



Meeting: December 13, 2022, Sherwood Center

**Members Present:**

Dan Smith – Chair  
Patricia Gallagher – Vice Chair  
Clayton Austin – Treasurer  
Sharon Chang  
Michele Greet  
Melissa Grow  
Brian Howell  
Susan Morris  
Jessica Russo Revand  
Lesley Sandoval  
Debra Wright

**Members Absent:**

Ruth Bandler – Secretary  
Lisa Casazza  
Padma Surapureddi

**Member Online:**

Yolanda Ortiz

**Staff:**

Megan DuBois – Cultural Arts Manager

**Guests:**

None

**Visitors:**

None

Dan Smith called the Commission on the Arts (CoA) Meeting to order at 7:16 PM.

**Adoption of agenda – Dan Smith**

- Dan noted that the City Council's remote participation policy had been included in the meeting packet and as an agenda item. Given a member's interest in online participation in this evening's meeting, he suggested that the Commission consider that item at the outset of the meeting.

*- A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to revise the agenda by renumbering Item No. 5B as Item No. 2A and renumbering Item No. 2 as Item No. 2B.*

## **New Business - Remote Participation in Meetings**

- Dan explained that a recent law requires the Commission to adopt a policy, consistent with a new law, prior to CoA members can participate in meetings online. He said the City Council's policy had been included in the packet as one example of the policy and its implementation.
- Pat suggested that if the CoA wished, it could adopt the City Council's policy in principle, with appropriate editorial changes (such as removing references to the Mayor and City Clerk), with the understanding that further revisions could be made for matters such as establishing a deadline for submitting a request to the Chair.
- Megan questioned whether the City Council's policy could be adopted with revisions. She also said it is her understanding that the City Clerk has been applying her own interpretation to members' online participation in terms of the three-meeting limit on absences.
- Debra asked for clarification of the terms for requesting approval of remote participation; objected to the state law's limit on approval of remote participation for personal reasons; questioned the appropriateness of applying the law to volunteers; and asked that the CoA's policy include an exception allowing the Chair to excuse absences in excess of the law's stated maximum.
- Michele, Susan, Yolanda and Brian also questioned aspects of the law that relate to the conditions attendant to a valid request for remote participation and the limit on remote participation for personal reasons.
- Dan and Pat noted that the terms and conditions were established by the state legislature and do not give the Chair discretion to grant additional exceptions for requests citing personal reasons.
- Brian asked whether making a document with details of members' discussions publicly available would suffice under the law.
- Dan and Pat said that the City Council's remote participation policy does not address subcommittee meetings. Pat noted that if three members discuss Commission business, it is generally considered a meeting under the state open meetings law.
- Dan concluded that the consensus was to postpone a vote on a remote participation policy, and to have one or more members work on a draft policy for members' consideration.
- **Action: Sharon Chang and Pat Gallagher will work on a Commission remote meeting policy for consideration at the January meeting. Other members are encouraged to send Sharon or Pat suggestions on how to implement the policy.**

## **Approval of Minutes for November 2022 – Pat Gallagher for Ruth Bandler, Secretary** *(included in the read-ahead packet)*

- **A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to accept the minutes.**

## **Treasurer's Report – Clayton Austin, Treasurer** *(included in the read-ahead packet)*

- Clayton summarized the report.
- Megan noted receipt of a \$500 check for the Old Town Hall Performance Series.

## **Cultural Arts Manager's Report – Megan DuBois, Cultural Arts Manager** *(included in the read-ahead packet)*

- Megan said her report includes the results of the recent City Council election and notes the adoption of a new City seal. She said the latter requires, among other things, changes to business cards. Megan also explained that Phase I of the Old Town Hall renovations (exterior matters) has been completed, and that the front entrance was available for use this past Friday evening (December 9<sup>th</sup>) for a Bonita Lestina Old Town Hall Performance Series (OTHPS) concert. She said Phase II will address interior renovations, such as code updates, but expects limited impact on Commission events. Megan said the re-opening of the front entrance places added importance on the need for at least two ushers at OTHPS concerts, and said she expects that the Performance Committee will address the need for a scheduled usher to find a replacement, if needed. Megan also said that she has updated the Calendar of Events to include certain grantees' projects.
- Clayton Austin sought Megan's opinion on whether mandatory masking might be required for upcoming indoor Commission events. Megan said she thought masking would continue as an optional practice.

## **Old/New Business – Dan Smith, Chair**

### ○ **New Member**

- Dan welcomed new member Lesley Sandoval.
- Lesley provided brief biographical information, noting that she holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from James Madison University, lives with her husband and two children in the City of Fairfax, currently works as a freelance graphic artist, and enjoys all aspects of the arts. She said she initially became aware of the CoA through the Funday Monday program.

