



CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION MEETING

July 8, 2020

6:00pm

**Savannah Cultural Arts Center
201 Montgomery Street**

Present: *Commissioners:*

- Linda J. Evans
- Kareem McMichael
- Eddie Edenfield
- Barbara Essig
- Patrick Kelsey
- Jan Kramer
- Kristopher Monroe
- Andrea Hall-Houston
- Sharon Wanda Aikens
- Michael Chaney
- Lu Fang
- Antonio Hunter

Virtual:

- Darren Bagley-Heath
- Raymond Gaddy
- Taqwaa F. Saleem
- Robin Sherman

City Staff:

- Taffanye Young, Chief, Community Services
- Stuart Miller, Director, Cultural Resources
- CJ Bogle, Contract Coordinator, Cultural Resources

Absent:

- Curt Bryant
- Anne Allen Westbrook

Public Attending: None

I. Call to Order/Determination of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM by Commission Chair Linda J. Evans and a quorum was determined.

II. Review and Approval of March Minutes

Commissioner Evans called to vote on approval of the June Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC) minutes. Minutes were approved with no objections.

III. Announcements

None

IV. Chair's Report

Commissioner Evans discussed the inability to complete evaluations due to the pandemic. The Commission guidelines call for a minimum of six (6) written evaluations each calendar year. Commissioner Evans proposed that this requirement be relaxed by lowering minimum number of evaluations or suspending it for 2020. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Patrick Kelsey to suspend the requirement for 2020. Commissioner Kristopher Monroe also agreed with the motion to suspend requirements. Commissioner Eddie Edenfield suggested revisiting this discussion if circumstances change later in the summer or fall. Commissioner Jan Kramer stated that the Commission should have had some evaluations from January and February. The Commission should have evaluations from Savannah Book Festival, Black Heritage Festival, and Mountainfilm on Tour Savannah. Commissioner Evans stated she did not want Commissioners to feel pressured to submit a report for an event that could not be attended. Commissioner Evans continued with the motion to suspend the six written evaluations with the caveat that as the year progresses when there is an opportunity to observe and evaluate (programs) that the subject will be revisited. Commissioner Evans stated that the Commission can adjust the number (of required evaluations) so that there is no instance where someone will go an entire year without doing an evaluation. Commissioner Barbara Essig asked if there will be a modification of the evaluation form to accommodate a Zoom evaluation. Commissioner Evans stated that adjustments to the evaluation form would not be necessary if evaluations were suspended. Commissioner Kareem McMichael stated he was more in favor of suspending it for the year because every program may not have the resources to host a Zoom meeting. The motion to suspend evaluations was carried with no objections.

Commissioner Evans stated the meeting material includes a list of organizations being funded for 2020 and which organizations the Commissioners have been assigned. Commissioner Evans indicated the events that have concluded; Mountainfilm on Tour Savannah, Savannah Book Festival, and Savannah Black Heritage Festival. Deep Center, Savannah Jazz, Savannah Music Festival, Savannah Philharmonic, and Telfair Museum are on-going or upcoming. Savannah Ballet Theater and Savannah Pride have indicated that they are changing, adapting, and modifying their programs. The organizations are solidifying their plans even though things are still uncertain at this time. The organizations will notify the Commission once plans are finalized. Each Commissioner has been assigned two organizations. Commissioner Evans worked from the Conflict of Interest Declaration form so that no one will be assigned to an organization that will present a problem.

V. 2020 Cultural and Arts Investment Program Discussion

Savannah Philharmonic (Assigned Commissioners: Edenfield, Westbrook)

Keep the Music Playing (KTMP) Workshop

Commissioner Edenfield stated he was unable to attend the workshop. The KTMP workshop was recorded via Zoom and made available for all Garrison School students to see before the first day of school. A link was provided to all Commissioners who were interested in watching the clinic live.

Commissioner Hunter attended the Zoom event and stated the facilitator and participants were actively engaged in the activities presented. The workshop included activities on how to care for and maintain the musical instruments.

Commissioner Hunter felt that the content of the workshop was age appropriate for elementary and middle school students.

Telfair Museum (Assigned Commissioners: Edenfield, Kelsey, Monroe)

Juneteenth Virtual Lecture

Commissioner Evans stated that the lecturers for the presentation were Dr. Vaughnette Goode-Walker and Dr. Alvin Jackson. The lecture was recorded and is available on Telfair Museums' YouTube channel. Commissioner Monroe stated he was unable to attend. Commissioner Evans stated that the topics included why Juneteenth is celebrated, a discussion of the secret schools of learning that operated in Savannah before emancipation, and the Willow Hill School which was founded in 1874 by formerly enslaved people in Portal, Georgia. Commissioner Kramer stated Harry Delorme conducted the lecture and mentioned/thanked the City several times during the event. Commissioner Kramer stated that the lecturers were dynamic and informative although the lecture was pre-recorded. Commissioner Kramer stated that the presentation (slides & information) was probably targeted to an audience of

high school and above and that Mr. Delorme reminded the audience of the Free Family Days which will be July 17th, 18th, and 19th. Commissioner Kramer indicated that Mr. Delorme also held a Q&A session where participants were able to type in their question(s).

