

MARY COWNIE, DIRECTOR
CHRIS KRAMER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Iowa Arts Council

December 13, 2013

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

State Historical Building, Des Moines

Present: Paul Dennison, Kent Hartwig, Molly Kotval, Ken Sidey, Terri Steinke and Vicki Sukup.

Present by Telephone: Evan Hilsabeck, Randy Lengeling, Chawne Paige and Lisa Walsh.

Absent: Carmen Darland, Linda Grandquist, Sean O'Harrow, Frankie Parrott and Ann Wilkinson.

Staff Present: DCA Director Mary Cownie, DCA Deputy Director Chris Kramer, Division Administrator Matt Harris, DCA Marketing & Communications Manager Tracy Arthur, IAC Staffer Joseph Pearson and DCA Public Information Officer Jeff Morgan.

Call to Order

Chair Dennison called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. Roll was called by Morgan.

Minutes

Hartwig moved to approve the September 30, 2013 minutes. The motion was seconded by Kotval and carried unanimously.

Report from Chair

Dennison commented about a report regarding the economic impact of the arts, specifically referring to an article in the Burlington Hawkeye newspaper. The article was passed around to board directors.

Report from DCA Director

See attached director's report.

Kramer provided information about the department's presentation to the Governor's office about the budget request related to specific activities of DCA, and Cownie said the department is better positioned today to move forward with planning of future activities.

Arthur presented a preview of newly developed Cultural App.

Kotval asked whether the app will be downloadable from the Internet. Arthur said it will be accessible via smart phones and discussion is currently taking place about its availability via desktop computers.

Hartwig asked if the app will be free to download. Arthur confirmed it will be a free app.

Sukup asked if board members need to communicate to local venues and organizations to visit the app. Arthur said yes, but DCA will continue to gather information for the app even after it is launched. Arthur also said she will ask board members to help promote the app.

Dennison stated the app should be so good that it automatically draws interest. Kotval asked if a marketing campaign is being developed to support the app. Cownie said DCA has been identifying marketing opportunities as the app is being developed.

Kotval asked if specific, one-off events will be included in the app. Arthur said listings of one-off events may be too difficult to manage with this program, but large events might be manageable.

Cownie said venues and organizations will be asked to upload their information to the app.... DCA will have to gauge demand and popularity of the cultural app, but it will be up to each organization to list their events.

Harris said there's a slippery slope regarding how DCA imports or adds events.

Kotval asked if there will be an internal alert to staff whenever a new entry is made to the app. Arthur and Cownie replied yes, and then the entry will be vetted before it goes live.

Kramer said promotional opportunities may include getting the app:

- On the home pages of local organizations, cvbs and tourism organizations
- To Iowa tourism department to promote to travelers coming to Iowa from other states
- To link from tourism to DCA's site for the cultural app

Kramer also said the department is addressing concerns about replication and duplication of information and expects to work with other organizations to cross-promote and market each other's websites and information.

Sukup commented that it is easy to incorporate links from websites to other website so duplication risks are reduced.

Cownie commented about points of first contact for travelers and tourists.... Surveys indicate travelers are looking for cultural tourism... these areas are not elevated enough.

Kotval asked if any key partners can be identified for tracking the app usage and if analytics will be reviewed.

Arthur said discussion is revolving around some tracking strategy about what users are using and offering incentives to use the app.

Kotval asked if there could be more specific tracking strategies developed to obtain analytics and create info for budget requests at the legislature, coupled with communicating the info back to partner organizations and venues.

Sukup suggested DCA contact city councils to share info.

Kramer commented that whether it's a partner adding information or League of Cities or others, if they decide to adopt it then an opportunity for more publicity. They can announce it and get all the app info onto their websites. The potential is there for it to keep growing. Kramer applauded Cownie for having

the idea and commitment to get the cultural app started and moving forward. The cultural app was listed as a priority on the department's list of ideas last year. Kudos to Mary Cownie for her efforts.

Cownie thanked the team that is involved in making the cultural app a reality.

Cownie commented that the roll out of the cultural app will be announced at a press conference with Governor Terry Branstad.

Companies need to provide information about their communities when recruiting and retaining workers. The cultural app will also serve as a business tool.

Lengeling asked if app will automatically update on smart phone.

Arthur said it should as long as smart phone user has his or her phone set to automatically update.

Lengeling commented the cultural app title "Find Your Iowa" may be confusing; it may cause users to think of roadmaps.

Arthur said the title was driven primarily by numerous marketing opportunities, i.e., Find Your Iowa, Find Your Museum, Find Your Art.

Lengeling commented it might say "Find Your Cultural Iowa."

Dennison asked how narrow or open the cultural app will be.

Harris commented there's a concern about what "cultural" means to different people; one person's definition of a cultural event may not be another person's definition of a cultural event.

Arthur thanked the board for their feedback and said it is good to be aware of perceptions and questions raised so they can be addressed and answered.

Walsh commented that the info in the cultural app will be good and useful as long as it is updated and current.

Kotval and Dennison said the cultural app is an exciting project.

Cownie commented that staff wants to hear from board members about their thoughts and reactions.

Cownie said DCA needs to be the repository for this kind of information, and technology has advanced to the point where it is going to work.

Cownie said if a constituent calls and says the department missed a piece of public art, the department wants to know that. The department wants to know the ways the app can be improved to fit the needs of the user... but the main priority currently is making sure it is ready to go from a technical standpoint.

Sukup asked about cities and counties participation in the cultural app.

Cownie commented it takes enormous time to populate event calendars, so DCA is doing as much upfront to populate it and add venues and organizations as the app moves forward.

Harris added that the info to be provided in the cultural app does not exist in one massive repository, so DCA is building data as it is building the app.

