

Hastings Arts & Culture Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday June 12, 2024 – 6:00 PM

Hastings City Hall – Volunteer Room

1. Call Meeting to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present: Commission Chair Hollenbeck; Vice Chair Read; Commissioners Humphrey, Tribe, Wagner; Staff Representative Lee

Absent: Commissioners Maner and McCoy

Also Present: Alex Menke, Hastings Economic Development Coordinator

2. Approval of Agenda

Hollenbeck requested to add the following items to the agenda:

- Recap of Google arts event calendar (see Item 5.1)
- Thrive letter donation (see Item 11.1)

Commissioner Wagner motioned to approve agenda as amended; Vice Chair Read seconded.

Motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes – May 8, 2024 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Tribe motioned to approve minutes as presented; Vice Chair Read seconded.

Motion carried.

4. Presentation by Alex Menke, Hastings Economic Development Coordinator

Menke discussed areas where economic development and the arts overlap. Currently there is not much formally in place, which he feels is an oversight because the arts community is important for cultural and economic aspects. He acknowledged the arts community needs different types of support than other types of businesses. As a first step, he will come to Arts & Culture Commission meetings as his schedule allows to stay plugged into what's going on in the Hastings arts community and help him get a better picture of what the city can do for economic development support. His goal is to observe and engage in discussion with commissioners about potential programs or initiatives that can be considered to help.

Menke said the HEDRA Board recently approved its strategic plan with no direct mention of arts. He'd like to see business support programs that directly serve artists in the way they may need through grants and loan programs.

Hollenbeck asked if Menke believes it valuable to put something into the strategic plan about the arts. He said there is a definite benefit to adding arts as a subsection to the strategic plan and having initiatives specified toward the arts community. He said some new developments have public arts requirements and spoke of such benefits for the city's Block 28 project, which is a HEDRA priority. Since the first part of the Vermillion Street Corridor Redevelopment Plan is such a public area, having a public art factor on the project would set the tone on that entire block of mixed used commercial and residential spaces. He will research public art requirements policies some cities have for

developments (some cities do X percentage of total value of property, while others do base dollar amounts based on valuations) and will work together with the commission to discuss a good policy for Hastings to formalize. Menke said as he does research, he will share information with the group for discussion. It is very important to him to use local artists and showcase the art. As Menke does this research, Read offered to provide him with cities who are doing something similar.

Hollenbeck asked about the Block 28 project timeline. Menke said construction would ideally take place in 2026, with the HEDRA Board eager to have construction occur at the same time as the Highway 61 reconstruction project. He noted the city will have a lot of input on what type of development it wants to see there since the city owns a majority of the land.

Hollenbeck asked how Menke foresees supporting artists in ways other than businesses. He stressed that's why coming to these meetings and getting further engaged with the arts community is so important for him. With more traditional economic programs, artists may not qualify because they are not in a permanent space. Revolving loans are designed for larger businesses that look at cash flows, credit checks, etc. Arts are not always consistent with these factors. He would like to consider retooling what we have or developing something new that is inclusive to people in the arts.

Hollenbeck shared that she has recruited artists in her downtown buildings and scaled the lease accordingly, as rent and lease costs are a big barrier. She suggested the possibility of using money for building owners to offset some of the rent costs, such as a scaled 5-year lease, with increments set in the lease as it matured. Menke likes the idea of providing reimbursement toward building owners or perhaps a property tax credit. He said the city is beginning its budgeting process soon and explained that next year's budget is tight because of the imminent need of building PFAS water treatment plants. He added the option exists to repurpose existing funds for a trial basis. Hollenbeck said it's a great way to encourage artists to make art their full-time job. Read added it will also make the entire city more vibrant.

Menke reported he and Hollenbeck have spoken about the desire to use 213 Ramsey, which is occupied until November, for art classes and is happy to work with the commission to develop a proposal for the space. The city currently owns the space and because it is real estate, is looking to transfer to HEDRA ownership. The decision would then ultimately be up to HEDRA Board. Longer term the site has potential for redevelopment, and the commission could site a more permanent space if interested. Menke is wide open to ideas and discussions.

