

## ***City of St Charles***

### ***Cultural Commission Meeting May 13, 2013 Century Station Training Room 5:30 PM***

Call to Order at 5:37 PM

Present: Becker, Brown, Manthei, Ainsworth, Bellaver

Absent: Hunt, Collins, Melone

Also Present: Chris Minick, City of St Charles

Charles Brown made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 14, 2012 as presented in the packets. The motion was seconded by Guy Bellaver.

The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Guy Bellaver made a motion to appoint Anne Becker as the Chair of the Cultural Commission. The motion was seconded by Charles Brown.

The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Since members of the Water Street Studios were present early, the Commission decided to hear their presentation first.

**Water Street Studios:** It was noted that most people are most familiar with the gallery in its Batavia location and it was further noted that the gallery offers outreach programs for individuals that cannot get to the gallery to enjoy the offerings. WSS plans to open a facility in the Schezwan Building on to host Print Lab, fine arts print media in this venue. PrintLab is intended to be a member based facility and the proposed funding would be utilized to bring in talent to assist users in the fine arts print media.

WSS currently has 216 members of which approximately 48% are from Batavia, 99 students from St Charles enrolled in paid arts programming at WSS Batavia. They also have grant funding and support as well as support from businesses, the Community and volunteers.

WSS plans essentially two programs with the funding requested:

1. A West Suburban Fine Arts Conference modeled on the One State conference to attract artists, art managers, leaders, and educators to the western suburbs. The requested \$8,500 contribution for this program would be utilized for support for keynote speakers and breakout session facilitators. Wssws anticipates that it would need a venue with the size and amenities of a facility such as Pheasant Run Resort for this conference.

2. Chicago Region Printmakers Conference: WSS believes that the print arts media community needs a focal point and that currently there is no conference that concentrates on the unique needs of that community. It is anticipated that this conference would attempt to fill that void. The goal of this conference would be to bring together the leading artists and organizations in this area.

Currently, the dates, times, and specific venues for the programs are open.

**Fox Valley Repertory:** FVR began by recapping the statistics of the last year for the group. They were noted to have 246 events resulting in attendance of approximately 38,000 patrons. Additionally, through the partnership[ that they have with the Pheasant Run Resort, they are able to track 12,000 dinner packages related to their events and 826 overnight stays at Pheasant Run, resulting in the direct generation of \$450,000 in revenue for Pheasant Run Resort. These are the direct statistics that they are able to track in conjunction with FVR's partnership with Pheasant Run.

Additionally, FVR assists other nonprofits and schools in region by having tolerance and anti-bullying performances, skits that are shown to local students to promote tolerance and denounce bullying. They also host giveback performances, wherein proceeds collected are shared with other local community groups such as rotary, CASA Kane County, Northern IL Food Bank, Fox Valley Hospice, etc.

During 2013, the Performing Arts Academy is instituting a summer camp for individuals with Autism and developmental disabilities due to demand. Another item new for 2013 is "Got Talent" to encourage local youth to display their performing arts talent.

Currently, FVR is renegotiating its lease with Pheasant Run Resort (PRR). In 2012, PRR went into receivership and revoked FVR's production retainer and declared its lease terms invalid. Currently, the lease is being reviewed by legal staff of PRR. FVR stated that it currently has a commitment from PRR through 2014.

**St Charles Singers:** A DVD presentation of the STC Singers was shown. The DVD highlighted various performances, programs and artists of the Singers. Additionally, there was discussion about the SING program offered to local students and the exposure that this workshop and concert provide. The next SING program will occur July 18, 2013. STC Singers also surveyed its patrons about their habits and practices when they attend a Singers event. The results of the survey were distributed for the members to review.

**Preservation Partners:** Discussion centered around one of the recent area successes of the Preservation Partners, the Pure Oil Building in Geneva. The building was able to be saved and the Geneva Bank and Trust was able to move in and reuse the building once it became clear that the building would not be approved for demolition. Many members of the Preservation Partners testified at the hearings and meetings during which the demolition was discussed.

General discussion of the programs offered ensued, as well as discussion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade visits to Durant House and the Beith House Museum. Additionally, it was noted that these facilities are also open to adults at various times throughout the year, primarily during summer.

Discussion of the revenue and spending mix of the Preservation Partners was discussed with it being noted that National Trust for Historic Preservation expends 76% of its revenues on Education, Historic

Sites, and Preservation Services. This is equal to the Preservation Partners spending for education purposes (76% of revenues).

Then, discussion of local “endangered” buildings was held. It was noted that these buildings will be the focus of future preservation efforts.

**STC Heritage Center:** the Heritage Center (HC) began by thanking the Cultural Commission for its continued support, noting its 80 year history with the last 12 years being in the facility on Main St. HC noted that there was one very significant acquisition over the past year, General Farnsworth’s desk was donated by a relative who wanted to make sure that it was actually displayed for all to enjoy, not simply placed in a back room away from the public. HC was able to comply and received the piece as a result.

Discussion of the various programs, exhibits and displays was then held. It was noted that recent exhibits focused on local businesses throughout STC history and military exhibits, particularly STC during WWII. Another recent display focused on the holidays and Mt St Mary’s Park.

Programs offered students and others researching STC history were discussed, particularly the Travelling Trunks program.

It was noted that the funding requested would be spent on displays, and educational programs predominantly. HC is also sponsoring a Hog Roast and Silent Auction Fundraiser rather than the traditional Gala celebration. This event will occur on June 29, 2013.

