

Creative Capacity Steering Committee

October 4, 2007 4:00 to 5:30

Draft Meeting Notes

Steering Committee Members Present

Martin Medieros, Chair; Sam Adams, Dave Allen, Chandra Brown, Elaine Calder, Brad Cloepfil, Chris Coleman, Debi Coleman, Eloise Damrosch, Bart Eberwein, Chris Erickson, Brian Ferriso, Brian Gard, Barbara Hall, Judie Hammerstad, Walter Jaffe, Bernie Kronberger, Norman King, Andy MacRitchie, Tom Manley, Debbie McCabe, Max Miller, Judy Pepler, Maria Rojo de Steffey, Tad Savinar, Dick Schouten, Steve Stadum, Nancy Stueber, Jon Ulsh, Virginia Willard, David Wynde.

Project Consultant: Kathleen Cosgrove

Project Staff: Jesse Beason, Jeff Hawthorne

Welcome and opening remarks

Portland City Commissioner Sam Adams opened the Steering Committee by welcoming the group and explaining that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss how we want to unleash the creative capacity in the Portland Region.

An Oregon Ballet Theatre video played showcasing OBT and the importance of giving to the arts.

Commissioner Adams reviewed his commitments to the Steering Committee (Power Point slides 1-3) and introduced Martin Medieros, a partner in the Swider Mederios Haver law firm. Self introductions were then made by those persons present.

Chair Mederios emphasized that the work of this committee will build on the work already completed throughout the region such as Vision PDX, the Regional Business Plan and others, (Power Point slide #4).

Project Overview

Kathleen Cosgrove, Project Consultant, presented an overview of the project including project objectives, timeline and decision making process. (Power Point slide 5-8). The time line calls for polling to be completed and preliminary findings to be concluded by late March 2008 and a final report to be out by the end of June 2008. (Handout "Meeting Schedule and Project Time Line".)

Kathleen touched on economic development strategies and social development strategies as the two primary approaches to building creative capacity. (Slide 9 and hand out "Economic and Social Capital Development Strategies.") Three studies were referenced that looked at the Portland Region

and how it compares as a creative community against other regions. (Slide 11 and handout “Measuring the Creative Capacity of the Portland Region” and accompanying studies).

A brief review occurred of some of the region’s assets and challenges. Recognition was made of an emerging cultural ethos that is beginning to distinguish the Portland region. (Slides 12 -13). Some of the characteristics that were identified in our round table discussions were vibrant creative community for sharing ideas, environmentally responsible and higher quality of life and more affordable than other creative centers.

Discussion on defining the scope – what does building creative capacity mean?

Chair Medieros began the discussion (slide 11) by suggesting that we think of creativity on a spectrum, with art on one side and science and innovation on the other side. In the middle would be a mix of the two. He asked the group to comment on where they thought the region should be its emphasis. Some of the comments were as follows:

Bart Eberwein, Hoffman Construction: Every company in Oregon competing in the global market place does so because it is innovating.

Chandra Brown, Oregon Iron Works and Oregon Innovation Council: The Innovation Council spent six months deciding on a definition of innovation. The path that the state chose to go down was based on return on investment to the public. Need to find competitive advantages and know your audience and the best way to communicate with them. What is your return on investment?

Steve Stadum, OHSU and Oregon Innovation Council: Indicated that though his preference might be for a broad definition which would include both art and science, we can’t solve every economic development and innovation issue. Funding for the arts may be in the of top five funding needs but there are other things that rank higher, when it comes to ways to stimulate science and innovation such as higher education, licensing of new technology, etc. Maybe the scope should be discussed in terms of funding for the arts if that is what we are really trying to do.

Dick Schouten, Washington County Commission: shared that the Washington County Commission wanted to support projects that are in their county. Their need is not to add funding for research and development but for local community venues.

Discussion on what do we want the outcomes to be of a creative initiative?

Tom Manley, PNCA: Need to leverage our existing assets. Invest in places that are really able to make it grow. Focus on investing in a world class design/art school.

Discussion: Consensus seemed to occur around the need for arts education in our school and recognizing art as a fundamental part of every person's education. Examples were given of the value of art education and the link to creative problems solving skills.

Tad Savinar, artist: Suggested that we should not over think trying to enhance our creative capacity and underestimate the creative capacity that we already have in the community. Build on our current assets which include our indigenous spirit – our region fosters creative thought and has a wonderful natural environment. If it comes down to resources, he agreed with Steve Stadum that a lot more resources were going into enhancing scientific and business innovation than there is for creative capacity and the arts. If we focus on the arts than focusing on arts in our schools would be a good place to start.

Ellen Calder, Symphony: Portland can afford arts organizations - it loves them - it just doesn't want to pay for them. Suggested that there is a huge public education program that would take time.

Conclusion/summary

There was agreement that people had much more to say about how to best focus our efforts to build creative capacity in the region. It was decided that a survey or response form should be sent out to people so they can add their additional comments.

Commissioner Adams reviewed the list of what would be done before our next meeting and asked the committee to think about what are the right targets for our time, money and passions.

In general there seemed to be agreement that a creative capacity strategy should:

- Start by primarily focusing on arts and culture;
- Include arts education as a fundamental part of our schools;
- Build on our current creative assets – creative and natural environment, and sense of place;
- Continue to educate the public of intrinsic value - art makes us human.

Next meeting dates

- Thursday, December 13th from 3:30 to 5:30
- Thursday, March 13th, 2008 from 3:30 to 5:30