

MINUTES  
**ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

Tuesday, March 22, 2011  
Lacy Board Room, Carnegie Stout Public Library 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
360 W. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Dubuque, Iowa

**Meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m. following staff assurance of compliance with the Iowa Open Meeting Law.**

Commissioners present: Ellen Henkels, Louise Kames, Sue Riedel, Geri Shafer, Paul Hemmer, and Mariana O'Rourke. Staff Present: Jerelyn O'Connor, Jessica Kurt.

Others present: Meg Wall-Wild

**Approval of Minutes of February 22, 2011.** Motion by Riedel, second by O'Rourke to approve minutes. Motion carried 7-0.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Approve 2011 Art on the River Jury Selection.** O'Connor presented slide show with the jury selections and alternates for the 2011 Art on the River Exhibit. O'Connor described the process of selection of artwork, applications received, and the jury process. The selected exhibit has also been reviewed and approved by the Art on the River Committee. Motion by Hemmer, second by Riedel to approve the Art on the River selections. Motion carried 7-0. Commissioner Shafer formally thanked the jury for their time and commitment to choosing the sculptures for the 2011 show.

O'Connor discussed with the commission the possibility of allowing the Best in Show artist of the Art on the River program the opportunity to show again in the following year's program. O'Rourke raised the issue that the site the artwork was exhibited at would perhaps then be taken away from another artist's work which would suit that space. The commission agreed that the issue would require more thought and discussion in the future.

2. **Review and Fund Operating Grant Applications.**

Commission Chair Shafer reviewed the process and the changes in the process for reviewing the Operating Support funding requests. She stated that each commissioner will have an opportunity to comment on the applications and raise any issues/questions, but will not direct questions to the applicants. If a commissioner had a conflict of interest, he/she will physically step away from the table. Minutes will reflect any issues raised and a summary of reviewers comments will be made available to the applicants.

**Bell Tower Productions** - Riedel abstained from the discussion. Shafer stated that the Bell Tower Productions narrative was very well written and it demonstrated the organization's strong financial position. She also pointed out that their strategic plan identifies their goals and exhibits thinking for the future. She noted the positive outreach the Bell Tower provides to all ages and its impressive growth over seven years. Henkels agreed and spoke about how the Bell Tower has found ways to expand and grow. Kames noted that the application was well written. She noted that many of their stated goals have been met. Hemmer mentioned their dedication to young performers.

**Downtown Dubuque Cultural Corridor** – Steffen remarked that the positives of the Downtown Dubuque Cultural Corridor are the inclusion of youth performers in the Jazz series and that the organization supports working artists. She noted

that their financials were not long range but that there was a tight control on the budget. Steffen added that she would like to see more information on audiences served and on their outreach efforts. Shafer said she would like to see a strategic plan specific to the downtown cultural corridor. Riedel states she likes that they provide accessible, free arts events which are open to all and she appreciates the variety of their programs. Kames noted that they made many connections to the city's cultural arts goals.

**Dubuque Arboretum** - Henkels said the Arboretum's application was laid out quite well and provided a good connection to the city's cultural arts goals. She noted the many positives the organization provides in regards to community pride but felt it's a bit of a stretch to fit well as an arts and culture organization. Riedel mentioned the fact that Arboretum is a tourist attraction—with 130,000 people visiting each year and how the organization is working toward having an administrator there that will help them there all the time. O'Rourke said she liked that they work with other groups but mentioned that their goals were "physical" and would like to see commitment to incorporate arts in this beautiful space. Shafer recommended the organization provide an action timetable, a clear plan for the future, and lay out the steps necessary and how they'll achieve those goals.

**Dubuque Arts Center**- O'Rourke spoke of the organization's positives in designing programs that are in line with the City's goals and their innovative ideas for the future. Hemmer felt that the organization was trying to do too much and that there is some duplication of services. He recommended the organization narrow their focus. Steffen stated there may be some opportunities for partnerships, such as partnering with Dubuque Main Street for monthly art walks. Henkels remarked on the incredible amount of things the Dubuque Art Center is doing but suggested they need to focus. Kames questioned the organization's stability. She noted their current initiatives are not in their strategic plan. She complimented them on their energy and enthusiasm. O'Rourke recommended more specifics be included such as participation figures. Riedel questioned whether the organization can sustain their programs if grants are not received. Kames and Henkels agreed that there was not enough information.

