

Creative Capacity Strategy Committee

October 11, 2007 4:00 to 5:30

Draft Meeting Minutes

Strategy Committee Members Present

Sam Adams, Jennifer Armburst, Jacques Boyreau, Eva Calcagno, Kelly Coller, KC Cowan, Sunshine Dixon, Tim DuRoche, Daniel Etra, Victoria Frey, Chris Haberman, Kimberly Howard, Ilan Laks, David Lowe-Rogstad, Heidi McBride, Mary McDonald-Lewis, Andrew McGough, Laurie Waissman, Lisa Radon, Gavin Shettler, Jonny Shultz, Bwana Spoons, Marna Stalcup, Karen Stein, Kathe Swaback, George Thorn, Minh Tran, Laurie Waissman, Wanda Wright, Mark Wubbold

Project Consultant: Kathleen Cosgrove

Project Staff: Jesse Beason, Pollyanne Birge

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.

Commissioner Adams reviewed his commitments to the Strategy Committee and facilitated self introductions by those persons present.

Project Overview

Jesse Beason, Project Staff, presented an overview of the project including the purpose, working assumptions and a brief review of some of the region's assets and challenges.

Jesse framed our regional challenges by comparing our arts funding structure with other comparable cities. Three studies were referenced that looked at the Portland Region and how it compares as a creative community against other regions. (Power Point slide 8-10 and handout "Measuring the Creative Capacity of the Portland Region" and accompanying studies). Jesse also touched on economic development strategies and social development strategies as the two primary approaches to building creative capacity. (Slide 14)

Discussion on defining the scope

Commissioner Adams began the discussion by suggesting that we think of our region's assets and challenges. Many people agreed that some of the challenges were assets and vice versa—for example: the Portland region is still relatively inexpensive for most creatives to work and live, but because it is so cheap, more people are moving here from more expensive cities, and, thus, housing/studio prices increase in this area.

Here are some salient points of discussion:

Challenges:

- Lack of infrastructure (especially in comparison to better publicly-funded cities)
- Lack of regional buy-in or perceived value to residents outside of Portland.
- Property/work space prices driven up
- Lack of Arts Education—(K-12)

Assets:

- This region is less expensive than most places to live/work—but for how long?
- Many diverse choices/options to interface with art—venues, galleries, programs
- More people moving here—potential patrons?
- Local government is on board—“We have an Arts Champion in Sam Adams”

The conversation then turned to public perceptions and ‘branding the arts’:

Discussion: A general agreement that we need to encourage new art supporters like ‘Joe six-pack’ and help grow more philanthropists ‘Daddy Warbucks’ to direct some of their contribution to the arts. The most compelling, accessible, and geographically appropriate ‘packaging’ of our region will result in the best founded support.

There was also discussion regarding the regional economic value associated to the arts: how to both analyze the limited data available and how to educate the larger public about the empirically established economic benefits of a strong arts-investing region. In short: “showing return on investment”

Mark Wubbold, Portland State University: This effort would be best served if we took cues from local best practices and ‘hitched our wagons’ to previously successful campaigns like those used in Affordable Housing and Parks funding efforts.

Bwana Spoons, Grasshut Gallery: Made reference that while local artists *can* make a living, in his experience, he sells a lot of his work out of town. What is a better way to help create local art lovers, and more importantly, art buyers?

KC Cowan, OPB-TV’s ART BEAT: Thinks this effort should develop ways to engage “Joe Six-Pack” with a message that gets to the value of art. We need a ‘silver bullet’, a big idea and a toned message to organize around.

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

Discussion: This conversation was ripe with project-related ideas like: a networking website that helped both connect artists and promote creative events/projects, artist resources for professional development/administrative support, and accessible arts education.

It was noted that such a website was currently in the works with the Portland Art Center helping facilitate.

Elizabeth Leach: Thought the 'Design Exchange' project was a great example of how to create educational resources and points of networking through hands on interaction with design examples and samples.

In general, consensus seemed to occur around the need to be focused on branding and messaging the Creative Capacity Strategy and coming to a toned message to get the best results.

George Thorn, Arts Action Research: This process is also about harnessing the vast network of arts supporters (artists, ticket holders, board members, patrons, galleries, musicians) in helping grow the resources in our community.

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.

Jesse Beason 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 the outcomes and objectives in the PowerPoint were complete as stated
- That we needed to build on our current creative assets – creative and natural environment, and sense of place;
- Educate the public of intrinsic and economic value of the creative community.

Next meeting dates

- Monday, December 3th from 4 to 5:30, Location TBD
- Tuesday, March 4th, 2008 from 4 to 5:30, Location TBD