

## **Napa County Arts & Culture Commission (NCACC) • Meeting Minutes**

January 15, 2009 (4-6pm)

Villagio

6481 Washington St. • Yountville, CA 94599

**Commissioners Present:** Chair, Lee Block (Napa), T Beller (At Large), Judith Caldwell (Yountville), Yvonne Henry (Calistoga), John Lail (At Large), Diane Damé Shepp (Napa County), Sue Wollack (St. Helena)

**Staff Present:** Michelle Williams (MW), Kate Demarest (KD) (ACNV)

**Absent:** Debra Lee Hodge (American Canyon), Margrit Biever Mondavi (At Large),

**Public:** Kerry Smith

**4:20pm: Meeting Called to Order** following Mary Crow's presentation of the Villagio's Fine Art and Music program

**5:50pm Meeting Adjourned**

### **Public Comment**

Kerry Smith (KS), Napa resident and artist, provided an update on the zoning difficulties for artists in displaying and selling their work as well as finding a location for a studio. LB reported that he met with Chris Kay of the County of Napa but the results were discouraging. It is virtually impossible to make any major change to zoning. Obtaining a use permit to allow an exception to the normal zoning is not a possibility. Changing zoning requires changing the general plan, which is very difficult.

KS noted that the Vintners Association's website lists 42 wineries that display art. Unfortunately, zoning restrictions preclude them from selling art. KS summarized the situation by saying that "If you want to sell art, you go somewhere else but if you want to show it, this valley is an ok place to show."

KS noted that county representatives refuse to give specific answers to questions. It is her impression that the employees are encouraged to discourage people seeking information. KS observed that there is a segment of the population that is just ignoring the zoning regulations when establishing their studios and selling their art. The county indicated that they weren't aware of any such illegalities.

TB believes the NCACC needs to understand what other communities are doing in this regard before the Commission can make a reasonable recommendation. LB recommended that the NCACC invite someone to attend a future meeting to discuss this. TB suggested initiating a discussion with Richard Mendelson (RM) to identify individuals who may be able to help. JL observed that RM has been in the valley long enough to have a good understanding of how the situation has evolved. LB will contact RM to see if he could speak with the commission or could recommend someone else who would be appropriate.

LB requested that this issue be added to the agenda for next month. In the interim, he recommends that all the Commissioners think about this issue beforehand. He noted that this is a matter of public policy, which is the focus of the NCACC.

JL requested that ACNV email a copy of KS's handout to all the Commissioners.

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the December 1, 2008 meeting unanimously approved as submitted.

### **IV. Discussion of NCACC Relationship with NCTPA Led by DDS**

Met with Jim Krider (JK) who is president of the NCTPA, a city councilman for the City of Napa and an ACNV board member. DDS noted that the NCTPA has a new ED, Jim Price. JK indicated that he is very aware of the NCACC's dilemma and the frustration inherent in working (or not working) with the NCTPA. Although DDS could not tell whether this was a personal or official position, she indicated that JK does not feel that the NCTPA is not the proper place for the NCACC. JK indicated a desire to work with the commission and a willingness to go to the board of supervisors to lobby to reposition the Commission as an

independent commission under the county. JK did indicate that it would be beneficial for the NCACC to work with the NCTPA because that is the best way to gain access to all the mayors, city managers etc. JK recommended that the commissioners identify a strategy on ways to educate the board of supervisors about what the NCACC is. JK committed to talking with Bill Dodd to discuss with him the importance of the commission and his recommendations as to where the commission should be positioned. DDS and TB discussed the relationship and distinctions between ACNV and the NCACC. She observed that some people don't understand why a separate commission is needed when there is already an active arts council in existence.

MW commented that the original plan was for NCACC to be a county commission. At that time the supervisors were very positive about that positioning. The staff, however, made a different recommendation, which the supervisors followed. One important item in making this change is to work directly with the supervisors so that they are driving the issue and not the staff. TB noted that a major stumbling block could be the county budget and the need for staffing to attend meetings etc.

Summary of actions: Contact JK to find out the status of his contact with Bill Dodd and the supervisors. LB, TB and DDS will meet with JK based upon his availability. DDS recommends that, once a strategy is determined, the entire commission should be involved in the advocacy work. SW recommended a session to review the earlier research of commission structures in other locations so that the commission can develop a unified message.

## **V. Public Art Discussion Led by Michelle Williams (MW)**

### **A. ACNV Outreach Sessions**

MW reported that several outreach meetings were scheduled at the City of Napa's request. The first was this morning to the Legislative Action Committee of the Napa Chamber of Commerce. MW felt the meeting was as positive as it could have been. The attendees were interested in ways to make the ordinance work and had suggestions that would make the program innovative.

LB noted that the discussion was spirited and that one major concern was the funding mechanism and the fact that one segment of the community would bear the entire expense of the program. LB observed that Harry Price was a tremendous asset to the discussion. He made the point that this issue is about more than just money. Major development is now going on in earnest and it is important to decide what type of community everyone wants to live in. Now is the time to set the standard for what the end result will be.

