

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

March 3, 2008 (4-6pm)

Napa County Transportation & Planning Agency (NCTPA)  
707 Randolph Street, Suite 100 • Napa, CA 94559

**Commissioners Present:** Chair, Lee Block (Napa), Judith Caldwell (Yountville), Diane Damé Shepp (At Large), Sue Wollack (St. Helena), T Beller (At Large), Debra Lee Hodge (American Canyon), John Lail (At Large)

**Staff Present:** Eliot Hurwitz (NCT&PA), Michelle Williams (ACNV), Kristina Young (ACNV), and for part of the meeting, Jim Leddy (NCTPA)

**Absent:** Margrit Biever Mondavi (At Large)

### **4:00pm: Meeting Called to Order**

#### **I. Public Comment**

Member of the public in attendance declined to make any comment.

#### **II. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from previous 2/5 meeting approved.

#### **III. Discussion of Purpose of NCACC (Led by Lee Block, NCACC Chair)**

**Lee Block** stated that as a group, the Commission is still discovering its role and purpose. He recently spoke with Richard Miami (of Copia) and had gotten insight that he shared. Lee said he had been looking at the arts as rather "monolithic", as a singular "Arts in Napa Valley". However, Richard sees the "Arts in Napa Valley" in two different groups: that of the local (theater, choral groups, etc. based here in the Valley) and that of the regional (those artists and performers who are based out side of the Valley but perform or exhibit here in our venues). Richard thought that to support these two areas of the arts would require very different activities. Taking into account the fact that many of these traveling arts groups would have their own marketing and financial backing, it may be difficult for the Commission to support these regional artists and that our local money, effort and time should be spent more on the locally based arts.

**Lee Block** concluded by saying that it is important for us to be aware of regional arts, especially when they are here in the Valley by putting it on our arts calendars (in contrast to direct promotion for those who already have these resources).

**Diane Damé Shepp** said that in these beginning stages, the Commission should support all the arts happening in the Valley and then decide later how we could fund the "majors" (meaning the larger, traveling arts groups and organizations) along with local arts of all sizes.

**Sue Wollack** concurred that the group must look at the big picture and see how it all fits together.

**Lee Block** agreed and said that we indeed have a bigger role to play for the local arts, especially in terms of promoting attendance, which is not as much of a problem for the "majors".

**Diane Damé Shepp** added that the group needs to revisit the vision and purpose as it will encompass the entire county.

**Michelle Williams** added that there are many ways we can help both of these groups and that many of the "majors" need help just like every other arts organization. The Commission can support all of the arts in terms of helping to build relationships, leverage resources, and create a sense of community. She also reminded the group that the individual artists need also be considered in this discussion, as their needs and structures are very different.

#### **IV. The Mission of the NCACC (Led by Diane Damé Shepp)**

**Diane Damé Shepp** thanked Michelle for including the information on building effective boards in the packets handed out at the first meeting. She said it reminded her that even if the group has differing opinions, they will come together with a great mission statement. She proposed that the group revisit the mission statement that the group created during the previous meeting along with the revised version that Lee wrote.

#### **Original Mission (as written on 2/5/08):**

Provide vision and leadership that creates an atmosphere in which the arts can flourish and inspire Napa County citizens to recognize the arts as integral to the well being of our community.

#### **Lee Block's revised version:**

The mission of the Napa County Arts Commission is to facilitate those public policies that enable the arts in all their diversity to flourish, to make the arts accessible to the general public, and to encourage the community at large to enrich their lives through the arts.

**Lee Block** explained his amendments. He said that he sees the mission standing on three legs: 1) the arts community, 2) the community at large, and 3) the political bodies. He looks forward to the time when the Commission can be involved in creating regular public funding through the Board of Supervisors.

**Diane Damé Shepp** agreed that this body should be an advocate for some kind of policy, and "the sooner, the better." She prefers the term "advocate" over "facilitate".

**Diane Damé Shepp** said she pulled out "key words" from the by-laws including: advisory, liaison, making recommendations. Show noted that "advisory" is used many times.

