



Full Commission Meeting Minutes

9/23/2014

4:30 pm to 6:20 pm

DCCA Large Conference Room

Dial In: 1.877.919.3206- Pass Code: 1848681#

Attending Commissioners: Judith Terra, CHAIR; Lavinia Wohlfarth, VICE-CHAIR; Marvin Bowser; Susan Clampitt; Rhona Wolfe Friedman; Alma Gates; Edmund C. Fleet; Darrin L. Glymph; Barbara Jones (Phone); Rogelio Maxwell; MaryAnn Miller; James E. Laws, Jr.; José Alberto Uclés; Gretchen Wharton

Attending Staff Members: Lionell Thomas, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; Lisa Richards Toney, DEPUTY DIRECTOR; Moshe Adams; Victoria Murray Baatin; Brittany Dibble; Tonya Jordan, David Markey

The Full Commission meeting of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities was called to order on September 23, 2014 at 4:32 pm at 200 I Street, SE, Suite 1400, Washington, DC 20003.

Adoption of the Agenda

- Commissioner Mary Ann Miller motioned to adopt the agenda. The motion was seconded.
The motion carried. Unanimous

Adoption of the July 10th Minutes

- Chair Terra motioned to adopt the July 10th Minutes. The motion was seconded.
The motion carried. Unanimous

Adoption of the July 24th Minutes

- Chair Terra motioned to adopt the July 24th Minutes. The motion was seconded.
The motion carried. Unanimous

Chairperson's Report

- Chair Terra thanked the commissioners and staff in attendance, noting that she was excited about the upcoming public Annual Meeting.
 - Chair Terra commented that the public annual meeting was an opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the public and update the community on the work of the Commission.
 - Chair Terra noted that the Commission held 26 grants panels, more than ever before. She gave kudos to commissioners and staff for their time, energy, and devotion to the panel process.
 - Chair Terra reported that, since the last Full Commission meeting on July 24, 2014, meetings had been conducted with the Cultural Planning Group, the firm responsible for the agency's strategic plan.
 - Chair Terra reported that the dedication of the Chuck Brown Memorial Park took place Friday, August 22, 2014.
 - Chair Terra reported on the number of exciting events coming up, including the major Lois Mailou Jones exhibition which will open at the gallery at 200 I Street, SE on Monday, November 3, 2014.
 - Chair Terra also reminded the commissioners of the upcoming Art All Night to be held on Saturday, September 27, 2014. She then noted that it is an incredible concept and thanked Commissioner Gretchen Wharton, in particular, for bringing the idea to the Commission.
 - Chair Terra then reminded the commissioners of the upcoming Mayor's Arts Awards. The event will be held on Wednesday, October 29, 2014 at the Lisner Auditorium.
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Executive Director's Report

