

ASSOCIATED ARTISTS OF PITTSBURGH
Board of Directors Meeting
March 9, 2015, 6:30 PM – Ice House Conference Room

Board Members present: John Lewis, Ken Antol, Ann Thompson, Mia Tarducci Henry, Brian Siewiorek, Cecile Shellman, Andy Urbach, Emily Meyer, Kathryn Stanko, David Bush, Christopher J. King, Ryan Lammie,

Absent: David Stanger, PJ Zimmerlink.

Guests: Juliana Morris, Executive Director, AAP; Conn Thiemann

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 pm. John Lewis conducted and presided.

Welcome and Introductions

John Lewis opened the meeting. He made a motion to approve the January minutes; Ann Thompson seconded the motion. They were unanimously approved by the Board. There was no February Board of Directors meeting due to planning and implementation of the upcoming fundraiser.

Committee Report

Advisory Board Committee is solid. They have had a meeting in Bakery Square (at Social) and a conference call meeting. Active Committee members include Graham Shearing, Laura Horner, Ken Friedman, Emily Meyer, Ann Thompson, Ken Antol. Meeting topics have included or will include defining members' roles; identifying each member with a single responsibility or priority; and considering additional people for the advisory board list, even people who are no longer living (as nominal/honorary gestures). These ideas will be presented to the full advisory board at the end of March. If other members of the board who are not Advisory Committee members wish to join that meeting, they are welcome. The meeting will take place in the Ice House Conference Room and more details will be circulated, including information about continued planning for the gala.

Introduction of Conn Thiemann

Conn Thiemann was introduced as a new Advisory Committee member by Mia Tarducci Henry. He is the founder of a self-organized museum partner organization, The Skibo Society, which engages young professionals and innovators to think critically about Carnegie Museum of Art. Mr. Thiemann is a first year law student. John Lewis addressed Conn and the board, explaining the mission of AAP and its leadership.

Committee Report (Continued)

Information about the Fundraising Committee was shared by David Bush. There has been substantial progress. A meeting was held on March 2 which was attended by Stacy Weiss, Andy, Chris, Ryan, and Tim. The tasks included scrubbing mailing lists (merge/purge) and a letter was crafted that will go out to would-be corporate funders. A party name/title has been solidified: Art at First Glance. Juliana shared with the group a well-designed packet comprising a cover letter, benefit sheet, and AAP FAQ. The honorary co-chair names will be added to the letter.

Juliana will make an electronic copy of the letter. She is also working on a ShowClix account, which will allow people to buy event tickets online.

John Lewis has compiled a good donor corporate list. March is a critical period to land corporate support. \$22,500 has already been committed. Juliana did a great job with the corporate package collateral, making it easier for Andy, David, and John to contact sponsors. Their job is to follow up with a personalized email and phone call. We need a \$10,000 sponsor and six or seven \$5,000 sponsors, ideally. The companies John Lewis had called initially with a \$5,000 ask were willing to donate at a \$2,500 level.

Ryan Lammie asked if there were a list that John Lewis could share with the entire board. The list was previously only shared with the relevant committee members.

Executive Director Report: Juliana Morris

Much has happened in the last couple of months. The Crawl was well attended, and went well, as did the Chatham Baroque event mentioned in the January Board meeting. Everything sold at the auction at their fundraiser.

The Heinz Endowments report was submitted on January 15. We have fulfilled all the requirements for receiving the second half of the promised funding. There will be a March 27 Heinz Endowments meeting with Janet Sarbaugh. Individual board members have had positive interactions with Janet Sarbaugh about the direction of Associated Artists of Pittsburgh. Ms. Sarbaugh attended the Mine Factory show and told John Lewis she was pleased.

The Black and White (digital entry) show opens at the Frame House on March 20.

Regarding the Mayor's Office art project, there are 65 works by nine artists. The strongest artists were submitted, and they are Pittsburgh-based or -focused. The mayor was very pleased. He will make the final selections; about 25 works will be finalized.

AAP has started contacting artists for the April screening. A prospectus was sent out, as well as a newsletter to the membership.

In February, there was a meeting with Nancy about the gala. The gala catalog was started early. The new member screening form is being created. Tom Sokolowski will jury the screening. There will be an exhibit meeting to plan the drop off. The jurying will take place April 26-30.

The AAP office/ED is monitoring incoming checks as well as fielding feedback from the host committee.

Elizabeth Brophy has given notice. She had initially expressed a desire to stay until the end of May. Juliana has a friend, retired lawyer Helene Landman, whom Elizabeth will help train. Helene can work through June to pick up the slack so we can make it through the Annual.

