

**City of St Charles**

**Cultural Commission Meeting**

**April 23, 2012**

**Century Station Training Room**

**6:00 PM**

Call to Order at 6:05 PM

Present: Becker, Hunt, Ainsworth, Bellaver, Collins, Manthei, Melone, Brown (6:10 PM)

Absent: Chapin

Hunt made a motion to approve the Minutes of May 9, 2011. The motion was seconded by Melone. Upon a voice vote the motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Collins to appoint Anne Becker as the Chair of the Meeting. The motion was seconded by Manthei. Upon a voice vote the motion was passed unanimously.

It was noted that the purpose of the meeting tonight was to evaluate the funding presentations. It was noted that we would likely need to have another meeting to formalize the allocations for 2012/2013. The Commission has \$89,400 allocated in the City's FY 2012-2013, which is the same amount as in the prior year.

Dr. Becker then distributed the Chicago Jazz Ensemble's survey. She noted that she thought that it was an excellent survey and could serve as a model for the Cultural Commission to collect various information from the groups funded.

The Commission then held discussion of the cultural activity of the STC Underground Teen Center, how they fit the mission of the Cultural Commission, how they will spend the funds, and the relationship between Park District and the Center. It was noted that these questions should be addressed during the presentation.

**6:15 PM Fox Valley Repertory (FV Rep)**

Representatives of FV Repertory presented and discussed information related to its Collider play and the Summer Theater Fest. The Commission noted the positive results of these programs to date.

Discussion then centered on how FV Rep gives back to the community. They have recently partnered with many of the local service clubs by collecting after certain performances. The collections are split 50/50 between FV Rep and the service club. So far they have been able to donate a little under \$20,000 to area service clubs.

FV Rep shared statistics that they were responsible for the purchase of approximately 12,000 meals and 1,000 hotel room visits over the past year. They are able to track package deals put together by Pheasant Run. It was further noted that these were only the package deals that were booked through

Pheasant Run so this is a very conservative number. They do not currently have an alternate means to track other data. Patrons also account for alcohol sales at performances but this cannot be tracked by FV Rep.

Currently, FV Rep is not receiving any financial assistance from Pheasant Run due to the changes that have occurred and the situation is much different than in the past. It was noted that the debt discussed last year has been forgiven and is no longer a liability. It was further noted that there is extensive cooperation between FV Rep and Steel Beam Theatre, particularly with sharing resources between the groups.

#### ***6:25 PM STC Singers***

Based on the marketing program and database that they have compiled, it is noted that approximately 80% of the patrons are non-residents to St Charles, up from 75% a year ago. The highlighted accomplishment was the Sing program that served 54 students last summer. The goal was 50 students. The teens showed up, were enthusiastic and enjoyed participating in the program. The opportunity was also present for the teens to obtain a 20-minute private evaluation. For the 2012 program, 75 slots are currently available. It was noted that the program also begins to prepare the teens for the time when they begin to go on real auditions by outlining expectations and requiring them to do advance preparation. The partnership and proposed concert series at NCAC was discussed. Additionally it was noted that they are striving for more exposure and larger audiences and that all concerts are held in STC with the possibility of a second show performed in another city/locale.

#### ***6:40 PM Preservation Partners***

The Annual Mission Statement card was distributed and the Cultural Commission's Award as a sponsor was noted. It was noted that the Partners are requesting an additional \$700 in funding for the current year. This funding is being requested in support of 2 concerts. The Partners presented pictures of the folk music trio at the Durant House and a classical Japanese guitarist at the Japanese Gardens. These events are very well attended and are free of charge as the new focus for 2012. It was noted that they held similar events at all of their locations. They do pay the musicians and the additional funding would help defray the costs. Integration and interaction with the CVB was noted, particularly with regard to the Japanese Garden location. Many times a group directed to the Gardens will have a meal or spend time shopping just prior or subsequent to their visit to the Gardens. Additionally, the Commission recognized and noted the Group's efforts to preserve the former gas station in Geneva. The Preservation aspects, standards and requirements were discussed. Buildings must meet the needs of the Community to be eligible for preservation efforts from the Partners.

#### ***6:55 PM Heritage Center***

Natalie Gacek of the STC Heritage Center (STC HC) stated that the STCHC is requesting an allocation of \$36,000 as detailed in the application packet. The funds would primarily be used to support the Displays at the History Museum, open 255 days per year, and in support of the "Trunk Program" that educates students about Native American, Early Settlers/Pioneers, and World War II history. The funding would also go to support the outreach exhibits that the STCHC occasionally runs at the School District, City Hall and Park District facilities. It was noted that the City has now taken over the Dunham Hunt House and the facility is no longer part of the STCHC budget. It was also suggested that the STC HC consider approaching the School District about the possibility of have a trunk series about the holocaust

to support the existing WWII trunk program as well as meeting the state educational requirement of holocaust education.

#### ***7:05 PM FV Concert Band***

It was noted that the Band is celebrating its 29<sup>th</sup> year. Additionally, there was discussion of the Middle School Program, and the Internship and Scholarship Programs. The level of collaboration with other area entities such as FV Repertory, FV orchestra and other various municipal arts programs. The level of support from the Illinois Arts Council, City of St Charles, Norris Cultural Arts Center, Geneva High School, patrons, members, etc. It was noted that the Band performed for the fireworks celebration on July 4 and they will do so again during 2012. There was also discussion that many of the collaborative efforts and suggestions for the growth of the FV Concert Band had originated at the Cultural Commission Meetings. It was further noted that there is still no charge for performances but that donations are definitely encouraged. Due to the nature of upcoming performances and the fact that they may need to pay for space for concerts at certain venues such as the Norris Center for the Cultural Arts, that they may charge for admission at some point in the future.