Hollenbeck asked about the Heart of Hastings Plan. Menke explained it is a long-range master plan for the greater downtown area that was last done in 2004, but a lot has happened since then – such as the Confluence, Lake Isabel Flats, and Artspace. Building and growth had to stabilize to see impacts and needs in order to get input from the folks who live and visit to determine what else is needed but currently not being serviced. Pending budget, they are looking at updating the plan. He would like to make sure the commission voices are included in that discussion.

Hollenbeck added that arts in city development has been on the commission's radar since its inception, and the commission is excited to work with Menke.

OLD BUSINESS

5. Subcommittee Updates

- a) Policy & Procedures
No updates
- b) Finance & Fundraising
No updates
- c) Outreach & Communications - Humphrey and Tribe
See Item 6 - Creative Convergence Recap

5.1 Recap of Google Arts Event Calendar (added)

Read is working to get secondary calendar access from Commissioner McCoy to help keep things moving so artists and organizations are approved to post, since it was heavily promoted at the Creative Convergence event. He is excited to get the calendar populated and ready to use in this busy season.

6. Creative Convergence Recap

Commissioners Tribe and Humphrey offered a recap of the May 9th event, which had approximately 45 attendees. Consensus was the impactful event was the best one so far. All agreed the venue was ideal as a welcoming, intimate, and private space.

Looking forward, commissioners stressed the outreach was vital and will continue to be a priority for subsequent events, and focus will be placed on certain groups who did not attend to encourage them to be more involved in the arts community.

Tribe liked the PowerPoint presentation and appreciated the time spent talking about what the commission is doing. The group gave feedback on their thoughts and experiences to consider for upcoming events such as logistics with chair configuration and concise programming, etc.

Read inquired about the survey at the event. Humphrey said there was low response turnout, and they will somehow better integrate and improve with incentives and make hard copies available versus QR codes only. There was discussion about collecting email addresses from attendees at such an event for future contact. Staff member Lee will get clarification on this.

Tribe asked about choosing a host for the fall Creative Convergence event. She will reach out to BR4R and ask if they are interested.

Hollenbeck brought up marketing for the upcoming Twelfth Night event and suggested the commission send the event flyer to their contact lists. City Communications Coordinator Skelly has posted it on the city's website and social media channels. Read will add this event to the newly created Google arts calendar.

7. Civic Arena Mural RFP Brief Update – Read

Read reported the RFP has been submitted to various organizations and posted on the city's website and is now out in the public sphere. September 1st is the due date for all materials to be submitted by artists. Read said we will probably start to receive submissions in mid-August. He will push it out via email to everyone he knows – artists who may know other artists who can share with their networks – and encouraged all commissioners to do the same.

8. Classical Actors Ensemble for June 30 – Read

Read stressed that commissioners need to market this event. He suggested posting the flyer on social media, sending it to friends, sharing far and wide. He noted that we are the only site in the southeast metro where this group will be performing, which will hopefully be a draw.

Hollenbeck asked about hosting a literature table for other arts organizations. Read will provide table, tablecloth and obtain the literature.

9. Fall Music Event (musicians in Vermillion Falls Park) – Draft name for event

- a) Performers – Read will talk to McCoy about securing performers. Wagner said she will help with this.
- b) Plein Air – Tribe said Jeremy, who was at the Creative Convergence, is happy to participate. Artist Dave Youngren has also agreed, and Hollenbeck will touch base with him. Read has not yet reached out to the University of River Falls. Humphrey will ask Sam St. John if she is interested and noted that Red Wing just did a plein air event and suggested we could reach out to those artists.

Tribe recommended commissioners come to the next meeting with suggested names for the event so marketing and communication can begin. Humphrey offered to create a flyer once a name is secured for the event.

10. Electrical Box Update – Roadside Park

Hollenbeck shared information that artist Jessie Eckroad provided for the electrical box painting project including a project plan, images that represent what she is envisioning, and questions for the commission and city. The project includes a paint-by-number concept where Eckroad will draw outlines of images on the electrical box and invite the community to sign up for timeslots to paint. Even though the job was supposed to be completed earlier, community involvement makes this a better option. Suggested dates for the project are August 3 and 4. Hollenbeck will ask Eckroad to draft a contract.