- Executive Director Lionell Thomas opened by stating that the agency had made marked improvement since he began his tenure as Executive Director in 2012.
- Executive Director Thomas noted that he and many others have seen the growth of the Commission over the years with regards to planting the seeds for many of the things the Commission is able to realize today.
- Executive Director Thomas specifically noted such accomplishments as the Arts Educations Census and the Comprehensive Environmental Survey of Arts Resources (CESAR).
- Executive Director Thomas also commented that, since 2012, the Commission's budget has risen from \$4 million to \$17 million.
- Executive Director Thomas noted that the Commission is very proud of the dedicated funding legislation and hopes that the agency will at some point receive the dedicated funding.
- Executive Director Thomas reminded the commissioners that the Commission was really intimately involved with the development of the Creative Economy Strategy. He further noted that the Commission is directly responsible for undertaking many of the initiatives, some of which have already been implemented.
- Executive Director Thomas reported that he sits on the National Assembly of State Art Agencies (NASAA) board, and many colleagues from around the country revere to the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities as a leader in the field.
- Executive Director Thomas commented that he believes the Commission is a national model, for much of what the Commission does set the stage for other arts agencies across the country. He further noted that when it comes to finding best practices and being a role model, the Commission is it, and he is very proud of the staff and commissioners coming together to make that happen.
- Executive Director Thomas reported that he is a part of the NASAA search for an Executive Director/CEO. He commented that he believes this is important for it ties the agency to the national stage.
- Executive Director Thomas then reported that on he was invited to meet with NEA Chairman Dr. Jane Chu during her recent site visit to Dance Place.
- Executive Director Thomas commented that the intense long-range strategic planning process will set the stage for future development and investment.
- Commissioner Darrin Glymph asked about the status of the dedicated arts funding legislation.
- Executive Director Thomas answered that the agency was not slated to receive any realization of that legislation until FY16. He also noted that the legislation is based on the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), which indicates that the District must reach a certain monetary threshold before it is able to dedicate additional funding.
- Executive Director Thomas further answered that the agency is interested in revisiting that legislation and called upon the support of those commissioners who practice law to help make that legislation tighter.
- Commissioner Marvin Bowser echoed Chair Terra's earlier statement noting that the grants panels and the commissioners serving as conveners for those panels is the most important work that the Commission does. He then asked where the Commission was in terms of approving panel recommendations and getting grant awards out to the community.
- Executive Director Thomas answered that a schedule is in place, one that Director of Grants Moshe Adams can speak more directly to. Executive Director Thomas noted that the schedule calls for the Grant Allocation Committee to meet before recommendations are made to the full Commission. He noted that notifications will be distributed by the end of October.
- Commissioner Bowser inquired if the awardees have been notified that they will be awarded grant funds.
- Executive Director Thomas responded that they have not been notified, as an award amounts will first need to be determined by the Grant Allocation Committee.

Budget

- Commissioner Rhona Wolfe Friedman opened by stating that the Finance Committee wanted to bring to the attention of the Commission new programs listed on the budget.
- Commissioner Friedman asked the commissioners to refer to line 13 of the FY15 budget called "Art Education Initiatives".
- Commissioner Friedman reported that it was the Finance Committee's recommendation that no one program be funded without going being brought before the full Commission for approval.
- Commissioner Friedman continued her report by stating that the entire budget was reviewed, and money was put aside for different line-items.
- Commissioner Friedman reported that the Finance Committee strongly felt that Public Art and other programs need to be brought before the full Commission for approval.
- Commissioner Friedman reported that, to approve the distributed FY15 budget, the commissioners are approving money to be put into placeholders for certain activities.
- Commissioner Friedman commented that the vote concerned should not be based on whether a commissioner likes or dislikes a particular program.
- Commissioner Friedman commented that the Finance Committee does not review programs.
- Commissioner Bowser commented that the Finance Committee is not the Grants Allocation Committee, so the Finance Committee did not do the Grants Allocation Committee's job.
- Executive Director Thomas noted that the Finance Committee also recommended that a budget narrative be provided.
- Commissioner Miller commented she understood why the Finance Committee put money into more broad categories, but she was not sure if she could accept the other proviso that no one program be funded without going being brought before the full Commission for approval. She went on to note that based on her experience with the agency for the past two years, that the full Commission has not reviewed every single project, specifically as it relates Art Education Committee and that such a measure would be moving into administrative workings of the agency.
- Commissioner Miller continued, stating that she would prefer to have more of a discussion before accepting that proviso either at the next Full Commission meeting or at an Executive Committee meeting.
- Commissioner Friedman stated that the proviso stands as the Finance Committee recommended it.
- Commissioner Friedman repeated the proviso noting that no one program be funded without going being brought before the full Commission for approval.
- Commissioner Friedman stated that the Finance Committee did not want to pass judgment on programs.
- Commissioner Friedman stated that the Finance Committee's intention is not to usurp authority from anyone.
- Executive Director Thomas asked whether or not the Finance Committee's recommendation and proviso concern just newer initiatives, citing the Larry Neal Writers' Awards which has been in place for years.
- Commissioner Friedman confirmed that the Finance Committee recommendation and proviso would only concern newer initiatives.
- Commissioner Wohlfarth noted the charge of the Finance Committee which was to review the budget. She went on to state that Commissioner Friedman has been pointing to wanting more clarity for new initiatives before going forward.
- Commissioner Wohlfarth noted that such recommendations would be discussed with the Policy Committee at another meeting.
- Commissioner Friedman thanked the Finance Committee and the Finance Manager for their hard work.
- Executive Director Thomas clarified that there were several documents transmitted and that the budget that was being voted on was FY2015 Budget that was just reviewed dated 9.18.2014.
- Commissioner Miller asked to hear the motion stated.