#### ***7:25 PM Steel Beam Theater***

The presentation began with thanks for the previous donation and it was noted that Steel Beam Theater (SBT) has been in downtown ST Charles for 11 years providing professional theater for the City and area. SBT noted that the paid professional actor brings another element and dimension to productions not always possible with volunteers. There was discussion of the robust children's programs offering the opportunity for children to get involved in theater and productions early in life and to provide culture and education opportunities for children. The additional economic activity generated on production nights was also noted.

SBT would like to have a more robust marketing effort during 2012/2013. They have made significant gains in social media marketing activity but still experience that a mailer is the best marketing alternative for them and their clientele. They would eventually like to add a Children's Theater Coordinator as funding allows. They do utilize a "working board" concept to supplement the limited paid staff that they do have. A suggestion was made to consider the implementation of a High School Internship program. It was noted that the SBT serves approximately 250 children per year. If they do not receive the entire funding amount requested, they will utilize the funds to hire a PT employee for as many hours as possible with the funding received.

#### ***7:40 PM Fine Line Creative Center***

Lynn Caldwell and Sue Peterson thanked the Commission for the funding allocation for 11/12. The recent fundraiser at FV Harley Davidson was briefly discussed. The funding is to create a drive to allow them to take advantage of the new zoning and providing a direct entrance to the facility. This entrance allows for expanded programs and hours for the Center. Discussion of programs held including an Acrylic Workshop, Felted Carpet and Rug Weaving Workshop were discussed. It was noted that there are many field trips to the facility from local schools and other programs were discussed consisting of Raku Day, Uncommon Threads on the Lake fund raiser, the Christmas Show and the Visually Impaired Weaving Class were also discussed. If allocated funding, it is the intent of the Center to utilize the funding for promotions, printing, advertising, etc.

### ***7:55 PM Sculptures in the Park***

It was noted that the funding allocation is being sought by the St Charles Parks Foundation which provides support to the Park District, mainly by holding fund raising activities and donating the proceeds to the Park District. They have helped by supporting Primrose Park and the Memorial Tree Project in the recent past. General discussion of the event was held. It was noted that the sculptors are paid a small stipend to be in the event and that the works are generally for sale. The Park District (with the support of the Parks Foundation) tries to acquire at least one sculpture annually.

### ***8:15 PM STC Underground Teen Center (UTC)***

The Baker Community Center Board is applying for funding for the STC Underground Center. It was noted that this is the UTC's inaugural application for funding from the Commission. It was noted that the UTC has had the support of many agencies but is currently operating as a program of the STC Park District; the employees are employees of the Park District. If awarded an allocation, UTC would use the funds to promote the events wherein teen bands perform and/or compete. The promotion of these events is very expensive and has not been tremendously profitable due to the low attendance. The popularity of the concerts at the Skate Park Bash was also discussed. They have noticed a connection between the level of advertising done and attendance at the respective shows. It was noted that the High Schools are charging for the UTC's free programs.

### ***8:25 PM Norris Cultural Arts Center (NCAC)***

NCAC is back with a funding request for 12/13 after a one year absence. They had a very small programmatic lineup. They held and hosted several events but did not produce any. The current arrangement allows for NCAC to be a tenant of the School District on a year-to-year basis. The funding would be utilized to promote anticipated activities such as the FV Concert Band concert events, the FV Orchestra concerts, the shows anticipated as a 3<sup>rd</sup> party producer and Theaterworks productions. The plan is also to update the website and to utilize more of social media presence to market. It was noted the School District now "owns and operates" the physical building and that the NCAC group is a tenant on an annual basis and pays rent for the productions. Additionally the NCAC group would be responsible to sell any tickets and run the box office for any productions undertaken.

The endowment funds were discussed. It was noted that the current agreement with the School District allows the NCAC to keep the endowment funds and they are allowed to utilize a portion of the funding for operating expenses but within strict guidelines and limits. It was noted the NCAC now functions merely as the producer of the event as any other tenant. They try to generate a set amount of revenue and then pay "rent" to the School District for the privilege of using the building. The gallery space is currently theirs to utilize rent free.

The program is not yet finalized. The School District has the final approval of the dates and events proposed. The funding would be utilized to aggressively market the group and the events for the upcoming season. Specific aspects of the plan are to utilize space ads, direct mail, revising the website, utilizing a 3<sup>rd</sup> party producer (Livin the Dream). This marketing plan would be undertaken in conjunction with a marketing firm (Cooper Hong, it was noted that Mark Smith presenting on behalf of NCAC is a paid consultant of Cooper Hong.) It was noted that the funding would be utilized to offset much of the contracted advertising and promotion cost based on the \$20,000 requested.

At this point, the presentations were completed and all guests had left the meeting. The Commission members then discussed various aspects of the funding year, the precise relationship of the park District to the STC Underground Center, and the Commission's previous direction that Cultural Commission funding not be utilized in support of programs of other taxing bodies.

Additionally, the funding level of the Commission generally was discussed. The prudence of setting aside a portion of the unused funding from 11/12 for this year was discussed, as was the concept of requesting more funding for the 13/14 allocation year. It was noted that the intent during the 11/12 funding process was to utilize the funding allocations prudently and to collect data on the direct link between the Commission's activities and the increased economic activity that results. The last step in the process was then to request additional funding for the 13/14 allocation year. It was noted that the discussion and strategy should begin immediately after the funding allocation process for this year is finished. The presentation for increased funding should occur early in 2013 to allow adequate time for inclusion in the budget process.

The timeframe for a next meeting was then discussed. The meeting was set for 6:00 PM on Monday, May 14, 2012 in the City's Century Station Training Room.

A motion was made by Brown and seconded by Bellaver to adjourn. Upon a voice vote the motion was passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM

Minutes prepared by Chris Minick