The next presentation is to the Development Advisory Committee, which includes almost all the developers in Napa, on February 10<sup>th</sup>. On February 20<sup>th</sup> a presentation is scheduled with the Napa Leadership Council. The goal is to present to the Downtown Association in the near future. ACNV staff is collecting feedback at each of the meetings. After compiling all the feedback it will be given to city staff to use in making adjustments to the ordinance.

### **B. Proposed Timeline**

The goal is to present to the Napa City Council in April or May. MW reported that there is a new draft of the ordinance and the city has requested informal feedback from the commission within the next couple of months. MW will send the new draft of the ordinance to the commissioners along with the just-finished FAQ handout.

The city provided a matrix of the elements of the ordinance that can be used for discussion and comments. MW will send each commissioner a copy of this matrix so that it can be discussed at the next commission meeting on February 2<sup>nd</sup> at the NCTAP offices. LB requested that this item be placed at the top of the meeting agenda.

### **C. Other Public Art Discussion**

JC reported that the Council in Yountville finished interviews for the commission for parks and rec, seniors and the arts. Four new members will be added to the existing three members. A small arts sub-

committee comprised of 4-7 Yountville residents will work on public art. JC noted that the parts of the public art ordinance under consideration for Napa aren't relevant to Yountville so they will be writing a different ordinance that includes a residential development component.

SW reported that her presentation to the St. Helena City Council was very well received and they requested that she return in a few months. In the meantime, the council recommended that SW contact Planning Commissioner Carol Pool about scheduling a public art presentation sometime after late March. The suggestion was for this to be a public workshop hosted by the Planning Commission.

MW recommended coordinating calendars for this presentation along with similar events with Calistoga and Yountville.

#### **VI. Spring or Summer Poetry Festival**

LB described a poetry program for the Veteran's Park in late spring or summer. The event was pictured as a family affair on the lawn with box lunches, and music etc. It would take advantage of Gary Silva, Napa's Poet Laureate. Gary knows some renowned poets in the Bay Area that he would be willing to approach about participating. This event would elevate awareness of the commission and might generate interest from individuals who do not presently feel engaged.

The consensus of the commission is that this program doesn't fit within the commission's mission of advocacy and public policy. It could also open the door for requests from other organizations for the commission to sponsor or host events.

#### **VII. Community Cultural Center Discussion**

LB opinion is that if the building of a community cultural center is not the most prominent need for the community, it is certainly among them. He envisioned a place that would accommodate lectures and workshops, exhibitions, and perhaps a café. He acknowledged that this is a difficult time to propose a large project that costs a lot of money; however, there are a number of options for facilities that might be available for such a project. JL noted that there is now work going on in the old Sawyer Tannery. The owner is looking to create or expand live/work artist spaces in this historic location. Due to restrictions on changing a historic building, the basic building must remain unchanged. Even with those constraints, the estimated cost of renovations to just bring it up to code approaches \$5M. The owner is interested in supporting the arts but, given the cost of renovations, he is looking toward revenue generating options.

Other possible locations to explore include the Borreo building and Copia. LB asked the commissioners to think about this. He believes that a cultural center is critical to keeping the county moving forward artistically.

#### **VIII. Arts Education Update**

MW reported that the status of this program has not changed significantly. ACNV is in the process of re-granting funds to local schools and organizations. Northwood Elementary has once again received funding from the CAC for a Magical Moonshine Theatre residency. The principal at Northwood requested that ACNV invoice for the entire year because he is concerned about the potential for the matching funding from the school to be cut even though it is in the approved budget.

The VAPA-aligned teacher-training program is scheduled for late spring or early summer. ACNV's recent partnership with the Alameda County Office of Education has provided a model to be used for development of the program. This means that the current funding is adequate to allow the training to go forward.

JC requested information on the status of the arts education catalog. MW informed her that the entire catalog is available online and that, due to budget constraints, ACNV did not print copies for distribution this year.

KD explained the new accommodations now being offered to schools that are designated at Title 1 schools. Title 1 schools will not be required to match grant funds on a 1:1 basis. Instead, ACNV will work with the school to see what works for them. The goal is to avoid last year's problem with lower income schools being unable to participate because of the matching funding requirement.

JL suggested approaching the vintners about funding. He noted that they generally focus on hospital support but over the past couple of years they began expanding their focus. Programs that impact children, especially in the current economy, are being considered. ACNV has recently expanded its involvement in programs related to arts and literacy. One example is the Napa County Reads program where artists created works based on the themes of the book. The NCOE plans to work with ACNV on a permanent basis to integrate the arts every year.

Applications must be made a year or two in advance but making an application would be worth it to begin to forge a relationship with the Vintners.

**IX. Other Business**

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None

**X. Adjournment**

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Meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.