

ASSOCIATED ARTISTS OF PITTSBURGH
Board of Directors Meeting
May 11, 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, Scott Hunter, and Christopher J. King

Absent: David Stanger, PJ Zimmerlink, Ryan Lammie, and David Bush.

Guests: Juliana Morris, Executive Director, AAP

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm. John Lewis conducted and presided.

Welcome and Introductions

John Lewis opened the meeting. He acknowledged that the Board of Directors did not meet for an April meeting, but expressed gratitude for the diligence in substantial planning and fundraising efforts by board members and volunteers in the interim.

Mr. Lewis made a motion to approve the March minutes; Ms. Ann Thompson seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

Staffing

With Elizabeth Brophy's having resigned with just under two weeks' notice, Associated Artists of Pittsburgh will seek additional (permanent) help, but not just yet. We are waiting to finish work on current projects. Potential interns might be a possibility, but we also need to find someone with education experience.

Mia Tarducci Henry stated that Clare McCandless, a recent MAM (Masters of Arts Management, Heinz College, Carnegie Mellon University), is looking for work.

Juliana Morris said that a lot depends on whether the project re the new rental space comes to fruition. Juliana really needs an administrative arm, somewhat like an assistant director. Work is complex. Juliana asked for resumes from Ms. McCandless and any other MAM graduates, as well as other qualified people.

Executive Committee Conference Call Report

John Lewis said that AAP needs to make certain that we are not neglecting the education function of the organization. We all need to know what this specific function is, as well as what the education calendar looks like.

Kathryn Stanko said that the City Schools' Student Art Invitational is AAP's only continued contact with Pittsburgh Public School students. Neither Cecile Shellman nor Kathryn Stanko was able jury the student exhibition this year because of their travel schedules (April 2015).

Juliana mentioned that the Fine Foundation has a quarterly newsletter full of photographs and blurbs. They are happy with us and should continue to fund the education projects.

Mia and Juliana will keep seeking potential candidates for an office/education employee.

Kathryn stated that while exhibiting artists' work is essential, when we are seeking funding we have to consider our being a "regional asset" and what we are doing for the community.

John Lewis said we could all think of other events where we can contribute to community arts needs.

Preview Party Update

Financials for the preview party are looking really good. We had budgeted \$100,000 in revenue with \$56,000 in costs. At present, we are at \$103,000 in revenue, with costs slightly higher: Since we have sold so many patron and grand patron tickets, costs for food and drinks have increased.

A meeting at Nancy Byrnes' house attended by John, Ryan Lammie, Mia Tarducci Henry, David Stanger, Ryan Lammie, and Bryan Siewiorek focused on how to drive art sales on the night of the event. It was established that a 50% commission could be taken, and we should be able to do well.

The event forecast looks profitable on all accounts. Several volunteers and board members have been exceptionally helpful.

John Lewis said that Juliana has done an amazing amount of work even though the event is a board event.

Nancy Byrnes has been very good. There were lots of challenges to iron out.

Exhibit Committee

On Saturday, May 16, Ryan, PJ, Scott, and Mia will start to build walls for the event art installation. Volunteers would be welcome from 9 a.m. onwards.

Ticket Sales: Gala

Chris asked how many tickets we were still hoping to sell. John replied that we have had a Facebook issue: only \$300 and \$500 tickets are moneymakers, so we should sell those up until the day of the event instead of broadly advertising/communicating the availability of the baseline

ticket on Facebook. We have only sold 50 or so regular tickets, but are at 75% VIP ticket sale percentages.

Juliana reported that our maximum capacity is 250, so we still have room to sell patron and grant patron tickets. Ticket requests/purchases are still coming in daily, such as for artists, their spouses, etc.

John stated that 20-30 more patron/grand patron ticket sales would be good, but we might not be able to meet that goal.

Brian and Mia talked about the Showclix setup and discussed the many Facebook “likes” for the event. Mia wondered whether Showclix could be set up to sell artist patron tickets (i.e., tickets at the patron level to the artists’ own buyers/collectors/patrons).

