

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

May 5, 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), Yvonne Henry (Calistoga), Debra Lee Hodge (American Canyon), Diane Damé Shepp (Napa County), John Lail (At Large), Margrit Biever Mondavi (At Large), Sue Wollack (St. Helena),

Staff Present: Michelle Williams (ACNV), Kate Demarest (ACNV)

Absent: T Beller (At Large), Eliot Hurwitz (NCT&PA)

4:00pm: Meeting Called to Order, Adjourned 5:35

I. Public Comment

No members of the public were in attendance.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the April 7, 2008 meeting approved as submitted.

III. Introduction of Yvonne Henry, (Calistoga) (Led by Lee Block, NCACC Chair)

Lee Block introduced **Yvonne Henry**, representative of Calistoga, to the other commissioners. Commissioners introduced themselves and welcomed Yvonne as an NCACC member.

IV. Discussion of Public Art Policy (Led by Lee Block, NCACC Chair)

Lee Block requested comments in response to the commissioner's review of the draft public art ordinance now under consideration for the City of Napa. **Lee** noted there were no objections to the ordinance at the April 7, 2008, meeting; however, external objections have arisen which need to be addressed. **Lee** offered his comments for the commissioners' information only. **Lee** is in favor of the ordinance in principle but questioned why the figure of 1% was chosen and why the ordinance is directed toward public art only. His concern was that other areas such as arts education could suffer because of this public art funding.

Michelle Williams commented that this specific ordinance is designed specifically for public art. **Diane Dame Shepp** explained that this is a tried and true program used throughout the country. Using a common approach bolsters the validity of the program for local government. This program creates a starting point from which other programs could branch out. Diane also requested input on the specifics of the ordinance. She has been working on it for so long that she can't necessarily recognize issues.

Lee Block questioned the relationship between the NCACC and the Public Art Commission that will be appointed by the City of Napa. His concern is that this approach could set a precedent and result in the proliferation of local commissions in each city. **Diane Dame Shepp** noted that the original definition of the NCACC was for the NCACC to act as the primary advisory body for arts and culture countywide. The NCACC was established to act as a liaison between the county and local municipalities and the public at large. A city commission seems to duplicate those functions.

Michelle Williams expressed her feeling that this would be good feedback for city staff to hear. Nothing is set in stone at this point and the city might reconsider the creation of a separate commission. **Michelle** suggested that a representative of the NCACC should sit on any city-based public art commission.

Michelle also noted that not everything that might be done on a city level would necessarily be covered by the NCACC. It will be important to include visual arts professionals and representatives from the public to sit on a local committee to evaluate public art proposals.

Lee Block noted that there is a lot of money involved in public art and it could be difficult politically for local government officials to address concerns from their constituents if it appears that local decisions and funds are being controlled by a countywide organization.

Diane Dame Shepp asked the commissioners for suggestions as to the best way to approach the NCTPA and local governments to discuss this and raise the issue. **Jon Lail** suggested that the commissioner representing each locale should meet with their city council to discuss this issue. **Lee Block** requested that commissioners schedule time on their city council agenda to make a report. **Diane Dame Shepp** noted that doing this on a regular basis would strengthen this body.

Diane Dame Shepp made a motion that **Lee Block** and **T Beller** represent the NVACC in discussions with the to City of Napa regarding the formation of the new city arts commission for public art. **Lee and T** will voice the concerns of the NCACC and hopefully work with city staff to create an effective structure, and let them work with them. **Diane** indicated the hope of city staff to form a separate panel for each public art project. She suggested that the city might wish to create a panel rather than a separate commission.

Michelle Williams advised the commissioners that the city staff is anxious for feedback and is willing to make changes. **Yvonne Henry** proposed that representatives advise the city councils that the NVACC will support them in any way they need.

Diane Dame Shepp suggested that the NCACC could act as an umbrella organization overseeing individual committees that would focus on a variety of issues.

Lee Block proposed a resolution from the NCACC expressing its support of the ordinance Napa is now working on. **Lee** further moved that the NCACC make a bold statement of support in public arts ordinances in principle and encourages similar programs in other cities.