- Chair Terra called for a motion to accept the budget as it had been presented. Commissioner Friedman moved the motion. The motion was seconded.
The motion carried. Unanimous.
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Committee Reports

- Standing Committees
 - No Reports

Internal Committees

- Policy
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth reported, due to the Policy Committee having not met over the summer, the Committee will first meet to address such things as the budget and its categories.
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth referred the commissioners to information regarding the strategic plan contained in their meeting materials, including a list of the “Gate Keepers.”
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth reported that the Steering Committee had met for one introductory meeting as well as one working meeting last week.
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth informed the commissioners that the consultants of the Cultural Planning Group would be contacting them soon to involve them in the strategic plan.
 - Commissioner Friedman asked how the commissioners would be getting involved with the strategic planning process.
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth answered that each commissioner would be interviewed.
 - Executive Director Thomas also answered that the final part of the process is the final adoption, during which time commissioners adopt the initiatives suggested by the Cultural Planning Group.
 - Deputy Director Toney reported that the consultants have spent the past two weeks doing external analysis, with regards to trying to better understand the environment of the agency. She continued by stating that this is important prior to meeting with the commissioners, for when they do they will have a sentiment to share.
 - Chair Terra noted that commissioners would be updated the as the consultants made progress.
- Arts Education
 - Commissioner Miller referred to Executive Director Thomas’ report regarding a mention of the recent arts education census.
 - Commissioner Miller reported that she and Arts Education Coordinator David Markey will be planning a meeting of the Arts Education Committee to discuss the census before producing a report.
 - Commissioner Miller reported that the agency received kudos from the consultants who conducted the census as to the response rate, as well as some other things that they felt were only happening in the District of Columbia compared to other states and cities they have surveyed.
 - Commissioner Miller commented that the agency has a lot more to do and a lot more it wants to do, but that the District is in a good place compared to other cities.
 - Commissioner Miller reported that the Arts Education Committee will release the report towards the end of October 2014.
 - Commissioner Miller explained the census explored public and public charter elementary, middle, and high schools.

- Arts Education Coordinator David Markey commented that, by law, the No Child Left Behind Act denotes music and visual arts as core content subjects, thus making them as important as mathematics and language arts.
 - Arts Education Coordinator Markey continued by stating that representatives from Americans for the Arts as well as the Kennedy Center are interested in the data collected by the recent Commission census, and may attend the next meeting.
 - Arts Education Coordinator Markey stated that the next meeting regarding the arts education census will be a presentation of the census data to key stake holders, such as the Office of the State Superintendent and the Arts Education Committee.
 - Commissioner Gates requested to return to the subject of the strategic plan. She then asked if an educator was involved in the work on the strategic plan; someone who can really carry forth the idea of arts education in the strategic plan.
 - Deputy Director Lisa Richards Toney answered that thus far Ben Hall, the Music Director of DCPS, is currently a member of the Advisory Committee. She further answered that an invitation was extended Nathan Diamond, Director of Arts for DCPS, to serve on the Advisory Committee as well.
- Bylaws
 - Chair Terra reported that she has received a couple of recommendations regarding the bylaws. She continued by stating that she would like to consider the recommendations and, thus, would be in touch with the commissioners within the next couple of weeks.
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth reported that the committees from last year are still in place.

