

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

September 15, 2008 (4-6pm)

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

Commissioners Present: Chair, Lee Block – Napa (LB), T Beller - At Large (TB), Judith Caldwell – Yountville (JC), Diane Damé Shepp - Napa County (DS), Yvonne Henry – Calistoga (YH), Debra Lee Hodge - American Canyon (DH,) John Lail - At Large (JL), Margrit Biever Mondavi - At Large (MM), Sue Wollack - St. Helena (SH),

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

Absent: Eliot Hurwitz - NCT&PA (EH)

Visitor: James Krider, NCTPA Chair (JK)

4:05 pm: Meeting Called to Order, Adjourned 6:00 pm

Public Comment

Jim Krider introduced himself as the new chair of NCTPA. Jim was attending so that he could get a better understanding of the NCACC and the issues it is facing.

Official Business

The minutes of the August 4, 2008 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

Agenda Modification by Michelle Williams

MW reported that she had received a number of requests that the agenda for this meeting be truncated and that the focus of the meeting be the future of the NCACC. In response to these requests, MW rescheduled the Public Art presentation to the October 6, 2008 meeting.

Discussion on the Structure and Role of the NCACC

LB reported that he had a good meeting with Rob Paul, the NCTPA legal counsel. Rob was asked to provide a legal interpretation of the position of the NCACC within the constraints of the NCTPA and render an opinion of what the NCACC may do under the law. LB voiced his assessment that Rob was forthcoming and helpful, although the news he delivered was problematic.

The following are some of the general items discussed:

- Rob emphasized that the NCACC is considered a committee reporting to the NCTPA.
- As a committee, the NCACC is only a reporting and advisory body.
- The NCACC has no authority to function as an independent body and cannot take any action of its own accord.
- The NCTPA is itself a reporting body and does not have any authority to take independent action. Its sole function is to report to its members.
- In effect this makes the NCACC a reporting committee to a reporting agency.

JK described the structure of the NCTPA, which includes mayors and city council members from every city along with two County supervisors. The city of Napa has been given weighted voting to account for its high population in relationship to the population of the entire County. JK described the main charter of the NCTPA as being focused on transportation issues within the County, or, as he summarized it, "to keep the buses running".

MW commented that, as the NCACC was evolving, county staff recommended it be positioned as an NCTPA committee so that Commissioners would have access to representatives of all the municipalities. This decision was based on the fact that the NCACC will be looking at issues that have a cross-jurisdictional impact and the NCTPA is a cross-jurisdictional agency. As a committee of the NCTPA, the NCACC could affect the course of Countywide plans and help accomplish things as a group that individual cities could not do on their own. JK noted that he anticipates future committees will be created as part of the NCTPA and that the Commission is breaking new ground.

The Commissioners discussed their concerns regarding the current structure, including:

- It is still unclear how much the NCACC can actually do to affect policy in its current form
- The majority of the Commissioners stated that when they were appointed they understood that the NCACC was to be an active group and not simply an advisory body. It was noted that it could be difficult to interest citizens in serving as Commissioners if it is only a 'talk' group.
- Rob Paul indicated that not only is the NCACC banned from fundraising, in its current form it can't even accept donations. DDS observed that these restrictions will make it impossible to engage staff or even create business cards.
- The NCACC has been meeting for seven months and has rarely been able to get on the agenda for NCTPA meetings. This has caused extreme frustration because the Commissioners have not been introduced to the NCTPA and have not had the opportunity to discuss their role.
- Rob Paul indicated that the NCACC's hands are tied until receives approval from the NCTPA for anything it wants to do. If getting on the agenda continues to be an issue it will be impossible to get anything done in a timely manner.
- NCTPA staff do not have the capacity to fully liaise with the Commission. Eliot Hurwitz was assigned to be the liaison between the NCACC and the NCTPA but was only able to attend the first few meetings. The current NCTPA ED attended one meeting and that was to introduce himself. In effect there is no ongoing official contact between the groups.
- As an advisory board to the NCTPA, the NCACC will be reporting to individuals who might not even be interested in art. Given the difficulty of getting on a meeting agenda, it seems as if the arts are not a high priority of the NCTPA. This could mean that the NCACC will be charged with the task of educating the NCTPA representatives on the importance of the arts and success is not guaranteed.
- The NCACC is not being considered as integral to the development of community arts plans. For example, the public arts ordinance for the City of Napa states that Napa will create its own commission to handle the public art program. Commissioners wish to be involved in this process and have a hand in overseeing public art throughout the County to ensure consistency wherever possible. Given the current structure, Commissioners are stymied as to how they can even comment on this duplication.

The Commissioners also discussed some possible alternatives to the current structure:

- Work within the NCTPA but function at an elevated status and with an active role.
- Move out of the NCTPA to become a stand-alone County commission. However, it is unclear if the NCACC would face the same limitations and lack of authority in that form.
- Investigate the possibility of restructuring along the lines of Parks and Open Space. JK noted that this structure would eliminate the multi-jurisdictional nature of the NCACC.
- If it is impossible to perform its stated function the NCACC could cease to exist.
- Possibly creating a stand-alone non-profit commission. This would allow the NCACC to do fundraising, which is impossible in its current form. A 501(c)(3) corporation could have links to all the jurisdictions and wouldn't be precluded from evolving into a county commission in the future.

JK expressed surprise at the difficulty the NCACC has had in getting on the agenda of NCTPA meetings. He suggested that the Commission develop a mission statement to present to the NCTPA. MW noted that this was done five months ago. In fact, it was Rob Paul's review of the mission statement and bylaws that forced the issues discussed at this meeting.