**Debra Lee Hodge** said she thought the by-laws spoke more the to political community, not to the arts community or the at large community.

**Judith Caldwell** recommends adding the term "support", She added that she wanted to warn against this group enforcing, or policing the arts in any way.

**Lee Block** underlined the fact that he wants the mission statement to have a sense of action, not passive where the Commission is waiting for good things to happen in the arts community. He doesn't see the Commission as being political, rather an advocate to weigh in on issues to the political bodies.

**Judith Caldwell** said that the Commission can inspire, support, be supportive in the action without bringing in the government or activism, and leave out anything esoteric.

**Diane Damé Shepp** said that although the Commission is not part of the government, they are in some ways; and that down the road, they will be going to governmental bodies and encouraging them to create some kind of funding program to support and inspire the arts.

**T Beller** asked for clarification, saying if the group works to identify, develop, and perhaps help implement we would be affecting policy, or will encourage and support arts advocacy. These are commitments versus, objectives. She said the discussion was getting away from the mission; these are more goals, which will be fleshed out beyond the mission.

**Sue Wollack** said that by using the words "vision and leadership", the mission will be "active".

**Diane Damé Shepp** stated that she wants to keep the word "integral" since it speaks to the economic piece without specifying what kind of support the Commission will be able to give.

**T Beller** suggested using the word "residents" instead of "citizens".

**Sue Wollack** said that "citizen" sounds more responsible.

**John Lail** asked if there was reason to run it by someone, down the road. He explained that this kind of review by a third party may be important in creating a mission that is not inadvertently inflammatory in some way. He suggested that the Commission may need to protect against any future potential legal problems.

**Diane Damé Shepp** said by-laws are a legal document designed to give structure to an entity and asked if the Commission should pass the final bylaws by a lawyer.

**Eliot Hurwitz** said that yes, the NCTPA staff lawyer will review the bylaws.

**Debra Lee Hodge** asked when they will be ready for the public.

**Diane Damé Shepp** suggested adopting a mission immediately, and then revisit it and change it down the road.

**Judith Caldwell** said that the mission also needs to include the human element, whether we use the word 'citizen', 'resident'.

**Michelle Williams** asked how or if the visiting artists would be included at this stage.

**Lee Block** said that the mission needs to anchor it in the community. He further suggested that Diane work on the mission statement some more between now and the next meeting. He asked everyone to also please make comments and bring them to the next meeting.

**Diane Damé Shepp** said she will work on it and email it out to everyone.

**Debra Lee Hodge** likes the phrase "the arts in all their diversity".

**Lee Block** asked about the inclusion of public policy.

**Diane Damé Shepp** said that will fit with the objectives the Commission writes (after they finalize their mission).

**T Beller** suggested the use of a facilitator to help the group get clear on goals & objectives.

**Lee Block** reminded the group that there is no funding for this and believed the group was capable of doing this work on its own.

**Judith Caldwell** noticed that even with differences that may exist amongst the group, that everyone is interested in the best for the group.

#### **V. Introduction of Jim Leddy**

**Eliot Hurwitz** introduced Jim Leddy, the Executive Director of the NCTPA.

**Jim Leddy** said he appreciated the commitment shown by the members of the Commission. He also pointed out the current local art exhibition at NCTPA, explaining that "we are trying to model behavior". He also thanked Michelle for working on bringing the Commission together.

Jim Leddy then left the meeting.

#### **VI. Logo Update (Led by T Beller)**

Since the last Commission meeting, **T Beller** said she met with Lee Block. They discussed the importance of branding and creating an graphic identity for the Commission. They looked at business cards samples that T has collected. T believes the Commission needs a business card, and the rest of the commissioners agreed. However, there is no budget for designing or printing.

**Diane Damé Shepp** said the Commission needs a logo that speaks to who they are and what they do. The Commission needs business cards to give out when they are presenting to City Council, attending conferences outside the valley... and that the Commission also needs to preserve the perception that we are more organized than they may be.