Ad Hoc Committees

- Public Art
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth reported that the Public Art Committee has been continuously talking about coming to the end of the Public Art Five Year Plan, particularly regarding initiatives that were mentioned but never implemented.
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth reported that the Public Art Committee will begin “direct-select” commissions but guidelines must first be established. She further reported that this direct-select process has been discussed at the last few meetings of the Public Art Committee, and it’s continues on.
 - Commissioner Bowser asked what the direct-select process would be selecting.
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth answered that the process would select artists.
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth requested a commissioner volunteer to work with her to help establish the before mentioned guidelines.
 - Commissioner Bowser commented that he still did not understand what or who the Public Art Committee was seeking to direct-select.
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth answered that the selected artist would be hired to create permanent public art.
 - Commissioner Bowser asked why the Public Art Committee was seeking one, individual artist.
 - Commissioner Wohlfarth answered it is because the Public Art Committee can and it was noted in the Public Art Five Year Plan. She further commented that the agency has been discussing the direct-select process for the past six months.
 - Commissioner Gretchen Wharton asked if there are community representatives currently serving on the Public Art Committee.

- Commissioner Wohlfarth answered that three people are about to be rotated off the Public Art Committee, and thus needed to be replaced. She continued by stating that this does not include the Vice Chair or commissioner appointments, but arts professionals.
- Public Art Manager Jordan reported that, currently, Martha Jackson Jarvis (artist), Molly Donovan (curator at the National Gallery of Art), Don Russell (Provisions Library), Commissioner Wohlfarth and Commissioner Gates serve on the Public Art Committee.
- Public Art Manager Jordan stated that, as the agency looked to replace the three rotating members of the Public Art Committee, it may be useful to find someone with an engineering, architecture, or landscape architecture background.
- Commissioner Wohlfarth reported that the agency received 4,000 applicants to enter the Art Bank in May of 2014.
- Commissioner Wohlfarth stated that the agency is becoming more selective regarding choosing which pieces are accepted into the Art Bank, which is why the Bylaws must change a little.
- Commissioner José Alberto Uclés stated that a loan program would offer much needed exposure to artists, as opposed to having their pieces stored away in a warehouse.
- Commissioner Darrin Glymph stated that a loan program is a great idea, but suggested the agency get in touch with the Office of the Attorney General since the artwork is the property of the District of Columbia.

Unfinished Business

- Chair Terra reported that, due to various commissioners having scheduled hearings before the City Council on Wednesday, September 24, 2014, she made the decision to re-evaluate committee members and chairmanship before the October Full Commission meeting.
- Commissioner Friedman asked if Chair Terra will be asking the commissioners which committees they prefer to be on.
- Chair Terra responded yes.
- Commissioner Wohlfarth reported that she had conducted research on the agency's 200 I Street, SE office building over the summer.
- Commissioner Wohlfarth explained that it was the agency's original intention to make the surrounding community aware of the fact that a gallery exists at the 200 I Street, SE space.
- Executive Director Thomas mentioned the Lois Mailou Jones exhibit -- the first of its kind, will be featured in the 200 I Street, SE gallery space.
- Executive Director Thomas noted that it is important to remember that the gallery is in a District of Columbia government space and is not private gallery.
- Commissioner Rogelio Maxwell asked if the agency had looked into his previous request regarding honoring Maida Whithers either at the upcoming Mayor's Arts Awards or in another way.
- Executive Director Thomas answered that he will be pleasantly surprised.

New Business and Announcements

- Chair Terra asked Executive Director Thomas if he would care to comment on the 5x5 Project.
- Executive Director Thomas referred to the packet distributed to the commissioners containing every press piece regarding the 5x5 Project.
- Executive Director Thomas referred to an article from Dirth Magazine, a national publication, the headline of which read, "The Arts Commission Has Upped Its Game in Public Art."
- Executive Director Thomas stated that there are challenges that come with beginning a new program. He further noted that this is the second installation of the 5x5 biannual project.

