

CITY OF LITTLETON

ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

June 11, 2020

The Littleton Arts and Culture Commission met on Thursday, June 11, 2020, via Zoom.

THOSE PRESENT: Erin Acheson
Mike Braaten
Monica Foley
Michael Hommell
JD McCrumb
Katherine McMurray
Michael Palamara

THOSE ABSENT: Kathleen Eckel
Greg Reinke

ALSO PRESENT: Tim Nimz, Library Director
Karina Elrod, Council Liaison
Fabby Hillyard, DJC & Associates
Kristi Moran, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was determined present and the meeting called to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 12, 2020 commission meeting were approved as written.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as written

4. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

There were no unscheduled public appearances

5. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Nimz asked the commission members to review the stakeholders inventory and add organizations that they want included. Revisions should be sent to Ms. Hillyard and Mr. Nimz.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Mr. Nimz discussed the library and museum reopening plans using a powerpoint presentation. Virtual programming became the top priority. Facebook, Instagram, the City's website, Littleton Report Online, The Oracle, and the Library's newsletter were all utilized to keep the public informed of various programs.

The reopening will have a preparatory stage, followed by phased reopening in three stages. Plans for reopening are guided by the Tri-County Health Department, state guidelines and information from peer museums and libraries. The timetable and staff levels will be fluid. As of now, the museum and library are in the preparatory stage. Both facilities remain closed to the public.

Mr. Nimz told the commission that plans to move into stage one will hopefully occur in July. Staffing levels will increase slightly. Farm sites and the library will open with limited hours. No onsite programming will occur. Patrons and visitors will be asked to limit their visit to one hour. There will be limits to restroom capacity, staff will wear masks and the public will be highly encouraged to wear masks as well. Cleaning will intensify, signage and arrows will indicate traffic flow. Social distancing will be practiced.

Stage two is still to be determined and at this time it is unknown when that will occur. Staffing levels will increase, and hours of service will be expanded. Small group programming will be allowed, field trips to the museum will be considered, the historic buildings will be opened, and the permanent gallery will be re-opened with modifications. Opening of the museum's gift shop will be evaluated, limited research access will be granted, and artifact donations will be accepted. Masks will be required of staff and social distancing as recommended by the state and local agencies will be adhered to.

Stage three is still to be determined with a 2021 target. Hours of operation and staffing are to be restored to pre-COVID-19 levels. The balance between virtual and on-site programming will become critical due to the loss of revenue. All mandates from the state and local agencies will be followed.

- B. Ms. Hillyard spoke about arts and culture in a time of uncertainty. She has put together a work plan through September 2020, which includes assessing current conditions, analyzing the steps needed to stabilize industry and looking at the next steps that will promote growth. She asked that the commission members expand the list of organizations and business as much as possible to ascertain what the trends for Littleton's arts and culture will look like. To achieve this, she recommended that the commission members use the proposed survey that was sent to them to find out how the commission can offer support to the local business sector. The survey might be able to provide an insight as to how businesses are doing under the impact of COVID-19.

Ms. McMurray wanted to know if the survey questions are being tailored to particular organizations. Mr. Hillyard responded that she tried to make the questions as broad and general as possible due to the uncertainty about the future of the businesses. The survey is designed to get an idea of where the businesses are in order to start to understand how we can all partner together.

Mr. Nimz stated that this is an important starting point because circumstances have altered businesses significantly in the last several months. It is important to know how COVID-19 is impacting stakeholders financially, structurally, and strategically. The commission's goal should be working through community problems that arts and culture groups might have and making recommendations to city council.

Ms. Elrod informed the commission that council is asking for variances from Tri-County Health as well as the county and state level. She indicated, as an example, that by knowing what percentages a restaurant needs to operate, council may be able to push the boundaries asking for variances.

Mr. Braaten asked when the comments regarding the survey would be due and when the survey would be released. Mr. Nimz answered by saying that time is of essence and the survey should be returned as soon as possible.