This resolution was unanimously approved.

Michelle Williams sought consensus on what to present at the NCTPA meeting where the NCACC is on the agenda. **Michelle** thought that the NCTPA might be the best body to present a resolution encouraging expansion of public arts throughout the Valley. **Michelle** suggests a strategy to: 1) present the resolution in support of public art to the full NCTPA board; 2) Meet with the staff of the City of Napa; 3) Meet with representatives of other municipalities throughout the county.

Sue Wollack expressed concern about going separately to individual cities. She felt that would reduce the impact of the NCACC as a full body. **Michelle Williams** suggested that the full NCACC attend an NCTPA meeting to present the resolution. This will allow the NCAAC to reach all the mayors at one time. **Judith Caldwell** suggested that each commissioner introduce him or herself so that the representatives of each town will know whom they should speak to.

Lee Block moved to create a resolution encouraging other cities to review the Napa ordinance from a conceptual point of view and then move forward to investigate the best way to create similar policies in their area.

The goal of the NCAAC is to be supportive without being controlling. Every city wants to control its own destiny but the NCAAC could present a framework for them to build upon. **Diane Dame Shepp** suggested taking this concept to the County Supervisors as well. **Jon Lail** observed that it is important to have a plan defined in concept and to recommend to the county that it establish a similar program at the county level.

Diane Dame Shepp amended the motion to state that the NVACC resolves to encourage both towns and the county to review the ordinance and move forward in their communities.

This motion was carried unanimously.

ACNV Action Plan Discussion (Led by Michelle Williams)

At the April 7, 2008 meeting the NCACC asked to review this action plan so that the commissioners can get a clear understanding of what ACNV is doing and avoid duplication. Staff is confirming that all ACNV activities undertaken relate to at least one of the four strategic directions of the Cultural Plan. It is expected that the Action Plan will be published at same time as the Cultural Plan.

Judith Caldwell suggested two minor changes:

- 1) Spell out Arts Council Napa Valley rather than using ACNV at the top of pg 2
- 2) On Objective #5 add the Yountville Sun under local news

Michelle Williams agreed to incorporate both changes.

Lee Block voiced his appreciation for an outstanding bit of work. He commented that this is the first time ACNV has had a coherent document to help set priorities and frame discussions.

Lee Block inquired into the state of arts education in the Valley. **Michelle Williams** reported on the recent Arts Education Study completed by ACNV staff and funded by the Heritage Fund. Now staff is in the process of benchmarking Napa's statistics against other counties in California. Once this is complete a formal report will be published.

Michelle Williams also reported on her recent participation on an evaluation panel for arts education grant applications. This panel scored 80 grant applications from across the state. This experience provided **Michelle** with a wealth of knowledge that will be helpful in preparing grant applications for Napa schools and artists. All in all **Michelle** came away from the conference with a lot of ideas for ways to strengthen ACNV's program. One panel member stressed the importance of arts education as a partnership between schools and artists. She explained the need for a commitment from schools to the development of their teachers.

The commissioners discussed state funding to the schools. **Michelle Williams** reported that schools were forced to cancel programs that had been booked with Magical Moonshine because funding was not available. Even with an ACNV grant paying 50% of the cost, the funding couldn't be found. One mystery is that the state has been funding arts education in the schools but it is unclear where that funding is going. (Napa schools are funded at \$16+ per student.)

Lee Block suggested that the best way to understand what is happening is to meet with superintendents to ask where the funding is going. **Yvonne Henry** suggested that NCACC develop a list of questions to diplomatically converse with the school administrations. It could be that the funding is being used for supplies rather than artist services or, as **Jon Lail** observed, the funding could be going into the general fund rather than being earmarked for arts education. **Diane Dame Shepp** noted that the schools should have financial records that could be used to report on how the state funding was spent.

Sue Wollack would be interested in understanding how the funds are administered. Are the funds handled as a lump sum? Does the funding make it down to the classroom level? **Debra Lee Hodge** questioned whether funding is allocated at the same level to all schools. **Judith Caldwell** noted that the Gasser Foundation provides grants of \$250 directly to teachers to help with classroom expenses. **Sue** felt that the close of the school year was a good time to work with the schools to determine how well the arts education funding was administered. It could also set a precedent to request a funding disbursement report at end of each year.