Juliana said that 90% of the membership is not on Facebook.

Andy said that he realizes this could go so much further since we are space-limited. Now that we have seen how the sales are going, we could push even harder next year.

John Lewis remarked that even six weeks ago it would have been hard to believe we could meet our goals. Sales will be “icing on the cake.”

One lesson we have learned, however, is that we are not on corporate donor lists. Joan Milsom and Ryan Lammie were to be credited for securing PNC and others. We need to make sure to apply early enough next time to be included on corporate budgets, such as Highmark’s list, EQT’s list, et cetera.

Personal phone calls asking for money is simply not a sustainable model. A corporate giving program takes planning and time.

Juliana heard that some people were unhappy that we did not invite the membership (with comp tickets). However, she has not gotten one email with any complaints. Most members are fine with this particular event being a fundraiser. Other options to include membership will be forthcoming, including the Butler Museum (June 14, opening of Annual).

Juliana congratulated John Lewis for doing so much, saying we would never have pulled this off without him. After the gala, Juliana will follow up by inputting all the new donors and friends on a mailing list. She may include a notice about our looking for more board members.

Brian said that we should have a SWOT debrief after the event; every successful party does that.

AAP Fundraising Gala Day-of Duties and Responsibilities

On Thursday, May 28: Board members should arrive at the Hotel Monaco no later than 5:30 p.m. Board members who are volunteering (and other volunteers) should be there even sooner. There are plenty of jobs to do if anyone wants to help.

Cecile Shellman will create calligraphed name tags identifying AAP board members and special guests. Emily and Kathryn will also assist at check-in. Roof greeters are needed in case people go up to the 9th floor roof lounge.

Helene Landman and Juliana are having a meeting to orchestrate and coordinate fine details.

Advisory Council Report

Attendance at the most recent meeting included Emily, Ann, Ken, Graham Shearing, Tom Sokolowski, Conn Thiemann, Barry Friedman, Dr. Ed Friedman, Mike May, James Frantz, and Vicki Clarke. The meeting was described as “raucous and entertaining.” They discussed contributions and expectations as well as patron/advisor role demarcation. Attendees changed the name from the Advisory Board to the Advisory Council. We need more than exhibition advisors. There are other areas in which their help could be sought and given.

After the meeting, the newest and youngest Advisory Council member, Conn Thiemann, sent out a summary which included observations and suggestions, such as the balance of artist/non-artist members on the council; what being a patron actually means, and what the benefits of being on the council should be. It was generally felt that the council members prefer meetings to social events.

One of the advisory council members wrote a donation check in November or December, asking if (s)he could apply the donation to a gala ticket. This is one benefit of having events: donations might come out of them.

Ken Antol said we still want to build up the advisory council. The Board said previously that it wanted to approve council candidates. Mia said we already do have some potentials, including Mr. David Light, who approached Mia at the Mine Factory. He is the husband of artist member Mara Light, and is a real estate developer. Other council member prospects may include Paul Levin, who works for Google. She’s another Skibo member, is younger, and is always at art events. Educating young people about AAP and changing old perceptions about AAP are priorities.

New board member discussion

John Lewis said that David Bush sent a note about board member potentials. The November ballot is coming up. We need to think about new members. This is a nice sized board. Three or four additional members would be ideal. John Lewis suggested adding two or more members from the corporate sector, with maybe someone strong in education. We need to think about diversity. Kathryn’s second term ends in 2016.

Ken Antol stated that artist members are needed for the board. John said we should think about the balance—should it be 3:1? 2:2? Ultimately, we just need to identify viable candidates. We have four current members up for reelection: Brian, Cecile, Andy, and David.

Juliana suggested having an evaluation for board members since this affects her too. In her experience, other boards have evaluated outgoing members before they're considered for reelection.

ARAD

John Lewis and Chris King are going to try to approach the people at ARAD to inform them about AAP's progress and seek funding. Paul Gitnik is no longer on ARAD board. Applications come out in June, with a July 15 due date. We need to know specific ways we can be seriously considered for ARAD funding.