### - **CoA Handbook**

- Dan said work on a Handbook has been underway for some time. He asked members to review and comment on Handbook material distributed to date.
- **Action: Members are requested to send Pat Gallagher their comments on Handbook material prior to the January meeting.**
- **Action: Pat is to send Megan a copy of the draft Handbook material.**

### - **Willard/Sherwood project**

- Dan stated that no final action on the Willard/Sherwood project has occurred, and invited Megan's and members' comments on whether and how the CoA might proceed.
- Megan noted that there were pros and cons to any approach. She said that electing not to send a formal statement or letter might allow the Council/others involved to obtain input via an interview with the CoA Chair. She also said that avoiding staking out one preference might allow the Council to offer other alternatives.
- Michele, Debra and Jessica agreed that this is the CoA's chance to have its say. Michele expressed the view that this was our opportunity to state a preference, while acknowledging other alternatives. Sharon also spoke in favor of a written Commission position.
- Dan said he did not see the options as a sliding scale, but as an either/or proposition. He also said that he considers the \$25 million price tag as the main sticking point, given limited ways to find funding at that level.
- Members generally agreed that funding is a major concern, especially if presented as the reason for increasing the City's real estate taxes. Sharon observed that the lower taxes issue is relative to city services received, and the perceived value thereof. Her position is that City residents receive less in return for lower taxes. Jessica noted that a tax increase is not the only way to obtain funding. She also noted the importance of providing new and existing residents with entertainment options in the City.
- Brian Howell asked about the possibility of getting County buy-in on the performance space addition to the Willard aspect of the project. Megan said she did not think this was likely, as the County agreed to the project long before the possibility of new performance space was raised by the City.
- **Action: Michele Greet will draft a Commission statement on the Willard-Sherwood project and distribute to members prior to the next meeting. Members are to reply to Michele.**

## **New Business - Commission Photo**

- Megan suggested the Commission discuss group photo options at the January meeting and make a decision at that time.
- **Action: Members are requested to provide their ideas about a Commission photo at the next meeting and be prepared to vote.**

**Committee Reports – Dan Smith, Chair** (see read-ahead packet for reports; no Grants Report included in the packet)

**Arts Awards – Jessica Russo Revand** (*included in the read-ahead packet*)

- Jessica noted that nominations received to date for the John Mason and Business Arts awards are identified in the report. She extended the deadline for nominations (and voting thereon) to the January meeting.
- **Action: Members are encouraged to submit additional nominations in time for consideration at the next CoA meeting.**

#### **ArtScreen – Clayton Austin**

- Clayton noted that the Committee is still seeking additional members, but had sufficient coverage for the upcoming Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> film, which is a movie version of *The Nutcracker*.
- In response to Brian Howell's inquiry about including a children's film, Clayton said the Committee was open to such films, and that children's films have been offered in some previous years. Sharon Chang provided additional background on both ArtScreen in general and presentation of children's films. She noted that one year, the CoA presented a children's film and related activities at the Stacey C. Sherwood Center. Pat Gallagher agreed with Clayton's statement that the Committee was open to considering children's films, and noted there are existing avenues for presenting such films in the City, such as through the Parks and Recreation Department (which, among other things, offers a summer family movie series) and at CoA FundayMonday events (noting that a movie was shown at a FundayMonday event she attended).

#### **City of Fairfax Band Association (CFBA) – Ruth Bandler** *(included in the read-ahead packet)*

- Megan reminded members that advance tickets are needed for the City Band's holiday concert.

#### **Public Art – Debra Wright** *(included in the read-ahead packet)*

- Megan DuBois noted that she and Debra are collecting handknit hats and gloves at Sherwood for distribution during the holiday season, and encouraged members to contribute these

#### **Language Arts 123 Committee – Sharon Chang** *(included in the read-ahead packet)*

- Sharon said she has identified three local authors in the children's literature genre and will be meeting with one of them tomorrow (Wednesday, Dec 14<sup>th</sup>).
  - Megan said an announcement of the upcoming Literary Competition has been posted. Further distribution on Facebook and elsewhere is pending resolution of minor details.
- **Action: Sharon asked members to collect names and contact information of writers in their neighborhoods and send them to her.**

#### **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) – Pat Gallagher** *(included in the read-ahead packet)*

- Pat noted that PRAB did not discuss the Willard/Sherwood project at its recent meeting

#### **Performance and Events – Jessica Russo Revand for Melissa Grow** *(included in the read-ahead packet)*

- Jessica said planning is underway for a reception honoring OTHPS donors on Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at the Blenheim Civil War Interpretive Center.
- In response to Brian Howell's question about a remark Megan made about contracting with a chocolatier, Megan explained that one of the CoA's OTHPS concerts is held at the Sherwood Center during the City's annual Chocolate Festival, and this concert traditionally includes a reception featuring chocolate.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 PM.