- Executive Director Thomas stated that he has been in the middle of a firestorm regarding the Anacostia installation at Good Hope Road. He further commented that this is one of the things that make a project such as the 5x5 Project both challenging and exciting at the same time, for it provokes conversation.
- Executive Director Thomas mentioned that he had personally appeared on several news stories, one of which was the Reeves Center—a project by Larry Cook and curator A.M. Weaver. He continued by stating that it was a very positive story regarding the large-scale banners all throughout the four quadrants of the city that contain little poems that highlights the African American male in a positive light.
- Executive Director Thomas reported that 90% of the attention the 5x5 Project has received is positive, the other 10% has been challenging.
- Executive Director Thomas reported that he and Chair Terra had some time to go down to and spend some time at the Good Hope Road exhibition viewing the artwork on the corner. He commented that it was a life-changing experience.
- Executive Director Thomas reported that he stands by the agency's intent to support the art and the artist, but he does not minimize the concerns from the community.
- Executive Director Thomas reported that it is not the agency's intent to offend anyone.
- Chair Terra noted there is a difference between temporary public art and deciding to put up a Picasso in the square. She further noted that, with regards to public art, it is not a question of whether one likes it or dislikes it.
- Chair Terra reminded the commissioners that the 5x5 Project is only temporary and is meant to provoke.
- Commissioner Maxwell commented that the 5x5 Project is great, progressive, and a really good wave of the future. He further noted that artists have been doing this since they first started making art: putting up temporary installations. He continued by stating that it is great to know that the city is making temporary public art a part of its fiber.
- Commissioner Friedman stated that she had been reading over the goals of the 5x5 Project, one of which is "to build relationship with local residents, galleries, and local institutions." She further commented that she believed the Commission's efforts have failed in that regard, for relationships have not been built that have been made public.
- Commissioner Miller stated that art is subjective. She further commented that expecting the commissioners to agree, with regards to whether a piece should or should not be exhibited, is totally unrealistic.
- Commissioner Miller stated that she sees the agency's role as one that will push the envelope.
- Commissioner Miller stated that the agency should absolutely be working with the community.
- Commissioner Miller referred to Councilmember Marion Barry's new documentary in which he expresses how positive he feels with regards to all of the development in and promotion of his Ward 8.
- Commissioner Miller stated that she feels the artist tried very hard to explain quite well what the art was. She further commented that the piece was very thoughtful.
- Commissioner Miller commented that it may have been incumbent on the agency to ensure that the lighting and signage of the piece was correct. She noted the agency may have fallen down in that respect.
- Commissioner Miller stated that she would never want to be a part of a group that censored something and took it down.
- Commissioner Bowser stated that the agency is not a private gallery, but a government agency.
- Commissioner Wohlfarth reminded the commissioners that they do not vote on content at any time or ever. She continued by stating it is the commissioners' jobs to vote on the budget.
- Commissioner Miller commented that the commissioners would never agree on content.
- Executive Director Thomas referred to Commissioner Bowser's previous comment, noting that the agency is a public agency.
- Commissioner Uclés stated that he was proud of the decision to keep the installation at Good Hope Road.
- Commissioner Antoinette Ford stated that she is not a resident of Ward 8, but still an East of the River resident of Ward 7 in Hill Crest.



- Commissioner Ford stated during one of her visits to the Good Hope Road site, she asked one man why he was taking photographs of the installation. She continued by stating the man noticed some broken mirrors incorporated into the piece were reflecting the image of the new buildings being constructed across the street.
- Commissioner Ford continued by stating the man believed the installation, which was filled with old and rotting pieces, was reflecting the change that is coming to the neighborhood.
- Commissioner Ford stated that she would find it patronizing should a group of commissioners come to her neighborhood and try to tell her what the installation was supposed to be.
- Commissioner Miller commented that the agency must be careful regarding the press, for the press' ultimate objective is to sell newspapers.

Adjournment

- With no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 pm.