**Judith Caldwell** suggested using Tony Austin, of the Austin Design Group and said that the Commission needs to be careful about choosing art for the logo, so all disciplines are represented.

**T Beller** suggested creating a single, elegant image that makes a statement that serves as a symbol of the arts.

**Debra Lee Hodge** showed some draft logo sketches that she had started to work on.

**T Beller** also reminded the group that the new Commission logo needs to work with but be nothing like the ACNV logo.

**Sue Wollack** asked about the budget for this.

**Debra Lee Hodge** offered her services for free and said she has a relationship with a printer who could give the Commission a discount.

#### **VII. By Laws (Led by Lee Block)**

(The current by-laws and Lee's comments on them were passed out to each Commissioner.)

**Lee Block** said he wants the Commission to be an 'active' group that makes plans and does not just discuss issues.

**Judith Caldwell** called it a "forward moving body".

**Lee Block** asked the group for their feedback on the current language used in the bylaws. "Can we shorten them? Change the thrust? Use different words?"

**T Beller** agreed that the Commission is an activist group. She suggested that the bylaws can be condensed as there are many duplications.

**Lee Block**, said his recommendations were based on phrasing and word choice. He gave several suggestions to address the fact that he found some of the language this "too passive, duplicative, and sometimes too wordy." (below: original by-law in blue, Lee's suggestions follow each)

From the items listed under Article #2, Objectives:

- Recommend promotion and expansion of public awareness of and access to the highest quality arts and arts opportunities possible. Change to: "Recommend promotion of public awareness of and access to the highest quality arts and arts opportunities possible"
- Recommend fostering, promotion and marketing of the arts and culture programs for residents and visitors of the Napa Valley. Change to: "Foster the promotion and marketing of the arts..."

**Eliot Hurwitz** said that the by laws need to define the Commission's relationship to the body to whom they are empowered as an advisory body. The bylaws state that the Commission "will recommend" to the assembled form. He recommended that the group keep that in mind.

**Diane Damé Shepp** said that the key word is "advisory".

**T Beller** requested an organizational chart, to clarify how activist the Commission can be.

**Diane Damé Shepp:** said the Commission is a 'primary advisory body', but it can 'promote' by advocating.

**John Lail** added that the Commission can also promote deals with marketing.

**Lee Block** said that in the by-laws, the first 4 items listed under Article 2 include the term "recommend".

**Diane Damé Shepp** said that the NCTPA sees the Commission as a recommending body.

**T Beller** asked for clarification about being a body who makes recommendations as opposed to being an active group who implements these recommendations.

**Judith Caldwell** said she wants to protect the commission and delete any words with negative connotations. She sees an overuse of the word "actively" in Lee's suggestions.

**Lee Block** asked about the word "encourage".

**Judith Caldwell** said that term would be ok.

**Michelle Williams** suggested for Article 2, Item #1: To 'actively' assist in the promotion (and expansion of public awareness of and access to the highest quality arts and arts opportunities possible.)

**Lee Block** asked everyone to take the by-laws home home and make their own revisions.

**Diane Damé Shepp** suggested that the Commission need simplify this list (of items in the by-laws) to get clear on who the Commission is and why it exists.

**Eliot Hurwitz** said the by-laws should define the scope of activities, what the Commission is charged to do by the charter.

**Judith Caldwell** brought her edits to the bylaws. She said that with the by-laws, they only need to delete four words about 'highest level' and the word 'actively'.

(From Lee's revisions: "Actively encourage the development and implementation of programs in the arts and culture as authorized by the County and Cities." [Original Language from by-law: "Make recommendations, and assist in the development and implementation of programs in the arts and culture as authorized by the County and Cities."](#))

**Eliot Hurwitz** asked Judith to clarify if she was speaking about the original by laws or Lee's comments, reminding the group that any revisions to the by-laws will have to be officially adopted.

