

Minutes Stoughton Arts council – October 7, 2009

PRESENT: Lynn Gifford, Mary-Carel Verden, Amy McFarland, Bill Brehm, Christina Dollhausen, Coleen Kehl, Bill Howard, Kathryn Jones

EXCUSED: John Beutel, Norma Standing, David Phillips

The meeting called to order at 8:33 a.m. Lynn Gifford moved to approve the September minutes, motion was seconded by Amy McFarland. Minutes were approved by acclamation.

David Pausch, facilitator from Arts Wisconsin led focused discussion on Mission and Goals for 2010. Summary attached.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:25 pm. Next meeting will be November 3, 2009 at 9 a.m.

SUMMARY FROM DAVID PAUSCH, FACILITATOR

On October 8 2009, I facilitated a four hour board planning session for the Stoughton Arts Council. The meeting was held at city hall and was open to the public. All but one council member attended, and there were several community members, not affiliated with the Council, who also joined the discussion. The session focused primarily on a short review of their mission and a longer working session developing specific plans for the next year.

MISSION REVIEW

We began the meeting by taking a brief look at the Stoughton Arts Council mission, and discussing whether it worked as a clear guidepost for Council members, and would it be a mission that would lead them forward into the future. While Council members had some concerns regarding the mission, in general they felt it fit their and the organization's needs. The two main issues regarding the mission were:

- The mission as it currently reads is very broad and could incorporate more specific language in the future.
- Currently, there does seem to be potential conflict in the current mission as to whether the organization's purpose is to connect artists and the community, or to promote artists.

To the second point, there was a general consensus that this potential conflict did exist, and would need to be cleaned up at some point in the future. There was a short discussion on how to do this, and whether it might be just a question of wordsmithing the current text. It was decided, however, that this sort of exercise would be better done at a different time, perhaps at a future meeting dedicated to the topic.

For the present time, the Council felt that the mission as it stands is useful in the short-term.

GOALS

The Council spent the rest of the meeting working to develop a set of goals, with actionable items, for the next year. They felt they had done well meeting last year's goals, though there were some concerns over workload and distribution of labor. There was some feeling to that too much was falling on Mary-Carel's shoulders, as well as, to a lesser extent, Henry's.

Also, there was also concern about the overall standing of the Council in the community. Was the community aware of the Council? What could be done to improve that awareness? What was the Council's role relative to other local arts promotion organizations?

The initial discussion identified several challenges that the Stoughton Arts Council faces. The Council identified the following as their primary current challenges:

- Getting "buy in" from local artists
- Getting audiences to events
- Membership and fundraising

With these in mind, we moved on to discussing what the Council's goals for the next year should be. To focus the discussion, we used an exercise where each council person was asked, using 5 "post-it notes," to submit 5 goals for the Council. They were told to try and be as specific as possible, but also to think as broadly as they liked. This allowed each member to have a voice at the meeting, while keeping them focused on the specific discussion—what would the Stoughton Arts Council accomplish in the next year.

After each Council member completed their goals, we took each note individually, read it to the Council, and ask them where it should be grouped relative to the other goals received. Through this, the Council members were able to group the goal notes into 4 broad categories: Communication, Promotion, Presence in Community and Membership.

From these categories we developed the following three general goals:

- Enhance Stoughton Arts Board communications
- Increase Membership through Building Value
- Increase the Stoughton Arts Board's presence in and around Stoughton

We then began reviewing each heading and the goals that were part of it, discard duplicates, and tabling some ideas that the Council felt were too large or not something easily achieved in the next year.

The remaining goal notes became the specific action items under each general goal.

The goals and action items are:

- 1) Enhance SAC communications
 - a. Set up Facebook page

- b. Expand membership benefits, enhance listings for members
 - c. Present to Community Affairs Committee to quantify the arts
 - d. Set up Communications Committee
 - i. Explore Isthmus opportunities
 - ii. Explore the Isthmus gift book
 - iii. Explore newsletter options
- 2) Increase membership through building value
- a. Hold three events
 - b. Email drive for membership (min 50 members)
- 3) Increase SAC presence in and around Stoughton
- a. Farmers Market table
 - b. Work to get empty store fronts open to artists
 - c. Events Action Team
 - d. Contact TAG coordinator at HS to set up volunteer program
 - e. Get logo link (membership bug) on as many websites as possible
 - f. Yahara River Show
 - g. Exhibit/Digital picture/traveling exhibit
 - h. Solicit permanent school art collection

After establishing the action items, we reviewed them again, individually. This allowed us to assign them to individuals, while having a broader discussion of whether the action items were feasible within the next year.

One of the larger concerns of the Council was the effort to increase membership. It was generally acknowledged that this should be a primary goal in the next year. It was also generally viewed that increasing membership was a prime way to increase available funds to the Council.

Monetary resources, it was clear from the discussion, were in short supply currently, and not likely to come from the city. In fact, generally among Council members, the fact that the city accepted and gave tertiary support to the Council was probably the best situation for which they could hope, at least for the time being. They also understood that grant monies could be in short supply, as could volunteers who would be willing and able to complete the necessary applications.

Given all this, increasing membership was identified as the quickest and easiest way to get more funds in the coffers, while building a base of support for the future. A fair amount of discussion, then, was given to the membership increase action item.

Some Council members felt that 100 was a reasonable goal, stating that, at least anecdotally, they felt there were that many people in the city who, if asked, would give. Others (this facilitator included) felt this number was too high, given that the Council currently had two paying members. It was brought up that a goal of 50 would be very reachable if each Council member became a paying member. There was acceptance of this idea, though not necessarily firm commitments from all Council members to do this. Ultimately, the group decided on 50 members by the end of calendar year 2010.

After the specific review of the action items, we successfully were able to assign to each item one or more Council people. They are as follows:

- 1) Enhance SAC communications
 - a. Set up Facebook page (HENRY)
 - b. Expand membership benefits, enhance listings for members (HENRY)
 - c. Present to Community Affairs Committee to quantify the arts (M-C)
 - d. Set up Communications Committee (M-C/NORMA/KATHRYN J)
 - i. Explore Isthmus opportunities
 - ii. Explore the Isthmus gift book
 - iii. Explore newsletter options

- 2) Increase membership through building value
 - a. Hold three events (AMY & ANGELA)
 - b. Email drive for membership (min 50 members) (M-C, Henry, Bill)

- 3) Increase SAC presence in and around Stoughton
 - a. Farmers Market table – CHRISTINA
 - b. Work to get empty store fronts open to artists – DAVE P & JOHN J & ANGELA
 - c. Events Action Team – ANGELA/NORMA/AMY/KATHRYN J
 - d. Contact TAG coordinator at HS to set up volunteer program – AMY
 - e. Get logo link (membership bug) on as many websites as possible – (COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE)
 - f. Yahara River Show (M-C & HENRY)
 - g. Exhibit/Digital picture/traveling exhibit – AMY/NORMA/M-C
 - i. Solicit permanent school art collection

All involved committed to completing their assigned action items, after which we adjourned the meeting.