

CAMBRIDGE ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES: January 12, 2016, 6PM

Start: 6:18 PM

End: 7:35 PM

MINUTES

Minutes will be approved by email or at next regularly scheduled meeting.

MEDIA

Cambridge Arts: Marketing & Communications

Jason highlighted media updates with Board to showcase the ongoing expansion of coverage of Cambridge Arts programs and events in the media and online. The review included WBUR's coverage of "People's Sculpture Racing", the kinetic sculpture racing revived by Christian Herold in 2015 and harking back to the tradition begun at the Cambridge River Festival in 1982-1985. The 2015 winner was Bill Wainwright's original sculpture/vehicle, which following the event was accessioned by MIT into the formal collection at the MIT Museum alongside sculptures by Arthur Ganson who was also an original participant in the 1980's. Additionally, the Boston Globe's art critic Cate McQuaid selected the Vivian Beer exhibition as a feature in the month of December. Board members were encouraged to follow and share Cambridge Arts on Facebook, Twitter (@CambridgeArts) and other social media platforms.

Poetry Ambassador Program

Jason explained the new poetry ambassador program and confirmed that Toni "Bee" Brooks will serve as the first Ambassador and facilitated and performed at an event on 12/10 at the Central Square Library Branch in the *Central Square Cultural District*. Cambridge Arts started poetry ambassador program to leverage the experience of the Poet Populist Program and the Cambridge Poetry Advisory Committee in order to expand the recognition and celebration of poetry in the broader Cambridge community and region. Three poets have been selected as Ambassadors for 2016. Each artist is to support events for four months of the year. Cambridge Arts provides list of potential venues, a tool kit, support on how to produce/perform, along with technical and physical support and space in which to work. The ambition is for three Ambassadors to work individually and collaboratively each year culminating in a celebration of the year at the Poetry Tent at the annual Cambridge River Festival. There will also be an open mike event in early spring at Gallery 344 connected to Poetry Month.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Cambridge Arts Grant Program

Applicant Reconsideration:

Julie announced that there is a request for reconsideration this year, the first time it has happened in many years. She gave an overview of the grant process procedures if this type of situation occurs and clarified that the only grounds to accept a reconsideration is if the applicant can prove that the staff, panelists, and Advisory Board did not follow the stated grant review process at the local and state level. Julie reviewed the detailed sequence of events and responses with the Board and also shared the information and feedback provided by the Local Cultural Council staff at the state arts agency who formally denied the reconsideration request. Following a period of questions and discussion, Ann L. motioned to deny reconsideration based on the fact that appropriate procedures were followed by Cambridge Arts, Lori seconded, and the Board unanimously approved.

The issue raised the applicant was the response by panelists to the significance to Cambridge community criteria. The Board discussed the overall priority of a broad Cambridge community served by each grant project. They encourage projects where the community is primarily served in Cambridge

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even if they have broader outreach in Boston where other funding may be available. The candidate submitted a good proposal that was very close to getting funding and is encouraged to submit again in future funding cycles. Julie also let members know that she will send info to the applicant on other grant opportunities in greater Boston region.

Cambridge River Festival

Jason summarized a proposal for a new location for the *Cambridge Arts River Festival* this year since the original location on the river by Harvard and along Memorial Drive is still not unavailable due to construction. He indicated that having the *Cambridge Arts River Festival* in Central Square and the Central Square Cultural District as an interim solution has been successful for the last two years, but requires significant demands on the city by closing down Mass Ave in Central Square. He explained that a new location also provides opportunities for developing new programmatic and funding partnerships and that he has met with the Deputy City Manager and submitted a formal proposal to City Manager Richard Rossi for a move of the event to the East Cambridge riverfront along the Cambridge Parkway. Jason included the memo in the Board information packets but asked that members not share this information further until such a time as the City Manager has had an opportunity to consider and weigh in on the request. He anticipated the review would be completed by the end of January at the latest.

Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 Report

Jason is delighted to announce that Cambridge has been selected to participate in the 5th Arts & Economic Prosperity Report this year as one of 6 core cities in the Commonwealth including: Boston, Lowell, New Bedford, Worcester, and Springfield. This is a partnership with Americans for the Arts, a national arts advocacy organizations, and the Barr Foundation. From January through December, data will be collected on money spent on culture and community, audience, jobs, and employment in the arts and culture sector locally. This will be the first time there will be a complete data set of art and culture impact on the economy where Cambridge is separated from Boston and the metro-Boston region and may help to strengthen funding for Cambridge-based artists and organizations. The existing Cambridge Arts Marketing Network (CAMN) will be a very useful tool in managing this process throughout the year. The final report will be completed by March 2017 which will show how Cambridge compares with other cities across the US. Cambridge Arts will collect data and is getting funding from the Barr Foundation for generating materials, Americans for the Arts will provide the research tool kit and comparisons.

Jason reminded Board members of the enormous impact of arts and culture in our city. To put things in perspective, he remembered a meeting with Mayor Menino when the former mayor announced that the most robust generators for revenue of the Commonwealth of MA are, 1) Technology/Life Sciences, 2) Healthcare, and 3) Arts & Culture. In fact, the mayor went on to say that the arts and culture sector generated more revenue for the Commonwealth in the form of ticket sales, meals, hotels, etc... than all 5 professional sports franchises – COMBINED!

Next Meeting is February 9, 2016, 6 PM.

Members Present

- Board: Lori Damon, Ann Lawson, Diane Norris
- Staff: Julie Barry, Director of Community Arts
Jason Weeks, Executive Director

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Members Absent

- Board: Luis Cotto, David Daniel, Aliyah Gary, Lori Lander, Diana Lempel, Calvin Lindsay, Stella McGregor

Respectfully submitted: Diane Norris, Secretary, Cambridge Arts