Ms. Elrod told the commission that variances take seven to ten days to reach the state level.

Ms. Hillyard said that Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) funds will be substantially reduced. As a result, it is imperative for the commission to determine where the arts and cultural groups stand and to try to stabilize things.

Ms. McMurray reported that the funds for the grant cycle for 2021 will be finalized in the next couple of weeks. Collected taxes have been substantially reduced and therefore everyone will be impacted.

Ms. Hillyard added that gaming money is down as well. She told the commission that they have challenges and that the more information they have, the more responsive they can be in building programs and creative policies that stabilize and allow for growth.

C. The Boards and Commissions dinner has been canceled.

7. COUNCIL LIASION REPORT

Ms. Elrod spoke about a potential lodging tax that was discussed by council. She explained that the tax would be added to hotels and short-term rentals. The proposal was that the revenue generated by the lodging tax would be dedicated to the support of arts and culture.

A small business grant went to about sixty businesses. As there might be some other form of grant money that might be available, Ms. Elrod explained that some of the survey information will be helpful in structuring a grant around artistic types of businesses.

Weekends on Main is a city sponsored event that will close the main street from 4:00 p.m. on Friday until 9:00 p.m. on Sunday. Restaurants will be able to utilize the street for extra seating in order to achieve social distancing requirements.

Council is looking at an art program to refresh existing murals and identify other places for creating murals.

Ms. Elrod asked the commission members to share what they have been doing during this time of uncertainty.

Mr. Hommell said that his business is considered essential. They have had an unprecedented influx of leads for landscaping and therefore are doing quite well.

Ms. Acheson shared information about the Arapahoe Philharmonic. They pivoted quickly to online programming. Musician playlist series, music connect series, recorded music and, interviews covering a wide variety of topics were created. A spring campaign was launched, and it exceeded the set goal.

Mr. Braaten spoke about Hudson Gardens and South Suburban Parks and Recreation District (SSPRD). Hudson Gardens canceled their concert series. He noted that the SCFD receipts will be impacted. SSPRD anticipated a three-million-dollar loss per month for each month of closure. After the opening of the golf courses, the loss was about one point five million per month. Golf is having a record year with nine thousand rounds played. The variances that Arapahoe County is submitting will allow the facilities to have a fifty percent occupancy when they reopen. SSPRD had to lay-off ten percent of the full-time work force and furloughed fourteen hundred part-time and seasonal staff.

Ms. Foley told the commission that Aspen Grove took a huge hit. However, forty-two of the forty-seven retailers are now open with reduced hours. The goal of Aspen Grove is to tout the fact that it is an outdoor shopping facility. The Paris Market was held with social distancing, hand sanitizer stations and availability of masks. There has been a positive response. Aspen Grove is working with the City to have a drive-in concert on June 20, 2020. Attendees will have to stay in their cars and the music will be streamed in through the car radios.

Mr. McCrumb talked about Town Hall Arts Center. There have been no staff lay-offs. Two shows and one weekend of the season have been canceled as well as classes. Refunds were issued, but there was about a twenty percent donation rate. Beginning in April, free classes were offered online. Classes are now in a paid model for online educational programming. They are anticipating being able to offer in person classes of ten or less soon. He is hopeful that a variance request or through loosening of restrictions will bring live theater to Littleton by September 1, 2020.

Ms. McMurray is anxiously awaiting the reopening of the museum. She told the commission that the virtual art exhibit is terrific.

Ms. Hillyard thought that the creative and innovative problem solving from everyone was fabulous. She wanted to know if from a survey standpoint, did pivoting to online programming work? Was monetizing online programming possible?

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Nimz had nothing further to add. He thanked Ms. Elrod for bringing the conversation concerning a possible lodging tax to council.

9. ROUNDTABLE

The commission members had nothing further to discuss.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. The next meeting will be held on July 9, 2020.

Kristi Moran
Recording Secretary