VI. Subcommittee Overview and Appointment

Commissioner Evans stated that CJ Bogle, Contract Coordinator, sent a list of the subcommittees and a description requesting that Commissioners let Mr. Bogle and Commissioner Evans know which committee they would be interested in joining. Commissioner Evans would leave the sign-up sheet on the table for each commissioner to sign-up if interested.

Commissioner Evans went over each subcommittee:

Youth Advisory Subcommittee -Commissioner Raymond Gaddy volunteered to Chair the committee and needs three or four additional members.

Public Art Subcommittee –Commissioners Kristopher Monroe has volunteered to be Chair and Anne Allen Westbrook has also joined. The subcommittee needs three or four additional members.

City Priorities Subcommittee –Commissioner Patrick Kelsey has volunteered to be Chair and Taqwaa F. Saleem has also joined. The subcommittee needs three or four additional members.

Weave A Dream Initiative Subcommittee - Weave A Dream (WAD) is the only permanent committee and all others are ad-hoc. The subcommittee is composed of the Commission Vice Chair who serves as the WAD Subcommittee Chair and has three additional members. Commissioner Darren Bagley-Heath is the Chair and members include Commissioners Andrea Hall-Houston, Michael Chaney, and Linda Evans. The subcommittee needs one or two additional people.

Commissioner Evans stated that the terms of meeting dates, time, agenda, and the frequency of the meetings are up to each subcommittee chair to determine.

VII. Director's Report – Stuart Miller

Stuart Miller, Cultural Resources Director, stated the Savannah Cultural Arts Center (SCAC) is still on standby in Phase 1 waiting for the City to get to Phase 3 of reopening. The SCAC will be able to do a partial reopening at Phase 3. Mr. Miller stated that we (Cultural Resources Department) have a full schedule of summer events planned and hope to have at least one week of camp before the summer ends. Mr. Miller stated that our fall classes are slated to start August 17 and will be the next big program day.

Mr. Miller discussed an update on the Cultural Mapping Project and presented a few slides from the research. Mr. Miller stated he wanted to find out what art resources were available in the City. Mr. Miller stated that some of the areas of focus were the demographics of the different districts; a demographic chart was created, identifying all six (6) Aldermanic Districts and then broken down by neighborhoods within those districts. Mr. Miller stated the goal is to identify where art is happening in the City. The Cultural Resources Department will start with an inventory of art organizations in Savannah and place them on the map. Mr. Miller stated that the Department is interested in placing art in every district and having an active art presence in every community. This mapping project will be used both internally and will be available for the public. Mr. Miller stated that there will be many layers to this database including resources to identify art locations such as resources for staging art in parks, recreation centers, and libraries. A listing of art organizations was distributed to each Commissioner and Mr. Miller requested the help of the Commissioners to identify other organizations that may not have been included.

Mr. Miller discussed a gallery show that is planned once the SCAC reopens which has been put together by the Visual Art Specialist, Antonia Gorham. Mr. Miller stated the project is called “The Return” and is about what artists have experienced in the last six (6) months of the pandemic. The show is expected to open in mid-October.

Commissioner Monroe stated that he thought the project was fantastic and questioned if it was available yet. Mr. Miller stated that it is not currently available and will be used internally to work out the kinks first. Commissioner Kramer inquired whether the venues would have to be a free and open to the public or could commercial spaces be included on the list? Mr. Miller stated that currently we are looking at only non-profit spaces, but there will be multiple layers and eventually commercial spaces will be added.

VIII. Overview of Arts and Cultural Enrichment (ACE) Program

Chief Young discussed the revamping of the Cultural and Arts Investment Program (CAIP) to the Arts and Cultural Enrichment (ACE) Program. Chief Young pointed out the streamlining of the CAIP guidelines and application into a more manageable length.

Chief Young stated that due to the Coronavirus pandemic that the Office of Budget Management (OBM) has asked to delay the opening of the

application until more information about sales tax revenue comes in. Chief Young informed the Commissioners that when the Commission is reviewing the applications for funding recommendations to operate as if funding is staying level with previous years. OBM will inform if the budgetary numbers change.

Chief Young discussed the Commission using the funding matrix to determine a baseline and then recommending funding changes after the Commission evaluates and discusses the applications. The Commission would then come to a consensus and record their rationale for the funding recommendation.