**Dubuque Arts Council** – Hemmer abstained from the discussion. Kames commended Dubuque Arts Council for their multitude of excellent programs, educational role, and exemplary management, and how they've long served the community. She mentioned their progressive choices of genres, large audiences, and noted that they received an Iowa Arts Council stability grant. Steffen liked how the organization looked at their target audience and then examined thoughtful ways of expanding it. Henkels remarked how the organization provides children new experiences which helps them to grow. Riedel spoke highly of the fact the group is reaching 20,000 students annually and 12,000 citizens attended concerts. Shafer remarked that the organization has done a great job addressing challenging economic times and noted their phenomenal job of moving forward and making a big impact.

**Dubuque Chorale** – Hemmer spoke of the organization's demonstrated record of excellence, modest but realistic financial document. Steffen liked the outreach the organization is doing and how the Dubuque Chorale provides the community an opportunity to perform. O'Rourke recommended the organization be more specific in addressing how they further the City goals. Riedel questioned what the mission was of the organization. Shafer stated that it is commendable that they've establish an endowment.

**Dubuque County Fine Arts Society** - Steffen abstained from the discussion. Riedel complimented the organization for trying to bring art to the community in a variety of venues and spoke highly of the annual Dubuque Fest which is such an

asset to the community. She recommended the inclusion of participation figures. She noted Arts Trek, the Elisha Darlin award, and the One Act Play. They provide affordable, accessible programs. O'Rourke suggested they provide more specific data on attendance figures, participation, and impact. Hemmer questioned whether the organization had a building and was informed that the building was sold. He then asked the commissioners where this was listed in the assets. Shafer said this was an issue that needed to be addressed and asked staff member Jerelyn O'Connor to research this. Shafer also noted that the organization needs to take a look at their long range plan and how they're going to accomplish those goals.

**Dubuque County Historical Society** – Shafer made comments on the organization's impact on the community and its standard of cultural excellence. They have demonstrated leadership through accreditation and are a Smithsonian affiliate. She also noted their Everyone's Museum Program as positive in improving access to the museum. Hemmer stated he thought the City should fund the Historical Society directly. Riedel said the organization was Dubuque's biggest tourist attraction. Steffen liked their long range plans and O'Rourke liked that the organization networks with national partners. Riedel also mentioned how the economic impact of the Historical Society rolls into other businesses.

**Dubuque Museum of Art** – Steffen abstained from the discussion. Hemmer commented that the museum has a good future plan that's concise and realistic. He complimented the organization for its accessibility to everyone with free admission and the wonderful plans they have for the coming year. Henkels is enthused about the new leadership and Shafer applauds the organization for continuing on a path toward the future while acknowledging its past history in Dubuque. O'Rourke questioned why their budgeting for a deficit operation and questioned bank charges included in their financials of \$6,700. O'Rourke asked that O'Connor address this issue with the organization. Kames had questions about the organizations strategic plan since it ended in 2011.

**Dubuque Symphony Orchestra** - Steffen complimented the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra for the diversity of their programming but feels the organization could do some further exploration to reach the underserved. She applauded their work on an endowment campaign and appreciate their participation with school age children. Kames noted how well written the narrative was and Shafer added it could be a model to other applicants on how to complete the application.

**Fly-by-Night-Productions** - Compliments were given to the organization for the fact that its run entirely by volunteers and how the organization has been able to provide the community with edgy performances for 28 years. The commission recommended that Fly-By-Night connect the mission statement with goals and state figures in regards to how many people attend performances. Henkels mentioned that that organization is sustainable in that they keep themselves going with sheer love of theatre. Steffen said its remarkable how Fly-by-Night understands its niche and commends them for addressing some outreach efforts this year. Riedel added that the organization does creative projects no one else does. O'Rourke stated that the organization offers artists and directors to be able to stretch—with no fear of failure.

**Grand Opera House** – Paul Hemmer abstained from participating in the discussion. Kames noted that the Grand Opera House has strong leadership and is keeping its mission with the City goals. The organization is looking at needs in the community. The theatre itself is fabulous. O'Rourke said the leadership is progressive and creative and complimented the organization's variety of entertainment. Riedel noted that the Grand Opera House projected an \$80,000 budget increase but questioned the plan of action required for that to happen.

