

Bloomington Arts Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
February 8, 2017  
McCloskey Room, City Hall

Attending: Gabe Colman, Peter Jacobi, Abby Perfetti, Lynn Schwartzberg, Sally Gaskill, Francesca Sobrer, Michael Wilkerson; Sean Starowitz.

Not attending: Alain Barker, Martina Celerin, Angelo Pizzo

The meeting was fist to order by Sally Gaskill at 5:02, the fist substituting for the missing gavel.

We agreed to approve the January minutes in March.

In the absence of the ailing treasurer (Martina Celerin) the report was that nothing was spent last month.

Chair's report by Sally Gaskill

#### Commissioner Terms

Sally noted that Wilkerson, Schwartzberg, and Gaskill have all been reappointed until 2020. The rule is one can have two full terms plus the remainder of the term you fill if appointed in the middle of someone else's term. We are currently short one commissioner to replace the esteemed Jan Grant.

For Council openings, prospective commissioners need to apply on-line. At times there have been interviews when there are multiple qualified candidates. Mayoral appointments are at that office's discretion; at times the Commission has been consulted, as have staff in the past.

Sally suggested that we reach out to people we want to join and ask them to apply. We are in a search for diversity and for someone else under 60 (55?) to keep Abby and Gabe company.

Staff report by Sean Starowitz, who is well under 60:

#### *Upcoming Arts Project Grants*

Press release for the grants has gone out.

#### *Public Art*

We should "think differently" about the 1% for Art program in planning for the Trades District and Switchyard Park. Technology-based artwork could make sense, he gently suggested. We do not have to do an open call; we can curate an artist if we have someone in mind. A lively discussion ensued re curating vs open call, and we, like true moderate Midwesterners, agreed that the City should do some of each.

Trades District might be a good place to do community festivals and programs due to its design (which we viewed onscreen – cool!). TASUS wants to be a stop on First Fridays. The area will have “curbless corridors,” which is like the old Catholic concept of “meatless Fridays,” but with better walkability and less fat. We looked at the designs and noticed ways that some of the proposed fixtures could be art projects. There is a survey on the city’s web site that could be filled out by each and every commissioner, suggested Sean Starowitz.

Similarly, Switchyard Park will have lots of opportunity for art. So we will all be thinking about this, and wondering how much money will ultimately be there to use for the arts, and what could have the biggest impact. As long as Martina is out we will not spend anything.

Sean also reported that he is on the City Bicentennial Commission and we are all invited to think about potential arts projects. We can think big! It could be a commission, not necessarily a competition.

Sean is working on mural possibilities for the 4<sup>th</sup> St Garage, the back of the Buskirk-Chumley, and some other cool projects, including a teen workforce project with Rhino’s. There will also be a mural on a nondescript limestone storage building on S. Washington St., making it no longer nondescript, as well as a groovy expansion of the existing mural at Building and Trades Park. It’s an exciting array of projects.

What to do with Peoples Park? There will perhaps be a new way of revitalizing the murals in the park, perhaps a new large-scale mural.

The Indiana Arts Commission has published an executive summary of a creative industries report, finding that there are a lot more self-employed artists in Indiana than in most places in the country. What does this mean? Hard to know – is Indiana a place where no one will hire an artist for a regular job and therefore our artists must be self-employed? Or, in the tradition of George Rogers Clark and William Henry Harrison, is it a place for rugged individualists who carve out their living piece by piece, disdaining the wage slavery that is more common on the latte-sipping East and West coasts? More research is needed.

Sean described the city’s working environment – reaching across departments in City Hall, trying to maximize the reach and potency of the arts. He also seeks to maximize professional development for artists the City commissions to build works and create murals in Bloomington. It sounds like an exciting time in City Hall; fresh ideas, innovation, new partnerships are all happening.

Gabe Colman recommended the restoration of the faded mural on Kirkwood between Washington and Walnut. Yr secretary randomly remembered that the artist was called “Red Martha” back in the day, but couldn’t summon the real name, though back in the 70s Red Martha would have been a perfectly acceptable real name. (NB: Gabe later put some serious facebooking into this project, found the original artist, and began conversations toward getting this renovation going. Yay, Gabe!)

Abby recommended that we look further outside the downtown, and Sean showed sites of future murals on the East side. Meanwhile, back downtown, the “Stardust” mural on the former Smith-Holden building is caught in limbo between two owners, and the wall needs to be rebuilt. Sean urged Commissioners to talk to property owners of other buildings who might want a mural. It would be great if the City were seen as jump-starting the mural craze, not controlling and managing and paying for it every step of the way.