Chief Young asked all City Departments that are issuing contracts for services to provide a couple of slides to present to the new City Council. This will allow Council to have an introduction to the program(s) before the November budget retreat. Chief Young stated that she is trying to get on City Council's August meeting agenda to present the ACE and WAD programs' information. This will give Council a better understanding of CAC's role in funding recommendations. Chief Young stated that Council will discuss and comment and that it is better that the Commission knows City Council's opinion on the front end. This meeting will occur prior to the Commission review (in September) and this information will help with the review and deliberation (of ACE applications).

Chief Young stated that two questions that will be asked by City Council are:

- Have there been thoughts on new programs or services that the Commission may want to contract with?
- How long should funding be given to the same program year after year?

Chief Young stated the decision for funding recommendations are ultimately the Commission's decision. Commissioner Evans stated that there has been discussion about funding longevity, and it depends on what that particular program is. If the program has an impact on a different group each year and is an outstanding program, then funding should continue. Commissioner Evans went on to state that the Commission has talked about weighing or adding some type of innovation factor into the scoring. If an organization does have an innovative factor, it will bump the organization's score.

Commissioner Evans stated that new programming and organizations come through the WAD program. Commissioner Evans continued to state

that established organizations that want to do additional programming have to understand that the organizations are competing with themselves.

Commissioner Patrick Kelsey stated that one item the guideline's criteria now includes, under the Program and Project Design, is a bullet point that exemplifies innovative and creative programming which perhaps not this year, but in future years, can be carved out to have greater emphasis. Commissioner Kelsey stated that the Commission has the ability to look at an application to see if the project really is innovative and creative and score them appropriately.

IX. Overview of 2021 ACE Program Evaluation Process

Commissioner Evans stated that this year the Commission would go back to a lead reader system where one Commissioner is assigned and becomes an expert on a proposal. Commissioner Evans explained the upcoming evaluation process in which the organization's scores are individually reviewed, the Commission will then listen to all opinions, make adjustments, adjust the score (if needed), and then the Commissioners would end up with a score that represents a consensus of what is the best representation of the proposal. Commissioner Evans stated that it is during this discussion and deliberation where the Commissioners can factor in on the specifics of the application. At the end of the day it is a group decision as to where this program ranks along with the others.

Commissioner Evans continued that the second part is so important and during the discussion the Commissioners can address their concerns, accommodations, and the items that there are still questions about or were not addressed. These items get discussed and are added to the consensus panel statements that are given to the organizations.

Commissioner Kelsey had a question concerning the criteria under Community Benefits/City Priorities section. Commissioner Kelsey stated that to him it seems as it somewhat discriminates against the Historic District and that the guidelines are favoring all the other districts. The criteria states *to increase access to art and cultural programs to neighborhoods beyond the landmark Historic District*. Commissioner Kelsey stated that he feels that this could detract from anything happening in the Historic District and would like to see a change in that bullet point. Chief Young offered to reword the bullet in the guideline to be more generalized changing the criteria *to increase art and cultural programming to new areas of the City*.

Commissioner Evans went on to reiterate that in the review process, depending on how many proposals are submitted, each Commissioner will be assigned a proposal to become the lead reader for that application. Commissioner Evans stated that a new Commissioner may be appointed as co-reader for a proposal so there will be an expert reader teamed up with a less experienced evaluator. Each Commissioner will read and evaluate all of the proposals and offer their individual scores, but under the lead reader system there will be a Commissioner that is an ‘expert’ on that particular proposal.

Commissioner Evans stated that when the deliberations are happening, the Commissioners will not leave the room until the scores, funding recommendations, and consensus statement are agreed upon. Commissioner Evans stated that funding decisions are kept confidential.

X. Contract Coordinator’s Report and Neighborly Demonstration

Mr. Bogle stated that if Commissioners would like, he can add them to a test application in Neighborly so they can review the process. Mr. Bogle presented a sample budget that will be included in application. Mr. Bogle stated that this year each organization will be required to submit a separate budget for each program. Mr. Bogle presented a copy of the postcards that will be mailed out to the organizations promoting the ACE program which will have the new logo and went over the marketing timeline. Commissioner Kareem McMichael stated that he has connections with media agencies if the Cultural Resources Department needed additional contacts.

XI. General Discussion

Chief Young asked the Commissioners to vote on their first and second choices of the six ACE logo designs. The logo will be featured on advertising for the ACE program. Mr. Bogle stated that the Commissioners attending via Zoom will be e-mailed the logo designs so that they can submit their vote.

Commissioner Evans reminded the Commission about the upcoming Family Free Day(s) at Telfair on July 17th, 18th, and 19th.

Commissioner Evans stated that Commissioners that are planning on attending the ACE deliberation session must be willing to commit to attending in-person and devoting most of the day to the process.

Commissioner Evans stated that the next Commission meeting is scheduled for September 9th, 2020 at 6 PM.

XII. Adjournment

Commissioner Evans adjourned the meeting at 7:26 PM.

**Next Cultural Affairs Commission Meeting
September 9th, 2020
6 PM**