Shafer added that the economic impact of the organization is very large and the quality of shows and productions is outstanding.

**Colts Drum and Bugle Corps** – O'Rourke complimented the organization for addressing financial challenges—cutting back on travel and hosting events in which the organization can make money—as well as the ideas the organization has to generate funds. It's an outstanding organization dedicated to youth and music and competitive excellence. Riedel questioned the organization's budget as to why it reflected a financial loss rather than breaking even. Hemmer pointed out the increase in gasoline prices and offered this as a possible reason for a loss of funds. Hemmer noted their exceptional leadership and outreach in challenged neighborhoods. Henkels appreciated that they noted how much of their budget is spent locally. Commission asked O'Connor to research the commission's history on funding the Colts.

**Northeast Iowa School of Music** – The Northeast Iowa School of Music received positive comments on its clear mission as well as for its history of success. O'Rourke recommended the organization provide information on their figures, such as the number of students and the number of people attending events. Steffen remarked that she liked the creativeness behind their fundraising and how they've allowed everyone the ability to contribute.

Commissioners finalized their scoring sheets. Scores from each applicant were read aloud and tabulated.

FY 11 Operating Support Funding	Scores							Score
	Hemmer	Henkels	Kames	O'Rourke	Riedel	Shafer	Steffen	
Bell Tower Productions	87	97	91	95	Abstain	100	92	93.6
Colts Drum & Bugle	100	97	88	96	85	92	82	91.4
Dubuque Arboretum	99	85	81	83	94	89	82	87.6
Dubuque Art Center	81	78	61	80	80	93	84	79.6
Dubuque Arts Council	Abstain	97	97	95	93	95	86	93.8
Dubuque Chorale	100	87	73	78	85	84	80	83.9
Dbq County Historical Society	100	100	94	91	100	100	90	96.4
Dubuque Fine Arts Society	88	87	86	91	85	85	Abstain	87
Dubuque Main Street Ltd.	91	83	84	96	95	85	77	87.3
Dubuque Museum of Art	95	95	90	89	95	100	Abstain	94
Dubuque Symphony	100	98	98	96	100	100	90	97.4
Fly by Night Productions	91	91	94	85	90	90	91	90.3
Grand Opera House	Abstain	92	83	97	95	93	89	91.5
N.E. Iowa School of Music	92	93	89	82	90	93	86	89.3

Consensus of the commission was to have staff prepare some funding scenarios and commission will finalize funding recommendations at the next meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Geri Shafer informed the Commission that the City Council did not approve the two budget requests to 1) increase funding for the Arts Coordinator position from 10 hours a week to 20 hours a week and 2) to increase the operating support funding by 10%, or a \$20,000 increase. Shafer advocated that the Commission continue to communicate to Council the importance of the arts to the community.

O'Rourke stated that the weekend ballet audience participated in the Economic Impact Study by completing audience surveys and she was impressed by how much people

spent in an evening. Steffen suggested local restaurants provide an economical special to those planning to attend an arts event. O'Connor informed the Commission that 250 surveys will be submitted quarterly. The economic impact study will be not be completed until 2012.

**INFORMATION SHARING**

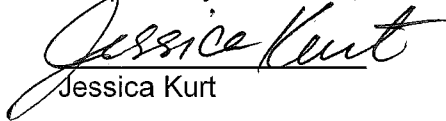
Shafer informed the Commission that City Council unanimously approved the commission's recommendation that the Bee Branch Parkway project integrate permanent, functional public art.

Shafer also updated the Commission that Lynn Sutton was appointed to fill the vacant Fourth Ward City Council seat. Shafer said she intended to write to Sutton to introduce herself and the Commission.

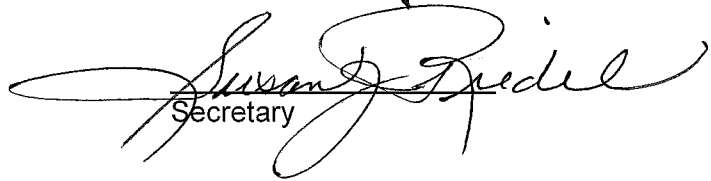
**ADJOURNMENT**

Riedel moved and Hemmer seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:42 p.m. The next meeting will be held on April 26.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jessica Kurt

These minutes were passed and approved on April 26, 2011

  
Secretary