JK remarked that he had anticipated that the NCACC was to be an active board. He would like to elevate the NCACC to a higher position in the NCTPA and give it more autonomy and some teeth. He is convinced that this is the time to make an impact in the arts. Remaining an inter-jurisdictional body is critical to ensuring consistency throughout the County. He reported that a new ED will be coming on board shortly and Mike Zdon is returning in the interim. This should help improve the NCTPA staff connection with NCACC.

LB suggested that it would be helpful to seek guidance in figuring the best way for the NCACC to evolve. A recommendation could then be presented to the NCTPA. Some suggestions included:

- Work with Elliot to investigate ways to become more autonomous within the current structure.
- Rob Paul has offered to work with the NCACC on legal options related to any type of restructuring.
- Approach Kathryn Reasoner or Diane Frankle to discuss the current situation. Both Kathryn and Diane have extensive experience in this area and could bring fresh ideas on how to change it for the better. If Kathryn and Diane are not in a position to help they might be able to recommend someone else. MW suggested that perhaps one or both could be invited to the next meeting.
- Schedule a Commissioner's retreat after some research is completed
- JK suggested that each Commissioner talk to their jurisdictional representative to let them know of their frustration.

A motion to initiate exploratory conversations with Kathryn Reasoner or Diane Frankle (or both) and arrange a meeting discuss options for fixing the current situation was passed unanimously.

MW will help arrange phone calls to Kathryn and Diane. TB and SW will each contact one. MW commented that should either Kathryn or Diane wish to attend an NCACC meeting, the next is scheduled for October 6th. Concern was voiced that this consultation could cost money and the NCACC has no funding.

A consensus was reached to delay approaching individual jurisdictions until after the October 6th meeting.

Election of the NCACC Vice-Chair

LB stated that it would be a disservice to the NCACC not to have a vice-chair. Although he attempts to make every meeting it is important to have a backup in his absence. DDS explained that the NCACC bylaws state that the NCACC will have a vice-chair. The bylaws state that the vice-chair will conduct meetings in the absence of the chair but does not specify what other duties might be associated with the position. MW recommended clarification of this section of the bylaws. MW reported that two Commissioners, DDS and JC, had volunteered for this position. DDS was appointed vice-chair following a closed ballot election.

Logo and Collateral Design Discussion Led by T Beller (TB)

The committee – TB, JC, MM – charged with design of the 'look and feel' of the NCACC business cards and letterhead, presented their initial recommendations. The goal was to create a simple, modern, sophisticated design that reflects an artistic group but does not highlight any particular artistic discipline. This could be achieved through the use of color and a clean, modern typeface on a neutral cream or off-white card stock. The committee recommended that any image that is used should be an abstract rendition of the Napa Valley by a local artist.

TB presented samples of cards she has received that are reflective of this style along with a graphic image of a stylized grape vine. JC presented samples of abstract images associated with the Valley as an example of what could be used on the card.

The use of an open call to artists for image selection would be necessary to avoid the problem of choosing an artist's image without competition or, effectively, using a no-bid contract. MW noted that ACNV staff does not have the capacity to coordinate such a call.

A motion to proceed with a decision at this meeting was passed unanimously.

A motion to move forward with a design was passed unanimously. The details of this design are:

- Horizontal orientation
- Personal information printed on the back of the card
- Heavy neutral or white cardstock to be decided by the committee to enhance design
- Typeface only with no image
 - Text = Napa Valley Arts & Culture Commission
 - Napa Valley in center using the color 'Luxurious Red' from the sample shown
 - Arts & Culture Commission printed in a rolling pattern, reminiscent of the hills of the Valley in burnt sienna
 - All text will include a shadow
 - Maximum budget to take artwork to final format for printing is \$2,500
 - Printing costs to be determined and will depend on the card stock used etc.
- **All work is subject to the current financial constraints on the Commission. Currently there is no budget for any collateral materials.**

Arts Education Program Update Presented by Michelle Williams (MW)

MW attended the Americans for the Arts conference and participated in a number of sessions focused on the No Child Left Behind program and arts education in general. These sessions gave MW an improved perspective on the challenges faced by school administrators and teachers. It is clear that ACNV needs to go to the schools and 1) ask how it can help in the classroom and 2) present solutions to help get arts into the classrooms.

In previous NCACC meetings the problem of arts funding in the schools was discussed. A specific example is the fact that some schools do not have even the \$150 matching funds needed to take advantage of the grant program. It was noted that CA has been providing arts funding but it was unclear how that money was being spent.

MW and DDS met with Barbara Nemko, Terry Longoria, and Christine Wedding at the Napa County Office of Education. A number of answers came out of that meeting:

- The issue might be more about time than money.
- The CA funding is not being spent because of the requirement that the funds be spent on curriculum that is aligned with VAPA (Visual and Performing Arts) State standards. Many educators not familiar with VAPA.
- Some schools don't realize that ACNV gives away money. The information is simply not reaching everyone.

Some of these issues are already being addressed:

- In support of ACNV outreach, Barbara Nemko invited MW to give a 5-7 minute presentation of the program at both the principals and after school coordinators meetings.
- MW has written a grant proposal to a foundation to create a VAPA standards training program for artists. This could take place over a 3-day weekend with, if successful, a second session being offered in the spring. The goal would be to evolve into an ongoing training program.

MW noted that the NCACC could be helpful in the arts education effort. The No Child Left Behind program has adversely affected arts in the classroom because the arts are not a focus of the federal requirements. MW stressed the need to pressure the reauthorization committee to reauthorize the program quickly but also intelligently with regards to the arts. MW will draft a letter addressing this issue with input from LB and two other Commissioners.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm