



MEETING OF THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION
September 14, 2022
6:00pm
Savannah Cultural Arts Center
201 Montgomery Street

Present: *Commissioners:*

- Patrick A. Kelsey, Chair
- Michael Chaney, Vice-Chair
- Lynda DeLoach
- Doris Liggins
- Andrea Hall-Houston
- Antonio Hunter
- Kareem McMichael
- Robin Sherman

Virtual:

- Alexis Alexander
- Joanna Angell
- Sharon Wanda Aikens
- Lu Fang
- Deborah Glenn

Absent:

- Tana Fileccia-Flagg
- Rob Hessler
- Keyshawn Housey
- Doris Liggins

City Staff:

- Stuart Miller, Director, Cultural Resources
- CJ Bogle, Contract Coordinator, Cultural Resources
- Ebony Middleton, Sr. Administrative Assistant, Cultural Resources

Public Attending:

- Arts Southeast – Emily Earl, Executive Director
- Arts Southeast – Jon Witzsky
- Savannah Children’s Choir – Gif Lockley, Executive Director

I. Call to Order/Determination of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Commission Chair Patrick Kelsey and a quorum was determined.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Kelsey called for a motion to approve the July CAC minutes. The minutes were approved with no objections.

III. Announcements – P. Kelsey

Save the Date: December 14th – CAC Elections and Special Meeting

This meeting is held to elect a new 2023 Commission Chair and to resolve any unfinished business.

IV. Investment Recipient Presentations – P. Kelsey

- **Arts Southeast – Emily Earl, Executive Director**

Four major components of Arts Southeast include artists exhibitions, the artist residency program, the street fairs, and the mobile gallery initiative.

A lot of work goes into hosting Exhibitions with Arts Southeast. This includes researching and meeting artists, conducting studio visits, planning and scheduling the exhibition, helping with artwork documentation, crafting artist statements and bios, as well as designing a marketing plan to include a press release, posters, newsletters, and more. Planning with the artists takes several months to a year. More planning includes helping the artists price their work, artwork delivery to the studio, exhibition design and layout, final touches, and planning a reception which will include the art community and art collectors. The current exhibition features work from Lisa Watson. Their exhibitions have several types of associated programming including, artist/curator or juror talks, exhibition catalogs, book signings, field trips and gallery tours, and more. Upcoming exhibition events are a lecture and tea tasting for the opportunity to learn about the significance of Yaupon Holly, a native plant of the Southeast with Christa Hayes and Lou Thomann. Another exhibition event is an artist talk with Lisa Watson. Her exhibition is titled; *Avant Gardner: A Creative Exploration of Imperiled Species*.

The On View Artist residency program was started in 2018 for local artists only. The purpose of the program is to provide a free, high visibility studio space for an artist to complete a new project, to continue an in-progress endeavor, or to conduct research exploring conceptual, material, performative, and social practices. At the end of

2021, Arts Southeast was able to acquire a studio apartment for residents of the program and now it has expanded to international artists. The current artist in residence is Jen Palmer through October 8th. The studio where the artist works during the residency can be viewed 24 hours a day via its large picture window.

There are four Sulfur Street Fairs a year. They are held in conjunction with First Fridays in the Starland district. There are approximately 20 vendors, artists, and creatives. There is live music, performances, painting, food trucks, demonstrations, and art activities for children. The last street fair will be on the first Friday in October. Some of the street fair vendors include, The Culturist Union, Sweet Spice, Lovelane Designs, Savannah Stage Company, Glory Days Vintage, Peanut Butter Shrimp Newspaper, and many more.

The Mobile Gallery Arts Initiative began last year in partnership with Live Oak Public Libraries. Images from past exhibitions on display in Sulfur Studios will travel to three different libraries around Chatham County. Currently, this initiative is in three libraries; Oglethorpe, W.W. Law, and Carnegie with plans to expand to more branches in 2023. Artist talks are made available for download to those visiting the library and provide an insight into the decision-making process. This year the program allows the public to see artworks in a range of media covering topics such as: printmaking as an expression of black identity; a commemoration of Juneteenth by artists from across the nation; multimedia artwork that educates the public about endangered native plants and animal species.

- **Savannah Children’s Choir – Gif Lockley, Executive Director**
The Coastal Youth Choirs organization was founded in 2006 by the Savannah Children’s Choir, Inc. The Coastal Youth Choirs is a nonprofit, community supported, choral organization whose mission is to unite, mentor and transform the children and youth of greater Savannah and the Low Country into creative, responsible, and confident leaders through excellence in choral performance and music education. Their goal is to provide a quality musical training program for all interested singers in kindergarten through high school.