Tribe suggested this event would be a great opportunity for the commission to provide refreshments in support.

Commissioners discussed the sign-up process for the event. The suggestion was made for Skelly to create a Signup Genius where interested parties can register for the event because the city is in a better position to promote and manage this. Tribe suggested Eckroad choose a backup date in case of rain and noted Signup Genius has an email function that would be able to handle that change should it arise. Hollenbeck will speak with Skelly about this undertaking.

Hollenbeck shared that Eckroad inquired about event signage on Highway 55. Read suggested using a sandwich board with generic "Event Here" text and asked if the Parks Department has something like that we could borrow. Hollenbeck will reach out to Paige in the Parks Department. Discussion led to continual use of such signs by the commission and purchasing branded signage. Read will contact Graphic Design to get quotes.

Read made a motion for the commission to spend up to \$500 on branded generic corrugated plastic signage and sandwich board for events. Second by Wagner. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

11. Public Art Map – Hollenbeck

Hollenbeck reported she was at a Tourism Bureau meeting where the idea was introduced to create an art walking map using Google maps with pins where art pieces are located. The commission would be responsible to provide and maintain brief text descriptions for each piece of art. They discussed the art pieces to include and whether there should be distance boundaries for the tour. It was decided the tour should include all sculptures and murals in the downtown area, as well as the Dale Lewis Sculpture Garden up the hill on Highway 42. Wagner reminded there are e-bike rentals offered at the Confluence, so we could include art that is further from downtown, like the sculptures at Linear Park located on the bike loop.

Commissioners agreed they would like to participate in this project.

11.1. Thrive Donation Letter (added) – Barb moved this before item 11.

Hollenbeck shared a letter from THRIVE announcing a \$1,500 donation to the Arts & Culture Commission as they disperse funds to other organizations that are fulfilling their mission of diversity, inclusion, and equity. She opened discussion on how commissioners may want to spend the funds to honor the way in which THRIVE wants them spent.

Hollenbeck suggested connecting with a Native American artist to paint the electrical box located under the bridge (near sea turtle sculpture) as a way to showcase symbolic Native American art, be inclusive, and generate thought and discussion around the highly visible art piece.

Another suggestion was putting funds toward the Lake Rebecca area discussed in the city's master plan. There are opportunities there as well.

12. Recap of Action Items

- Hollenbeck
 - Contact Jessie Eckroad about proposal for electrical box painting event
 - Talk with Dawn Skelly about SignUpGenius for the electrical box painting event
 - Connect with Paige about generic event sign for event on the 30th
- Read
 - Graphic Design for price quotes on signage
 - Talk with Ryan about Google calendar access
 - Email University of River Falls regarding musicians for fall event
 - Take watermark out of logo
- Tribe
 - Contact Jeremy to confirm commitment for plein air painting event

13. Announcements

- BR4R Juneteenth event cancelled
- Maker's Market tomorrow – 30 artisan members, most within Dakota County, held from 5:00-8:30. Food trucks will be on site. (Read will go and talk to vendors about Rivertown Days.)
- Twelfth Night – June 30th
- Black Dirt – Cinderella in July
- Rivertown Days – July

Humphrey said she reached out to the school superintendent about the grant opportunity commissioners discussed at the doelast meeting. The superintendent is interested in working together to pursue. This prompted discussion about the grant, which is due July 12. Because there are no specifics to sell the idea, commissioners decided to pause applying for this grant opportunity until next year when the commission will have had more time to continue to work with the school district and establish a track record for a more feasible plan. Read went through grant criteria and commissioners made the decision to table until next year (for funds to be used the following year). Humphrey suggested the THRIVE donation monies could possibly be used to fund the upcoming year's Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration at the school district.

14. Adjourn

Vice Chair Read motioned to adjourn at 7:35 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Tribe. Motion carried.

The next Arts and Culture Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 12 at 6:00pm in the Volunteer Room at City Hall.