

Bloomington Arts Commission
Minutes
May 17, 2017
Law Library, City Hall

Attending: Alain Barker, Martina Celerin, Angelo Pizzo, Francesca Sobrer, Peter Jacobi, Abby Perfetti, Lynn Schwartzberg, Francesca Sobrer, Michael Wilkerson

Not attending: Gabe Colman

The meeting was called to order by Chair Sally Gaskill disturbingly close to 5 p.m.

Marina Celerin gave the Treasurer's Report. No change in revenue or expenditures. We are quiet City Mice, fiscally speaking.

Everyone toasted the excellence of the 30+ grant applicants and especially the quality of those who would be funded. Sean suggested that the high quality of the non-funded ones would be strong evidence of the arts community generally, and your BAC specifically, to request receiving more funds to grant in future years.

Commissioners expressed admiration for the Bloomington Glass Guild final report for last year. They didn't apply in 2017 because they are focusing relentlessly on opening a new studio. Sean has met with them to help them find a space.

Overlook, a new organization, was disqualified from the grants process due to making a capital request. Sean is coaching them. They have an interesting space, exciting project, and lots going on.

Sean will meet personally with all whose BAC grants were turned down and try to coach them, not only for next year, but also to help them find other sources of funding.

Sean's report:

Jason Carnes is leaving city employment and the BUEA. A new person is coming later in May. (Later announced as Brian Payne.) Ergo, Sean will be playing a lead role in Zone arts grants this year.

Selection committees for two murals met earlier today, and chose two new muralists. Emily Wilson (also a recent MA graduate in arts administration at SPEA) will do the utilities building on South Washington. Her design involves simple, cool bodies of water in the shape of local lakes. She's also doing some muraling on the near westside at a traffic calming spot.

The 7th Street and the Bypass tunnel and façade in the Green Acres neighborhood will be completed by Justice Rowe from Chicago. His sample could be described, reductively, as jazzy colorful abstract work, designed to make the passable but long ignored under-the-bypass tunnel more welcoming to walkers and bikers.

Sean responded to a last-minute grant opportunity from the State Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) and received it! Funds will be devoted to Quick Impact Placemaking; the city will create a Pop Toolkit, which contains a series of activities for alley activation, such as putt putt, cafe tables, etc. This can be used for block parties and various neighborhood happenings.

Sean has facilitated the creation of a new fund that people can donate to for public art, so that the city can leverage its limited funds to create more art.

Emily Goodson, playwright and former Bloomington resident now returned has been appointed to the Arts Commission by Mayor Hamilton. She will join us next month. Welcome, Emily! And thank you, Mayor Hamilton, for making the appointment.

Sean asked for volunteers to help with the plans for the arts development of the Switchyard: Martina and Abby raised their hands, and if you've been to school you know what that means.

The Bicentennial Committee volunteers are Alain Barker, Sally Gaskill, and Michael Wilkerson. Just trying to keep the shoulders stretched. Oh well.

It was noted that in all the drama of the grant meeting, we did not approve the March minutes. And we didn't have a quorum for the February minutes approval. Bob Dylan once said, "To live outside the law, you must be honest." No one can remember anything, including yrs truly. So we will approve everything in June.

Finally we turned to the most important subject of the day: final tuning of the 2017 Arts Project Grants.

Arts Projects Grants Review

Although we evaluated the Middle Way House application, it was subsequently noted that the project for which they applied is a fundraiser. Our grant guidelines disallow projects that are "primarily fundraising." After a substantive and healthy discussion, the Commission voted 6-1 that this Middle Way project should be ineligible.

Wilkerson asked if we screen out people and tell them they are on the road to perdition before they file a grant and get whacked. Usually we do, but if they don't contact Sean before the grant app comes in, and they don't come to the public session for potential grantees and ask questions, they are left without a recourse for that year.

What followed was a long discussion about the scoring and conversion to grants. Sean offered two scenarios. There was a discussion about two issues: how many of the 32 applications to fund, and whether the decision should be purely based on final scores. All acknowledged the difficulty here – it's a competitive process with limited funds. Most of the 32 are deserving of funding, but if we fund everyone the grants will be too small. In the end, the mathematical scenario was chosen, and we elected to fund all grantees who scored 80 or higher in the tabulated system, which was 17 of the applicants. Final details would be ratified by an e-vote.

Several members mentioned that having to turn down such a variety of good ones is an argument for more funds from the city for next year, which Sean strongly supports as the way to build our case for a bigger appropriation. It's likely that we'll get more applications going forward. Sean hopes our \$20,000 will rise in the next two years.

Under "other business," and all you journalism people (Peter Jacobi!) how's this for burying the lede -- Abby Perfetti now serves as the vice chair of the BAC. Congratulations, Abby! (Actually, as the chair points out, she has done so since January 2016.) Abby will chair our June meeting in Sally's absence.

We set a tentative date of June 28, 5:30, for the second annual awards ceremony and reception for the funded projects.

In other business:

1. There have been some graffiti damages – hooligans, not rising Midwestern Banksys – that have affected some of our public art, especially the Dale Enochs limestone Banquet. Sean and Gabe are working on a solution to this, which will surely generate more BAC attention in the future.
2. Sally wants to look at our recently passed strategic plan to focus on and actually take our proposed next action steps.
3. Voces Novae is having a concert about happiness.

That seemed to be a terrific way to end a meeting. We will reconvene June 14.

Michael Wilkerson
Secretary