Andy Urbach remarked that we are a completely different organization than they might recall; our level of sophistication and input has increased substantially in the last three years.

John Lewis remarked that the benefit of making the effort is that there is a long-term effect.

Juliana stated that she relies on that money for Kathy's payment, and that we should be considered a regional asset. ARAD funds regional assets.

Highland Avenue Potential Lease Space

There's a lot of work left to do on the space. The front windows will be replaced, but they are holding off on some of the upgrades until they know which business or project is going to be in the space. There's another possible tenant. BE galleries' architect looked at the plans. If we need a sprinkler system, rule us out. Juliana has not been able to write a business plan. If we wait to do a business plan, we won't get the space, and it will be rented to the other client. Juliana does not want to lose the space.

John suggested drafting up a letter of intent that could give us exclusivity. We ideally want the two available spaces. It's a great part of the city and we shouldn't miss this opportunity. They are zoned for home goods. Juliana said that we will have openings, public coming into the space, and times where we will have 200 people in the gallery. We may have to change our use permit.

Emily Meyer asked when the lease is up here. Juliana said we signed a three-year lease. The lessor said they'd never prevent us from leaving.

Kathryn Stanko said we can't use the space as a gallery without an accessible restroom (ADA regulations).

The members want it; the board wants it; the issue is staffing it.

Investment Fund

John Lewis has always seen the need to build a larger endowment. With the fundraiser, do we need to draw down 5%? Under PA law, we have lost the right to draw down that 5% forever (i.e. we can't draw down 10% next year). This is the policy established by the board. We need to do that this fiscal year. At this point we are 10.5 months in. We need to put the money into operating cash.

Chris King clarified that the 5-7% governed by state law is only able to be drawn once/year. These are legally restricted funds. If we get the space on Highland and need cash, we should not put ourselves into an uncomfortable position.

Ann said it would be very nice if we could tell the Bolmgren family that we named a gallery after Donna Bolmgren, in recognition of her gift.

John summarized the discussion to state we had two pockets of funding: one legally restricted, and the other psychologically restricted. He proposed to average the balances at the end of three years, and withdraw 5%. Kathryn Stanko seconded the motion. We will accomplish no negative cash flow this year and next year. We may not need to touch the 5%, but there needs to be a long-term plan.

Semi-Annual Members Meeting

Date: Sunday, June 7. John Lewis will give a report. Juliana said that attendance at the meetings has been poor, and asked whether we could have it on a Saturday night with wine/cheese, and celebrate the successful fundraiser. Ken Antol said that per the bylaws, we have to have the meeting by the end of June. A written notice must be given of the meeting within 10 days. We must have it as scheduled. The annual party is June 14 (brunch) with a postcard going out this week.

Executive Director's Report

The Heinz Endowments meeting attended by Chris, John, Juliana, and Ryan was very successful. Janet Sarbaugh said: "Phenomenal! You have done everything you said you would set out to do; the board looks great, advisory council looks great...congratulations."

Ms. Sarbaugh said we would get the \$20,000 from Heinz as promised, and she bought a ticket to the fundraiser.

The Mayor's Office installation is completed. The Black/White show at Framehouse was good. Helene has been a great help in the office; every day the mailbox has been stuffed with ticket requests. 150 tickets were sent out to special patrons.

Tom Sokolowski juried spring screening. There were 53 applicants, of which 19 were accepted. This falls within our norm. We ended up paying \$500 for the jurying space, but we didn't know the fee beforehand. Installation will be tougher this year because we have had a shorter time span to do the catalog. There are 14 awards this year; more than in previous years.

Renowned artist and AAP artist members Philip Pearlstein and his wife Dorothy Cantor will be coming to our gala. They are in Pittsburgh for a Warhol show on their work, which opens the following day.

Next on the Agenda

John Lewis said we will have a Diversity Update (Cecile and others) at the June 8 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.