At the iFell building, Wednesday, February 22, 6 p.m., there will be a public information session about grants from the city, including the BAC and BUEA. What a party that’s going to be. (NB: Yr secretary attended, and it was a sizable, informative, enjoyable meeting, save for the sad fact that one could smell the workings of Rainbow Bakery down the hall, though the meeting was devoid of refreshments. People are so dedicated to the arts!)

### *Arts Project Grants*

Sally seized control of the meeting again and got us all into the review criteria for the upcoming grant applications. In advance of the meeting, Martina proposed a simplification of the point system but not changing the wording of the criteria. Even though she was not present, everyone celebrated her genius.

Then we began to discuss what the criteria actually mean and how we would interpret them. Francesca heroically provided sample rubrics! But now we have to adapt them to our criteria. This sounds like yet another job for Katie Skayhan, Sean’s part-time graduate student assistant!

Yr secretary continued to practice telepathy during a detailed discussion that he did not want to interrupt. Had he been successful, he would have willed the movement of the cookies, from Lynn’s spot to his own, but alas! Perhaps he should invoke Rule 19? It worked for Mitch McConnell. Sean is going to bring a timer to the grant meetings! Seems harsh. Up to now we thought he was nice. Oh well. At least we won’t have to have a grant meeting that lasts until midnight.

Yr secretary, still dreaming of a cookie, eyed Francesca across the table, trying not to blame her for her fellow Bloomington North teacher having assigned his son to build a replica of the Roman Senate House for his Latin class. But seriously folks, what is the pedagogical point here? That yr secretary ran into a fellow faculty member frantically seeking Roman Senate House building supplies at 8 pm the night before the project was due was little comfort. Teachers these days!

Sean agreed to summarize and give it all to Katie Skayhan to fix under his judicious supervision. He has recently served on some national grant panels and is willing to lend from that perspective. Commissioners will review prior to the next meeting.

We moved on to the strategic plan.

### *BAC Strategic Plan*

Martina had sent comments. Using those as a basis, we continued to carve up the remaining words of the draft. We accepted a bunch of her suggestions and not a few others. We weren't sure how directly we should say in our plan that the commission should be doing social media. We don't want to kill the already-overburdened Katie Skayhan so we agreed to tread lightly there. The commissioners want to be aspirational but also realistic. In all seriousness, a difficult but important balance to strike.

Sally would like to offer some more changes and asked us for one more round of comments. We agreed to take one more look to get it just perfect. How was this work done before computers? What if a volcano erupted? Was it worth someone's time to completely retype the plan every time someone had an idea? Lots of us can recall those days, but prefer not. (Yr secretary teaches a unit on strategic planning every year and reminded himself that the value of the plan is not so much what's in it, but that all of us participated in its formation and are buying into what it promises that we will do as a commission. To most commissioners, the draft plan seemed solid, and both Martina and Sally should be praised –though they weren't because we were getting hungry – for their diligence in editing and proposing small but important changes to the drafts.)

### *Commissioner Announcements*

Abby promised pie on Monday after the Malcolm Dalglish musical extravaganza at the BCT. (Yr secretary also attended that event, which was hard to describe but really cool if you're in the right demographic, and which, Abby singing beautifully and not lying, ended with fresh apple pie. Would there be any left over for the next BAC meeting? Doubtful.)

Francesca is doing her **last ever** play at Bloomington North Feb 23-25, "Machinal." Sally then performs on Sunday with Voces Novae about General Lew Wallace, who killed a bunch of people and then wrote Ben-Hur. Yr secretary will be participating in a forum on March 1 about "The arts in the era of Trump" at SPEA and then sneaking off to England where he will negotiate exchange agreements and give a keynote presentation at which he is expected to explain the Trump administration to a bunch of nice academics in Manchester, England.

There is so much going on in this brave little town. Sometimes it's amazing to think about. Subsequent to the meeting it feels incumbent on yr secretary to mention that Peter Jacobi is a community treasure. Hear me out on this. Yr Sec. attended the Joshua Bell concert on February 28, because, duh. He saw Peter there, as Peter is at most everything the Jacobs School does (Bell's concert was their 574<sup>th</sup> of the year.) The music literacy of this town is probably 4 times what it should be, pretty much solely due to Peter's excellent and tireless writing about it in the local newspaper. When is Peter Jacobi Day going to happen? And, if there were such a day, who would cover it for the newspaper?

Finally Sean turned off the projector and then people started putting on their coats, it being February and all, and so at the assigned hour of 6:30 pm, we headed out into the landscape.

The next meeting will be March 8, with, thankfully, someone else taking notes.

Michael Wilkerson  
Secretary