The Coastal Youth Choirs developed a five year plan which focuses on developing and expanding their three children and youth choirs, the Choral Foundations Program, professional development for music educators, and music educators nights.

The Coastal Youth Choirs consist of three different choirs. The choirs are the Discovery Choir (grades K-2), Preparatory Choir (grades 3-5) and the Premiere Choir (grades 6-12). The Premiere Choir is also known as the travel choir. The travel choir led by Dr. Jared Register has been invited to perform in Wexford, Ireland in June of 2023. Choirs meet Monday evenings at First Baptist Church Savannah and singers also attend 2 weekend retreats to prepare for concerts each semester.

Choral Foundations is an outreach program that exists to enhance choral education throughout the Savannah Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS) by sharing choral music introduction across partnerships with music educators K-12. These partnerships are grounded in the Children's Youth Choir's support of general music and choral music educators, offering a variety of resources, development of music curriculum, vocal and choral techniques, children and youth repertoire, and more. Participating schools are invited to perform at Children Youth Choirs concerts throughout the year as well as venues throughout Savannah/Chatham County. Children Youth Choirs is passionate about the growth of every young singer and through the Choral Foundations Program seeks to encourage, support, and strengthen existing school general music and choral programs while uniting a diverse group of young people through music. This program is supported by the ACE grant. ACE grant choirs include, Andrea B. Williams Elementary, Heard Elementary, New Hampstead K-8, Savannah Classical Academy, and more. You have the chance to see schools that participate in the Choral Foundations Program at the SCCPSS All City Choral Festival on Friday, September 30 and Saturday, October 1st.

The Choral Foundations Program also sponsors professional development opportunities and conference attendance for teachers. The program believes in forging relationships with several counties including Bryan, Chatham, Effingham, and Liberty counties in Georgia as well as Beaufort, Hampton, and Jasper Counties in South Carolina. The goal is to bring quality professional development to elementary music teachers and choral educators. Currently, professional development days are offered a couple of times during the year.

Music Educator Nights are offered in conjunction with the Savannah Philharmonic and Savannah Music Festival. They are hosted at the Savannah Brewing Company and provide a chance for music educators to enjoy a casual dinner, drinks, and networking.

V. Director's Report – S. Miller

Director Miller started with thanking the commissioners for their time spent evaluating applications for the 2023 Arts and Cultural Enrichment (ACE) program. The evaluations have been turned into the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and will go to city council for review later this year.

The first show sponsored by Spotlight was held on August 27th by 100 Black Men of Savannah. They presented their play titled *Broken Wings*, which focuses on incarcerated youth. Approximately 135 people were in attendance. The Spotlight Facility Usage Program provides a subsidy for nonprofit organizations to purchase rental space at the Cultural Arts Center at a free or discounted rate. The subsidy amount is based on the organization's operating budget. The next Spotlight event will be held on October 1st by DOC Savannah. DOC Savannah will show a screening of *Little Satchmo* and follow with a Q&A session with Sharon Preston Folta Little, Louis Armstrong's daughter. This showing will also be the first to use the Cultural Arts Center's new seating registration software for the Ben Tucker Theater. There will be two more Spotlight events happening in the Fall. The Savannah Repertory Theater will present *24 Hour Plays* on October 22nd at 8 PM and The Tybee Ballet Theater will present *Land of the Sweets from the Nutcracker* on November 19th. For more information on events happening at the Savannah Cultural Arts Center visit <https://www.savannahga.gov/1058/Upcoming-Events>.

There were over 250 students attending classes and workshops for Fall 1. Registration for Fall 2 term will open next week. The gallery opening for *Vessels*, the current exhibition was on Friday, September 9th at 5 PM. *Vessels* is a collaboration show with The Telfair Museums' Friends of African American Arts. The exhibit will feature over 21 artists with works from across various mediums including drawing, painting, sculpture, and collage. The *Vessels* exhibition will run through October 8th. Happening the same night at 7 PM was a collaboration performance between the Savannah Philharmonic and the Savannah Cultural Arts Center. Performances took place both on stage and in air and included original works of aerial dance, ballet, and modern. About 100 people came out for both events despite there being bad weather. The next double event being held at the Savannah Cultural Arts Center will be the opening of an exhibit called *El Salon* presented by SOY x SOY followed by a Halloween performance in the Ben Tucker theater.