**FV Concert Band:** Fox Valley Concert Band (FVCB) is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> year, noting 20 with the same conductor. The programs and performances of FVCB were then discussed, noting in particular the numerous performances and opportunities for STC residents and students to interact with FVCB. FVCB annually partners with a middle school band to provide them the opportunity to share the stage. FVCB offers internships and scholarships for various qualified local individuals as well. Additionally, FVCB collaborates with many local organizations, including performances at Wheaton College, Fox Valley Repertory, the Fox Valley Orchestra and the Norris Cultural Arts Center(NCAC). FVCB is the in house band for the NCAC and they are currently in the process of booking the performances for the 2013 season. Discussion was held regarding the scheduling process and any difficulties that may arise due to the arrangement and relationship of NCAC and the school district.

It was noted that there are still not ticket sales for the majority of performances, but freewill donations are encouraged.

**Steel Beam Theatre (SBT):** Discussion of the programs of SBT ensued, noting that 6 main stage shows encompassing 86 individual performances were scheduled shown by SBT. Additionally, 9 children’s shows and musicals resulting in 85 individual performances were also held involving literally hundreds of participants, actors, volunteers, etc. Additionally, there are year round classes, summer camps, internships, etc.

Kane County Scaregrounds is the annual Haunted House at the KC Fairgrounds providing fund raising opportunities for the SBT and bringing attendance from locations outside of STC. Additionally, SBT makes “good use” of the theater facility, annually drawing 10,000 attendees to downtown STC.

Discussion of large rent increases then ensued with it being noted that rent is up over 400% to \$66,000 for SBT. The building own has related that taxes have increased from \$8,000 in 2001 to \$48,000 currently. It was also noted that operating grants are harder and harder to come by.

**Fine Line:** They broke ground on April 1 on the driveway approach that they had been planning over the past few years. They are hoping to have everything completed in June. The discussion then centered around the programs that they have in place and are offering such as the field trips program, Teacher Institute Day (it was noted that 75 teachers attended), participation in the STC Art Show, and Raku Day (to be renamed Finer Line Arts Festival and to occur in September during 2013.)

Fine Line's web presence and prior grants were noted along with the need for a continued social media presence. The requested funding would be utilized to support the advertising, public relations, and social media presence if approved.

**Sculpture in the Park:** It was noted that this is the 8<sup>th</sup> year for Sculpture in the Park. The festival runs from May through mid October each year. Each year the Park Foundation or Park District hope to have enough funds to purchase one piece to own and display permanently. Discussion then was held relative to the stipends that the artists receive. It was noted that each artist receives a \$500 stipend and an artist approved for two pieces receives \$750, which is the maximum an artist can receive. There are 9 artists and 12 sculptures represented in the show for 2013.

The public reception events were then discussed, which is a free wine and cheese event. The event is open to the public and there is an opportunity to meet and interact with the artists at the event. For 2012, the event drew approximately 100 people and the hope is that 150 will come during 2013.

It was noted that funds have not been available to purchase a piece for the permanent collection for the past two years, mainly because of the economic downturn. One year there were no funds available to purchase any pieces and the next year one of the artists donated a piece for the collection. Additionally, corporate sponsorships and funding have been more difficult to acquire over the past several years due to economic conditions.

**St Charles Arts Council:** SCAC is mainly a volunteer driven organization whose mission is to lend tangible support to expand the arts in the STC area. The outreach and volunteerism displayed by members has been very successful. The goal of SCAC is to make the arts the center of the community and ultimately to increase the funding allocable to the arts. The goal of the organization is not to divide the "arts pie" but to make that pie bigger so that the arts become a larger focus of the community.

Discussion was then held relative to the individually programmed funding requests for 2013-2014. It was noted that of the \$30,000 in funding requested by SCAC, all but \$1,000 would be directly distributed to artists in some form.

The Reflections piece which is a sculpture honoring Max and Doris Hunt is anticipated to be an outdoor piece along the river proximate to City Hall. Mr Guy Bellaver is the sculptor, and a community fundraising effort is underway to finance the vast majority of the project. Timing and coordination of the renovation of the plaza will be the key to proper placement of the piece.

There was then discussion of the SCAC underwriting the "Best of Show" award at the Charlie's Center for

the Arts show during September, 2013. Funding is also requested for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ekwabet sculpture proximate to the river. There is an event honoring this milestone in June of 2013. In August, funding is sought for the Festival of the Horse and Drum. In February of 2014 funding is requested for the student event at Charlie's Center for the Arts.

Additionally, SCAC noted that they typically receive funding requests from other organizations whose funding requests do not fit into the funding cycle of the Cultural Commission. Therefore, they wish to partner with the Cultural Commission to maximize funding opportunities for multiple events.

At this point all of the funding presentations from the various organizations had concluded and the Cultural Commission began deliberations on the funding allocations. Discussion centered around the fact that the Cultural Commission has not seen an increase in funding since the beginning of the economic downturn a few years ago. A question was raised as to the funding mechanism of the DSCP, the CVB, and Pride of the Fox Riverfest and whether these entities had similarly seen their funding allocations reduced.

Additionally, there was discussion as to whether the City would consider moving the Heritage Center funding allocation out of the Cultural Commission allocation and funding them separately as they do for Pride of the Fox.

There was additional discussion as to the statements from Steel Beam about the substantial rent increases and increases in property tax amounts in the downtown area. Chair Becker indicated that she would try to arrange informal discussions to see if the amount of funding could be increased for the Cultural Commission given the many worthy organizations that request funding from the Cultural Commission.

The next meeting was set for June 18 (Tuesday) at 5:00 in the Century Station City Training Room (basement)

Guy Bellaver mad a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Jodi Manthei .

The motion passed unanimously upon a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM

Minutes prepared by Chris Minick