also asked them to provide costs on remodeling a meeting room including a hard multi-purpose floor, storage, and privacy blinds. Another factor to be considered is the current rental contracts for that room. If the City Manager and/or the City Council direct that a room be remodeled into a dedicated art space, the funding to cover the remodel would also have to be raised or found.

Mireya Lewin asked whether there is a policy or protocol putting the arts and Mercer Island residents' ability to participate in the Arts at some kind of high level, even if it is not income producing. She felt it is very easy to sometimes lean towards children, because there is a huge advocacy for children. She asked, "Do we teach art to children and then when they become adults then say you don't do art anymore?"

Jane Brahm indicated there is no written policy. However, she felt that there is room for this in City Charter. She stated that you can see throughout its history that Mercer Island values and supports the arts.

The chair thanked Ms Falterman and Mr. Merchant for their appearance, assuring them that the Arts Council will discuss this further during tonight's meeting.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

**An Tootill motioned for approval of the May 14, 2014 regular meeting minutes. Motion was seconded and passed.**

#### **Chair Report:**

Jane Ditzler, Chair

Jane Ditzler has resigned from the Arts Council and tonight is her last meeting. Jane thanked everyone for her time with the Arts Council, and hopes she will be called on to assist the Arts Council when needed. She said she has enjoyed and is thankful for her time on the Arts Council and feels that she has made a contribution to the Island.

Paulette agreed that Jane has made many contributions during her tenure. She recounted some of the high-lights of Jane's membership on the Arts Council, including the fact that she has been chair three times, the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, the Alaska/Yukon exhibit. Paulette stated that the Arts Council wanted to thank Jane for her contributions to the Arts Council. Jane was presented an engraved crystal vase from the Arts Council and an engraved paperweight from the city.

*Summer Celebration!* Anna Gordon will work with Amber to finalize the crafts and coordinate workers in the tent. Amber will order the craft supplies.

#### *Election for new Chair and Vice Chair for the remainder of this year:*

Vice Chair Paulette Bufano has agreed to take the Chair position. Jane asked if there were any other members who would like to put their name forward. There were no volunteers. Paulette was unanimously elected as Chair. An Tootill volunteered as Vice Chair, and was unanimously elected to that position.

Jane turned the meeting over to the new chair, Paulette Bufano.

**Literary:**

Susan Szafir, Chair

In Susan's absence, Amber Britton asked members to sign up to introduce Shakespeare in the Park performances. She also reported on Susan's behalf that there is a new Meet the Author event with Daniel James Brown, author of "Boys in the Boat", on Friday, September 12 at Island Books.

**Mostly Music in the Park (MMIP)**

Karen Kaser reported that she will coordinate the sing along at Mostly Music in the Park.

**Gallery:**

Linda Iwanyk, Chair

In Linda's absence, Amber reported that a new show was recently hung in the gallery. It is a colorful show by two Mercer Island Arts - Marianne Bond and Helen Schwedenberg. The Reception is tomorrow, June 12, 6:30 to 8:00 pm.

**Public Art**

An Tootill, Chair

***Mosaic Playground Proposal:***

Suzanne presented a Mosaic Playground proposal from glass artist Sandy Glass. The proposal was prepared at the request of and paid for by the Arts Council. It has two important components - installation of the project as well as providing an educational opportunity for students on Mercer Island. Up to 20 students will be trained in how to make mosaic and make mosaics that will be installed with other professionally created art.

The proposal is for four locations:

- The largest piece will be the wall next to the restrooms and behind the arbor seating area.
- The second location is down below facing the tennis court. This is the part of the project that the students will do once the professionals have prepared the surface.
- There are two additional spaces that are smaller, rectangular surfaces, in the same general area of the playground that will be covered with mosaic.

Each location will have the same tiled landscape scene, and one will include student tiles. Suzanne briefly reviewed the details of how the mosaic will be created and installed along with the budget. It was noted that this will be phase one. There are two optional additional phases that can be considered in the future.

An stated that she felt three versions of the same landscape scene is not the best choice.