The Arts & Economic Impact Study by Americans for the Arts has started, and the commissioners help is needed with passing out audience surveys. The survey can be completed via paper or online using a QR code that will be provided and will only take a couple of minutes. The purpose of this survey is

to gauge the economic impact of spending by nonprofit arts and culture organizations and the event-related spending by their audiences.

VI. Contract Coordinator’s Report – C. Bogle

Mr. Bogle also began with thanking the commissioners for the work they did with the ACE program applications. He reminded the commissioners that comments were still needed for ACE organizations. Upcoming events from ACE recipients are The Savannah Jazz Festival on September 23rd and 24th, Phil in the Park with the Savannah Philharmonic on October 8th and PRIDE weekend with Savannah Pride Center on October 28th and October 29th.

The Spotlight Facility Usage program is scheduled to open for applications for the months February through June 2023 on October 1st and will close on November 15th. This subsidy includes rental of the Ben Tucker Theatre or Studio Theatre with the following services: one technical rehearsal, one dress rehearsal, the performance, use of an Audio/Visual Technician, front desk staff, a SCAC manager, a cleaning crew, the box office, and concessions stand. Any non-profit that wants to put on an art performance or lecture series can apply.

Weave-A-Dream (WAD) is now closed, and all funding has been allocated. It will reopen to new applications in January 2023.

Elections will be held for Commission chair in December. Current Chair Patrick Kelsey has reached the two-term limit stated in the guidelines. Nominations are now being accepted and are confidential.

VII. Chair Report – P. Kelsey

Commission Chair Kelsey stated that he has not received many post discussion ACE panel survey responses. Input is needed about ACE and WAD funding processes. Findings from these responses will be forwarded to the (Cultural Resources) department. The link to the survey will be reshared.

Commission Chair Kelsey presented a motion to suspend the commission’s policy requiring six minimum evaluations to be completed during the calendar year 2022. Most of the commissioners have not completed the required 6 evaluations. If all evaluation expectations are not met, the policy states that the commissioner is removed from the Cultural Arts Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sharon Aikens. The motion to suspend the six minimum evaluations was carried.

VIII. Vice-Chair Report – M. Chaney

No report was presented.

IX. Sub-Committee Reports:

- **Youth Advisory Sub-Committee Report – T. Flagg**
Commissioner Tana Flagg was absent. Commissioner Kareem McMichael stated that the objectives of the Youth Advisory subcommittee currently were to connect with under resourced groups and what their needs are pertaining to the WAD & ACE grants. The Youth Advisory subcommittee would also like to create a survey which would result in some type of policy statement that would help advocate for services and resources, as well as develop an overview statement to provide to possible partners. The target audience would be 6th through 12th graders. A partnership with the Deep Center, Loop It Up, and others is already in the works to obtain a sample size of about 50 students. The survey would be distributed next year in the spring.
- **Public Art Sub-Committee Report – R. Hessler**
No report was presented.
- **City Priorities Sub-Committee Report – P. Kelsey**
No report was presented.
- **Weave-A-Dream Subcommittee Report**
The Weave-A-Dream program exists to provide small grants up to \$5,000 for small and emerging programs. This year the WAD budget was \$23,000. All \$23,000 has been allocated. A grant of \$3,500 was given to the Savannah Chatham Sustainability Coalition for their *Circles of Hope* program. Frank Callen Boys & Girls Club received \$2,500 for their *Arts & Literacy* program which will go into effect on November 7th. The Gordonston Community received \$1,500 for their *Gordonston Art Fair* slated to start on October 8th. Hello Neighbor received \$5,000 as a match grant. The Tybee Island Marine & Science Center received \$3,750 for *Whale Week*, which will take place in November. The Savannah Flute Association received a grant for \$1,750 for a *Baroque Music Day* on November 13th. The Tybee Ballet Theater received a grant in the amount of \$5,000 for the performance of *Land of Sweets*, scenes from *The Nutcracker*. They will perform at the Cultural Arts Center. WAD applications will reopen in January for fiscal year 2023 applications.

- **Spotlight Subcommittee Report**

Commissioner Kareem McMichael stated that applications for WAD will be accepted starting October 1st. For more information, including the guidelines you can visit the website at

<https://www.savannahga.gov/3460/Spotlight>.

X. Tabled Items - P. Kelsey

There were no tabled items on the agenda.

XI. ACE Recipients Evaluations

There were no comments made concerning ACE recipient evaluations.

XII. Adjournment – P. Kelsey

Meeting was adjourned at 7:24PM.

Next Cultural Affairs Commission Meeting: November 9, 2022

Special Meeting: December 14, 2022