**Lee Block** restated that the group should take all these new suggestions home and work on them over the next month.

**Michelle Williams** asked if we should form a committee to work on this. The group said no.

**John Lail** said if they haven't finished it by next time, then we can form a committee.

**Diane Damé Shepp** asked about the use of the word 'committee' instead of 'commission' in the by-laws.

**Eliot Hurwitz** clarified that technically this is a committee. Under the NCTPA bylaws, the Commission is a committee of the NCTPA, just as the 'Joint Powers Authority Forum' was established as one of the committees of the NCTPA. Let this document (the bylaws) be what it is: a legal document explaining responsibilities and structure; not public communication.

**Diane Damé Shepp:** "Under 'Qualification of Terms', Article #3, the need to add 'resident of Napa county'."

**Diane Damé Shepp** (referring to #3 in Article 4, 'Membership Withdrawal', which states, 'Membership may be withdrawn for any of the following reasons at the direction of the NCTPA Executive Director: #3. If the member does not reside in Napa County. '), said she would like to take out the negative language and rephrase it to say 'the member must be a resident of Napa County'.

**Eliot Hurwitz** said that this may still need to be in this section too.

**Diane Damé Shepp** said that the phrase 'each will have one vote' is stated in both Article 3 and Article 6, making one of them redundant.

**T Beller** (referring language in [Article 3, 'Composition - Qualification & Terms](#) which states, 'It is strongly recommended that each Commissioner either practices in the field of architecture, visual arts, performing arts, public art, literary arts, art history, historic preservation, arts administration, or has a demonstrated knowledge of and appreciation for cultural and artistic activities.') said that they need to include language to encourage the (participation of the)

business community. This is covered with 'demonstrate appreciation', but not just artists or people directly involved (in the arts) should be included.

**Diane Damé Shepp** said that the Commission can form ad hoc committees based on NCTPA's by laws and that the Commission falls under the Brown Act.

**Eliot Hurwitz** clarified the Brown Act, explaining that if you have more than a quorum (5 members in the case of the Commission) present at one time, then you will have to fulfill all the formal meeting protocol (with an agenda, minutes, etc.)

**Diane Damé Shepp** said this type of structural explanation to go under 'Officers and Duties' (Article 5). She also asked about the ACNV support staff.

**Lee Block** suggested they could generate an article to address this.

**Michelle Williams** said she is fine with whatever language or additions that makes the structure as clear as possible.

**Diane Damé Shepp** asked for explanation of the last paragraph of Article 5, 'Officers and Duties' (which states: [The Chair or an appointee delegated by the Commission may make presentations to the NCTPA Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors at milestone points in various projects or when the Commission as a whole has identified items and directed that such a communication occur.](#))

**Eliot Hurwitz** said the chair or another appointed person could report on activities to the NCTPA Executive Director or the full NCTPA.

**John Lail** asked if this could be a member of the commission? Eliot said yes.

**Diane Damé Shepp** noted that Arts Council Napa Valley is incorrectly identified (in Article 6, 'Meetings') as the 'Napa Valley Arts Council' and the by-laws need to be changed to reflect the current name. She also asked Eliot to go over benefits the current Commission structure.

**Eliot Hurwitz:** Every official representation of the Commission needs to be approved by the Commission as a whole; for example, members of the Commission wouldn't represent government officials to the public without NCTPA board approval.

#### **VIII. Poet Laureate (Led by Michelle Williams)**

**Michelle Williams** gave some background about the Poet Laureate (PL) program: Arts Council Napa Valley (ACNV) began this program about 5 years ago with the involvement of Brad Wagenknecht and the Board of Supervisors. ACNV is now reinvigorating the program and wants to appoint a new poet every 2 years. She presented the program guidelines, and also ACNV would also like to appoint a 'Junior' Poet Laureate every two years. She asked how and if there was a way to involve the members of the Commission – anything from helping to spread the word, to possibly having members participate in the selection panel. ACNV is currently accepting nominations, then the panel will choose and make a their recommendation to the Board of Supervisors who will then appoint the new Poet Laureate in May.

**Diane Damé Shepp** asked how this program fits in with the Commission structure, in terms of the Board of Supervisors.

**Eliot Hurwitz** expressed concern with this after the previous by-law discussions, and said that the Commission is advisory, and that he was unsure if the Commission could have a role in this.