**Suzanne Zahniser motioned to accept phase one of the proposal. The motion was seconded. The motion passed by a vote of five to one.**

***Light Rail Coordination:***

An Tootill reported that she and Suzanne attended a recent Light Rail Meeting. She said it is much larger than she originally anticipated. She felt that the views that are more likely to get the most exposure are the side views. The Arts Council has the opportunity to collaborate with Sound Transit on the art if we want something similar to what they do at another station and are willing to commit additional funding. Sound Transit has identified the artist, but has not yet designated a design.

Amber stated that if the Arts Council wants to have additional art, the minimum Sound Transit will consider is \$25,000. If the art is located outside of the station, rather than inside, the Arts Council will have more say in the design.

Amber indicated that one additional component will be to have an Arts Council member to serve on a committee with representatives from other community groups on an artist selection committee (MIVAL, Youth Theatre Northwest, youth member, Mercer Island Center for the Arts and Chamber of Commerce.) An suggested Mireya and Amber agreed to ask her if she is interested.

An wanted to know from the Arts Council how much additional money we should ask for from Mercer Island 1% of the Arts. She felt that additional money will allow the Arts Council to be involved in the enhancement of art provided by Sound Transit. The minimum they will accept is \$25,000.

It was agreed that until the artist selection committee makes a decision as to who the Artist is going to be, it makes more sense to see what the Arts Council could expect to get for the extra money before making the decision to allocate additional funds.

*West Mercer Wall:*

An Tootill reported that she and Karen Kaser measured the West Mercer Wall. It is twice as long as the Tennis Mural wall with some portions as high as 13 feet. The primary viewing area is about 100 feet. Based on this, An will rework the budget proposal.

**Community**

**Relations:**

Chair, Vacant

*Art Uncorked:*

Jane Brahm indicated that the Chamber wine tasting event has been given a name - "Art Uncorked". It will feature wine tasting, food, and artists, and is scheduled to happen on August 12, 6-9 pm. The Chamber of Commerce is in the processing of getting all of the permits. They would like the Arts Council to participate by providing several street musicians. Tickets will be \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. It will be a green event in that participants will be asked to bring their own glass. Jane suggested this could be a great opportunity to debut STQRY. It was agreed to use one of the P&R tents as a booth, and set up to do so. It was noted that the Meet the Author night is scheduled the same evening.

*Art Programs at the Community Center:*

In follow up to the earlier appearance, there was a discussion of how the Arts Council can support keeping Art Programs at the Community Center. Before making a recommendation, Mireya would like more information on how the decision is made and what the priorities are for managing resources as it relates to artists and whether the decision was revenue driven.

Suzanne Zahniser posed the question as to whether the Arts Council could request that a portion of the 1% for the Arts budget be used to make the necessary renovations to the Community Center to house the Art Programs in one of their rooms. Amber responded in order to use the 1% money the renovation would have to serve an artistic purpose. It could however be utilitarian as well, such as an artistic floor or shelving.

Anna Gordon proposed that the Arts Council go to the City Council and Parks & Recreation Department to let them know that, as representatives of the community, we would like for the artists not to be displaced and to ask that they continue to find options. Council Member Jane Brahm suggested a letter and a group of Arts Council members to go to one of the City Council meetings with a presentation. Chair, Paulette Bufano, will write the letter and it was agreed that all Arts Council members will sign it.

***Collection Management subcommittee:***

Mireya Lewin, Lead

**Staff Report**

Amber Britton

Amber reported that she was contacted by Island Park Elementary with a request for the location of public art on the island so that students could go on a field trip to view some of it. Amber gave them the website with the username and password. Amber distributed some very charming letters the kids wrote indicating their favorite pieces and how appreciative they were that they got to go on this field trip.

Amber handed out hard copies of instructions from Mireya on how to use STQRY.

Amber reported that the tennis wall artist called to let her know that the MI Reporter contacted her to do a story. The Reporter did not contact us, but Amber was able to request that she emphasize that it was an Arts Council project and that it was Arts Council funded. We didn't have a chance to see it before it went to press. It article comes out in today's paper.

Amber reported that the world trade center pieces were picked up from the port this week. Amber is in the process of having them delivered here. The Fire Department is in the process of planning a reception when it arrives.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm

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Paulette Bufano, Chair

Attest:

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Eileen Hemmis Trifts, Scribe