Dennison commented that the progress made in DCA is unbelievable and that it is good when you can take pride, and DCA is doing just fine.

Dennison called for a five minute break at 2 p.m.

Dennison reconvened the meeting at 2:05

IAC Administrator Report

See attached Administrator report

Harris commented that staff has been conducting workshops across the state about updates in IAC's grant programs. Attendance at the workshops totaled 150 people. Response to the information has been strong and constituents have asked if/when staff will come to or return to their communities. Workshops are not just limited to IAC grant programs, but also offer tips about other grant opportunities as well.

Harris offered kudos to IAC staff members Joseph Pearson and Veronica O'Hern for their efforts, and said the workshops have been good for raising IAC's visibility around the state.

Harris said the Iowa Great Places program has come under the purview of IAC; David Schmitz is now managing the program with assistance from staff.

Harris said the Iowa Great Places program had an October 2013 deadline for communities interested in participating to submit letters of intent. Eighteen Iowa communities submitted letters of intent. The next deadline in the process is January 15, 2014. Staff is working with applicants to help them put forward the best and most accurate applications possible. Harris said an announcement of funding and new designees is expected in April 2014.

Kotval asked how many Great Places communities will receive funding in the next round. Harris replied that initial reviews show some communities may be ready to move forward and others may need additional work. There is no set amount is designated to a specific place. It will go under review from Great Places Citizen Advisory Board.

Kramer said the Great Places program is returning to its original plan: the application process will be followed by completion of projects within three years. The Great Places board will have an opportunity to review and ask questions to make sure the applications and projects have been developed thoroughly and are representative of the entire community.

Harris said the communities will be required to present a community vision and projects that are priorities. The GP Board will review applications and project proposals. Return to original program processes and make sure applicants are presenting the authentic qualities of their communities in terms of arts, culture and history. DCA wants to elevate the projects that are mission-based for the department but also elevate the communities.

IAC has received word that there's a doughnut hole in terms of funding for these kinds of projects and is looking to see how state/community projects can become competitive at the national level for additional funding. For example, with the Art Place for arts and creative infrastructure, Iowa has not had any recipients of any of this funding, but there is an anonymous funder with interest in funding projects in Iowa. IAC staff have been working to make sure applicants have strong applications.

Kotval asked how many people participated.
Pearson said there 12-15 participants.

Kotval asked if any of them had ever applied.
Harris said a couple had applied but had not received funding.

IAC staff is working with Citizen's Institute for Rural Design for educating Iowans about funding opportunities and helping them become more competitive. IAC staff is also working to connect Iowans to IAC funding sources, but also to other funding sources.

Kramer commented that she received an email from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies about the passing of legislation with bipartisan support that looks at amount of funding that was cut by sequestration, a way to better manage it, and then sequestration cuts may not occur in the future. Hopefully, DCA/IAC will know more in the next few months. The impact would be \$50-60,000 for DCA that is usually re-granted to Iowans. Kramer said there is hope the funding can be restored.

Harris commented that the National Endowment for the Arts is currently without a chair so there is no strong representation within the White House for the NEA.

Sukup asked if there was a NEA chair.

Cownie replied that the chair had stepped down about a year ago; a similar situation occurred at the National Endowment for the Humanities when former Iowa Congressman Jim Leach stepped down as NEH chair. The issue raises a question about accountability when the NEA doesn't even have an interim chair. If the arts are targeted for a larger cut, the NEA does not have a seat at the table.

Harris reported the annual Poetry Out Loud program is entering its recruitment of participants phase. At this time, 20 schools have registered to participate. This program had been handled by the IAC Arts Educator staff person in the past, but this position remains vacant. IAC is contracting with Yvette Herman to facilitate the program.

Kotval asked when the state competition will be held.

Harris replied the state competition will be held March 2, 2014.

Harris reported that IAC received 41 applications for the next grant round, and six applications for the Rural Arts program.

Harris reported IAC oversaw three Regional Cultural Caucuses, in Sioux City, Ames and Cedar Rapids. The caucuses were held to get feedback from constituents and facilitate discussions about the status of the arts in Iowa. Staff is reviewing feedback and identifying common themes as they prepare for a statewide convening in Spring or June 2014.

IAC staff member Joseph Pearson presented a summary of the three cultural caucuses.

Walsh left the call at 2:47 p.m.

In Pearson's presentation, Kotval noted participants considered funding to be a barrier but not a solution. She asked about the economic impact component in the cultural caucus presentation. Harris referenced the community vitality index. CVI is rooted in hard data from federal data streams and employment figures. Harris provided an overview about the CVI.

Sukup asked if the CVI matched the results of the survey.

Harris said Jefferson and Johnson counties lead by a wide margin and several counties in the western and southwestern part of the staff are lagging.

Kotval commented she would like to see how info is processed and presented, and overlay it with results from the CVI to see how Iowa compares.

Kotval suggested the cultural caucuses be held every two years instead of four because the input is needed more often.

Cownie commented that the info is good to have for analysis, but it does not reflect everything the department does. She said it was a good decision to make the investment, but there is more to be done.

Kramer commented that the department is working and will continue to work on gathering information and identifying new ways and technologies to organize and communicate the info.

Harris commented about statewide convening at its most basic level would give peers an opportunity to network, which would be the event's fundamental value.

Dennison commented that the quality of people in the arts is really something that came to his mind. Cownie replied that IAC staff did a terrific job in conducting the cultural caucuses.

Dennison asked board members for any comments about activities taking place in their local areas.

Kramer commented that Simon Estes will be performing in Ames to raise funding for youths in Africa.

Kotval made a motion to adjourn. Sidey seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Dennison adjourned the meeting.

Submitted respectfully,

Jeff Morgan
Public Information Officer
Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul L. Dennison". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name and title.