**Diane Damé Shepp** asked if the Commission may better serve as a 'stamp of approval'.

**Eliot Hurwitz** said that because the PL is a county program, they may discuss it as an info item, but it may not be appropriate work for the Commissioners.

**Judith Caldwell** concurred and said if the Commission follows the mission and bylaws, then they can recommend, facilitate, and foster this program. She may present the idea of the PL, to the board of the White Barn in St. Helena because I know they want to support the program, but not as a Commissioner.

**Eliot Hurwitz** said members could do that kind of work as individuals, but as Commissioners.

**Lee Block** asked if it would be more appropriate to make a recommendation about this to the NCTPA.

**Eliot Hurwitz** said yes, that the Commission could present your recommendation to the NCTPA and say, "We have met as a Commission and we would like to ask this assembled body to recommend x."

**T Beller** asked if something as simple as this gets this complicated, how would the Commission be different as a county commission vs. a committee of NCTPA? She also asked why this group is part of the NCTPA and not a County Commission.

**Diane Damé Shepp** asked, given the constraints, how the Commission can be effective.

**Eliot Hurwitz:** said that no commissioner will represent NCTPA without direction of the agency itself or the director of the board.

**T Beller** said that after 4 years of working to create this commission, that political decisions were made around how the Commission was to be structured, and that it is important for the Commission to understand the issues around the decision.

**Diane Damé Shepp** said she was appointed and sworn in by the Board of Supervisors.

**Eliot Hurwitz** said that Diane was actually only nominated by the Supervisors, and appointed by the NCTPA.

**Michelle Williams** suggested that the poet laureate program could be used to see how the NCTPA/Commission relationship will work.

**Eliot Hurwitz** said that the Commission is asking all of the elected officials, all city councils to make an official recommendation, if it is taken to the NCTPA. If the Commission would like to bring the laureate program to the Commission, the NCTPA would have to be the deciding body.

**Michelle Williams** asked if everything addressed by the Commission has to pertain to every other jurisdiction? If so, the Commission will be hamstrung. The cities have different city specific issues.

**Eliot Hurwitz** gave example of the way the NCTPA will work with individual cities on a climate control program by working with the cities one at a time. Another example is the public art ordinance (currently under consideration by the City of Napa). ACNV could go to the individual cities, make presentations about the ordinance in Napa (after it is passed), and then the

Commission could make recommendations as a whole. Individual projects, such as galleries, etc., may not be the best use of this body. Members of the commission cannot sit on panel as an official Commissioner. However, members could ask permission of the NCTPA Executive Director, if they want to speak for this body as a whole.

**Lee Block** stated that there will be no solution tonight and that the group needs another meeting to continue this discussion.

**Judith Caldwell** asked about the Brown Act.

**Eliot Hurwitz** confirmed that Commission members are not allowed to have any off the record discussions as a body. At any meetings of members (outside of official meetings) there must less than 5 members present. The implication is that any deliberations of this body must be on the public record.

**Michelle Williams** brought the discussion back to the Poet Laureate program and asked the members to please help spread of the word as citizens (not as Commissioners). She said that ACNV will bring the results of the recently completed county-wide arts education study to the next meeting.

#### **IX. Other Business (Led by Lee Block)**

**T Beller** said that Tom Fuller has offered to write a press release about the Commission. There has been a lot of interest in the Bay Area about this important step forward for Napa Valley. However, this might be premature at this time. It is something to follow up on later. **Lee Block** wants Michelle Williams' input in this.

**Sue Wollack and John Lail** said they wanted the mission finalized before press went out.

#### **X. Next Meetings**

- The Commission meets the first Monday of the month at 4pm.
- The NCTPA Board meets the third Wednesday of the month at 2pm. All commissioners who have not yet been presented to the board are asked to attend: Sue Wollack, Debra Lee Hodge, Margrit Biever Mondavi, & T Beller.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:55pm.