The consensus of the NCAAC was that NCAAC and ACNV should meet jointly with school representatives.

Sue Wollack suggested having a number of educators in attendance as well. **Michelle Williams** commented on the positive impact that knowing that NCACC is supportive of the efforts of the schools could have on programs planned for the new school year. Michelle would be pleased to set up a meeting with school administrators and inform the NCACC of the details.

Economic Impact Study by ACNV (Led by Michelle Williams)

Michelle Williams reported on the Economic Impact Study of the arts Napa County now beginning at ACNV. The Americans for the Arts is under contract to assist with this study. The Americans for the Arts has done the largest economic impact study in the nation and, as a result, ACNV will be able to benchmark the local results against those of the nation. ACNV will create a report that will be published in much the same way as the Cultural Plan.

This study will take the remainder of year to complete and will include the following steps:

- 1) A comprehensive database of contact information for all non-profit and unincorporated arts organizations both large and small. For profit groups will not be included. (**Jon Lail** noted that some of the larger organizations might be reluctant to share their financial information.)
- 2) These organizations will be asked to complete a survey providing their financial and staffing information. The Americans for the Arts has the ability to provide this survey online. ACNV staff will follow up with non-responders.
- 3) ACNV will gather information on audiences through the use of an intercept survey. In order for the data to be truly useable 1,000 surveys will be needed from a variety of events and venues. The surveys will detail what audience members spent, how far they traveled, what their zip code is, etc.
- 4) Americans for the Arts will compile the data into a comprehensive report.

The study is now underway with **Michelle** generating the database that has all the best contact information. When the data is complete Michelle will share the list with all commissioners. This data will be sent to the Americans for the Arts as part of the study. **Michelle** advised the commissioners that, if they are interested, they could be of help in working with individual locales to gather information and generate support from the community. **Lee Block** would love to have the NCACC participate in any way the ACNV would like. He believes that this survey will provide another talking point for a presentation to each local jurisdiction and that the NCACC should work to enlist the aid of city fathers in this effort.

All commissioners advised **Michelle Williams** that they are interested in participating in the project with ACNV staff.

Design of business cards (Led by Margrit Mondavi)

T Beller and **Margrit Mondavi** have date set to meet to review and discuss the options. **Judith Caldwell** requested information on the meeting so that she can attend.

Commission Donation (Led by Margrit Mondavi)

The commissioners discussed the question of asking for a financial commitment from commissioners. **Sue Wollack** noted that while this is common for individuals sitting on the board of a non-profit, she questions whether this is a normal procedure for a public commission. **Judith Caldwell** voiced concern that the requirement of a donation could limit who could participate in the NCACC because of the problem of different economic levels. **Sue Wollack** noted that no requirement for a monetary contribution was presented to individuals applying for the NCACC. **Lee Block** voiced concern about setting a precedent for a public body.

Michelle Williams reminded the commissioners that the commission has no budget. Furthermore, ACNV has not received any increase in funding to provide staff support to the NCACC. **Michelle** hopes that this will be a funded committee but it is unclear when that might be. **Sue Wollack** stated that it is important to initiate a dialog to discuss the funding issue earlier rather than later. **Michelle Williams** suggested that the NCACC should not approach the NCTPA or local jurisdictions until the NCACC's role has been defined and accepted and the NCACC can approach government with recommended funding levels.

The commissioners agreed that the first funding issue is the cost of business cards. It was agreed that each individual would take care of his or her own expense in that area.

Other Business

Diane Dame Shepp reported that she gave the by-laws to the NCTPA last month but review and approval was put off because they had too much to do. **Eliot Hurwitz** was absent and unavailable to address the relationship of the NCTPA and the NCACC. **Michelle Williams** believes the ratification of the by-laws may be on the next NCTPA agenda. **Michelle Williams** will check with **Elliot** to determine if this schedule is correct.