

# Creative Capacity | Strategy Committee

March 13, 2008 1 – 2:30 p.m.

## Meeting Notes

Approximately 50 members of the committee were present. The meeting was held at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in Portland.

### Opening Comments and Introductions:

Jesse Beason, of Commissioner Adams staff began the meeting. Self Introductions were made.

Jesse gave a brief summary of action to date; including listening to stakeholders, development of an initial list of cultural needs in the region, review of national best practices and focus groups and polling on what cultural experiences regional voters want. Jesse also reviewed the charge of the Creative Capacity Committee which is to determine the cultural needs of the region and if there is enough support from the public to move forward with the exploration of regional funding options.

### Findings:

Dave Metz, from the opinion research firm Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin and Associates presented the findings from the focus group and polling results in a power point format. A summary of the findings has been attached to the meeting notes but some of the key point that Dave stressed include:

- Voters in the Portland region value the arts and see multiple benefits from them. Helping children learn, grow and become more creative is seen as the most important benefit of the arts.
- In principle, 2/3rds of voters backed dedicated funding to the arts – even funded by a tax increase of up to \$3 per month. Support is consistent across all three counties, however, slightly less strong in Clackamas County.
- The most compelling arguments for supporting dedicated arts funding relate to arts education. People reflect back to their own experience as a child and believe children should have the same opportunities. Respondents also believe exposure to the arts fosters confidence and creative problem solving which is viewed as critical in today's competitive, global economy.
- Again the numbers are consistent in all three counties and show that the strongest supporters are younger voters', women, and persons with a post graduate education. Those that are least likely to support dedicated funding include men over the age of 50 with a high school education or less.

### Discussion and Political Analysis:

Jesse Beason summarized that the polling shows great numbers but that a great deal of work is needed to communicate the most persuasive messages to the public over time. The benefits of arts and culture need to become should be something that is on the forefront of people's minds. Jesse indicated that we are years away from a ballot measure especially given the competition for funding, i.e. transportation, zoo, fairgrounds, library.

### Options For Moving Forward:

After some discussion on the poll, Kathleen Cosgrove, project consultant from Skyline Consulting Group, introduced two possible strategies for seeking funding:

1. Formation of a special arts and culture district, or
2. Funding through Metro's existing taxing authority.

Both options would require going to the voters for funding, however, creating a special district would require passing legislation in Salem and obtaining voter approval for forming a special district.

Kathleen emphasized that before pursuing any option local jurisdictions and other stakeholders would need to meet and determine what they would need in such a funding package to make it work their constituents.

**Discussion:**

Kathleen Cosgrove opened dialogue with posing the question, "Should we move forward with exploring options for funding?"

Discussion occurred around the pros and cons of each option, how the process and distribution might work if metro was used as the taxing authority and how elected officials and stakeholders would need to have detailed discussion on what should be in a funding package and how funds would be distributed.

Members of the committee enthusiastically agreed it was worth moving forward wanted to discuss what might be in such a package and how the public could be engaged in advocating for arts and culture.

Kathleen Cosgrove and the possibility of expanding state wide Cultural Advocacy Coalition to also focus on regional efforts. Alternatively a regional advocacy group could also be formed. It is important that the general public, not just the art community needs to be engaged in advocacy.

A short questionnaire was distributed asking people how they wanted to be involved moving forward.