Outside Gallery Space Discussion

Juliana has investigated an available venue that has been presented as a viable opportunity for a gallery space. The location is well sited (South Highland, across from Casbah). It's an old antique shop. Juliana was given a tour and has taken photographs. She is working with James Franz (who owns Tedco) and Keith Cochran, architect (married to one of our artists). Mr. Cochran was called in to look at the space and see if the zoning is appropriate or needs to be changed.

The tenant/building is not currently up to code, and there are some fixes that are imminent even though the bones are good. The landlord is fixing the bathroom. It is currently not accessible. We would not necessarily need a sprinkler system. We would need drywall for a noise buffer. James could put this up. We would need appropriate lighting for the artwork. Juliana shared photographs with the board, demonstrating very high ceilings, about 1,200 square feet of total gallery space, beautiful wood floors in good condition, a kitchen area, potential storage space (about 300 square feet), and a usable but small basement. There may be additional space for a dedicated boardroom. There is an estimate of a \$20,000 build-out up front to get the space ready.

The rent would be quite reasonable for a space of this size and location. It would amount to about \$2,000/month or \$3,000 if the boardroom and small office space are secured. Kent Antol asked what utilities would run us per month, but as of this meeting that had not been investigated. Mia Tarducci Henry asked whether the gallery would be manned. Juliana underscored the intention to have this be our own space, switched out with lots of variety in terms of exhibits and programming. There will be good opportunity for sales. The East End is terrifically built up at the moment. This is not a bad deal, and not a huge investment. The street is one of the busiest and well-coveted in Pittsburgh. This would be a fantastic opportunity for increased AAP visibility and impact.

All board members expressed high enthusiasm for the project idea. There were a few concerns about viability moving forward with holding the space, meeting rent, revenue generation, and staffing. Other areas of potential concern or which bear further investigation are security, insurance, signage (which we could pitch to the artist membership to provide).

John Lewis suggested a renewed focus on the projects at hand, including the Annual and the gala. While this project is exciting, the timeline should be carefully considered. It was noted that we are just discussing this idea rather than approving to economically commit at this time.

A brief discussion on possible grant funding specific to this project revealed that while some avenues have been explored (Hillman, Heinz Endowments), timing, potential board approval for action, etc., might mean we need to explore further before financially committing.

Financials

As of March 9, total cash is at \$65,492.00. The investment balance holds at \$565,539.

A discussion about whether we should increase drawdown occurred. Chris King noted that there's a restriction from foundations: 5% drawdown on investment funds. John Lewis remarked that his intern (intern from his law firm working on research) concluded that there is a state statute that restricts funds; back in the early 2000s the AAP Board did restrict these funds. Board policy allows a 5% drawdown. Eight months into the fiscal year, we still have not taken the drawdown. We could up this to 7% and take some if we need it.

Last year, we had a poor financial performance. In 2013, we didn't even earn 5%. We changed advisors. It will be interesting to assess where we are now, given our limited flexibility. Juliana Morris pointed out that we have approximately \$600,000 in investment accounts, yet continue to squeak by with operating. Even an additional \$10,000 would help considerably. Do we really need that big of an investment account?

Chris King stated that the large investment was intended for us not to have another "downtown debacle."

Diversity Initiative Discussion

Cecile Shellman and Kathryn Stanko reported on their efforts in February: Kathryn visited the Women in Visions show at Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. Kathryn also suggested that Elizabeth Ashe Douglas could be made an honorary member. Ms. Douglas is a venerable artist from the African American community who screened into AAP initially back in 1952. Donna Balmgren sponsored her membership years ago as well. A small discussion ensued about ways in which we could advertised to the African American and Latino/Hispanic communities as well as to younger artists.

John Lewis suggested that the Pittsburgh Foundation (Program Officer Germaine Williams) might give us money to underwrite "minority memberships." Cecile and Kathryn could meet with him.

Mia expressed that there is often a disconnect between older and newer (and older and younger) members.

Ryan Lammie suggested members from the African American and other communities who might be willing to serve on committees or the board, including Bill Generett, Jeff Anderson, and Darrel Kinsell. Cecile Shellman concurred, expressing that Jeff Anderson in particular could be a strong ally. Ryan also suggested Xi Wan (sp?), a collegiate curator. It might get unwieldy to add too many new people to the board. Cecile Shellman suggested not simply adding "diversity" for

“diversity’s sake”—we all need to think of diversity more broadly rather than identifying perceived differences and infusing people with those particular characteristics or demographics into the circle. This could seem disingenuous and inauthentic. We have to be careful about how this is approached. Mia and Ryan volunteered to help Cecile as volunteers for a diversity committee/task force.

Other

Juliana will be featured in an Eyetique ad soon.
Conn Thiemann’s SKIBO group should be invited to the gala.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.