

MINUTES OF THE
NASHUA ARTS COMMISSION MEETING
June 14, 2016
City Hall Room 208

Presiding: Tracy Hatch, Chairman

Members in attendance: Mitzi Barrett, Judy Carlson, John Egan, Bonnie Guercio, Paul LaFlamme, Lindsay Rinaldi

Members Absent: Alison Bankowski, Tina Cassidy, Donna Metzger, G. Frank Teas

Staff present: Amy DeRoche

Others present, Sarah Marchant, City of Nashua Director of Community Development; Tim Cummings, City of Nashua Director of Economic Development; Manuel Ramirez, Positive Street Art

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am.

1. Approval of Minutes: Judy Carlson moved and John Egan seconded a motion to approve the NAC minutes of May 10, 2016. After discussion, several corrections / additions were made as follows:
 - a. The minutes should reflect Committee members who were absent as well as others who were present, specifically the Review Committee members.
 - b. There was a discussion at the meeting about the Northern Ballet's grant application and the commission decided to table that discussion until the June meeting.

With those amendments, the motion to approve the minutes was approved unanimously. Amy will make those amendments and post the minutes on the City website.

2. Special Presentations:
 - a. Tim Cummings introduced himself and presented a brief description of his background.
 - b. Sarah Marchant presented an overview of the Performing Arts Center (PAC) feasibility study process. Last summer, and RFP was released, dividing the process into 3 phases (since combined to 2, with contracting and development of a business plan combined into a single phase). The first phase focused on data gathering and analysis. Webb Management was selected for that phase and presented their recommendations to the City in May. In summary, they recommended looking into creating an "Arts District," the building of 1 or 2 new

venues, and the possible renovation of the Keefe Auditorium. Phase 2 of the process is now being planned and is before the Board of Aldermen's Planning and Economic Development Committee for consideration and approval. This phase will include evaluating sites, new vs. adaptive vs. demo/rebuild scenarios, possible building design, further exploration of what establishing an Arts District would mean and require and the exploration of possible partnerships that would be required to make this happen. Sarah also mentioned that, while the renovation of 14 Court Street as a possible site was explored, it has been determined not to be a viable option.

In response to questions from the Commissioners, additional information was discussed: the PEDC's initial conversations regarding the proposed second phase centered around Keefe Auditorium and whether it was prudent to consider investing considerable city funding into a facility that the city does not control. Downtown is the focus for the location of a PAC. The concept of an 'arts center' with gallery space, classroom space, etc., beyond just performance space is still being considered, but is not the driving consideration. Relying on local arts groups as the sole users of the performance space is not a stable source of financial support and the attraction of outside groups / performances should be emphasized.

Paul LaFlamme suggested that the PAC become a regular agenda topic and that there should be a NAC member responsible for following this process closely and reporting back to the commission.

3. Grant Application Recommendations Review: Tracy Hatch clarified that here were no minutes taken at the Review Committee's meeting to consider and make recommendations regarding the grant applications received. She asked that Amy DeRoche prepare minimal minutes, recording who was in attendance at that meeting and what their recommendations were. Additionally, John Egan reported that the Review Committee did not refer to the grant criteria when making their decisions, so no score sheets were used.

A motion was made by John Egan and seconded by Mitzi Barrett to approve the grant money distribution as presented by the grant committee. Discussion ensued:

Concerns were raised that the recommended awards appeared to be based on the percentage of the grant dollars requested, without any consideration of the overall operating budget of the organization.

A question was asked about possible conflicts of interest among those on the Commission, as many of them had grant proposals being considered. It was explained that commissioners would not cast votes on individual allocations, but only on approval of the totality of the grants.

A question was also raised as to whether all of the applications were complete, particularly with regard to the requested Operating Budgets and reports from last year's grantees.

The allocation of funding was questioned, with regard to the percentage of funds granted to programs focused on school-aged children vs. a more general population. Nine proposals for a total of \$42,645 were received. Five (5) of the proposals were specific to school-aged children; those 5 requested \$19,645, representing 46% of the requested funds, and were awarded \$15,700 (80% of their requests and 63% of the total awards; 2 received 100% of their request, 1 received 90%, and the remaining 2 received 65% and 60%). The four proposals not associated with schools requested \$23,000 (54% of the requested funds), and were awarded \$9,300 (37% of the awarded funding), with one receiving 50% of their request, two 40%, and one 30%.

After discussion, the Commission voted 3-4 on the motion to approve the allocations as presented by the Review Committee. The motion failed.

John Egan then moved, seconded by Lindsay Rinaldi, to allow Northern Ballet's application to be considered despite their missing the deadline for submitting their report on last year's grant results. Discussion ensued around the clarity of the directions in last year's process. The Commission voted 6-1 to accept the application for consideration for this year's grants; Bonnie Guercio abstained.

Paul LaFlamme moved and Judy Carlson seconded a motion to return the recommendations back to the Review Committee and request that they take another look at their recommendations, using the specific grant criteria included in the application (including the completeness of the application), that they take minutes of their deliberations, and that they used score sheets to guide their decisions. All minutes and scores sheets should be returned to the Commission along with their recommendations. The Commission voted 6 – 1 in favor of the motion.

4. Recommendations on the Relocation of the Kinetic Sculpture: Judy Carlson moved and Paul LaFlamme seconded that the Commission recommend moving the kinetic sculpture to the front of Bicentennial Park. The Commission approved the motion unanimously.
5. New Business – Agenda for the coming year: In the interests of time, this item was tabled by Tracy Hatch until the July meeting. She asked that Members consider ways that the Commission could be more proactive in their work around the arts, and think about gaps in service around the arts and ways to raise awareness in the community.
6. Comments from Commissioners and Members of the public: None
7. Adjournment: Paul LaFlamme moved and Judy Carlson seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously.

Next meeting: The next meeting of the Commission will be on Tuesday, July 12 at 8 am in Room 208 at Nashua City Hall.

Minutes recorded by Amy DeRoche.