

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND **Approved**
Arts and Cultural Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
September 28, 2015
3:00p.m. – Conference Room # 3

Committee Members Present: Chairman Jane Joseph, Jim Collett, Meg Eberly, Bob Lee, Lisa Snider and Ben Wolfe (by phone)

Committee Members Absent: Vice Chairman Maryann Bastnagel, Janice Gray, Hannah Horne

Town Council Present: Kim Likins and Tom Lennox

Town Staff Present: Jill Foster, Deputy Director, Community Development

1. Call to Order

Chairman Joseph called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.

2. FOIA Compliance

Public notification of this meeting has been published and posted in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. Approval of the Agenda

The committee **approved** the agenda as submitted by general consent.

4. Presentation and Discussion:

Chairman Joseph introduced today's guest speaker and requested that she make her presentation.

Mary Briggs, President & CEO, Hilton Head Island Symphony Orchestra

Ms. Briggs gave a summary of the Symphony Orchestra's history. Eight years ago at the beginning of the Recession, the Orchestra was challenged by the slowing economy and lack of public interest in their events. The united 24-member Board determined they needed to make an artistic change in spite of pushback, and to focus on 'going forward.' They pared down expenses by 20% each year and tapped into their reserve fund. The Board did not re-new the music director's contract, but hired a new music director who turned things around so that today the Orchestra is financially and artistically strong, with a business model based on actuals of the previous year and upcoming trends. They have 3 full time employees and 6 part time employees, with a union for the musicians, which worked with the Board to create the healthy condition they are in today. They receive around 40% income from ticket sales, 40% from private donations, 10% from the ATAX, and 10% from business donations. In 2014, their attendance at events was 12,000, with 2,000 students participating in youth programs. This did not include their attendance at Symphony Under the Stars. This event attracts younger attendees (over age 40) as opposed to other events (over age 60).

Ms. Briggs explained their goal is to unite, inspire, and enrich the Lowcountry through music, focusing on local and regional young musicians, and to enrich via educational programs and collaboration with other groups. She explained the collaborative efforts they have with the Art League of Hilton Head Island, the Hilton Head Dance Theatre, and the Choral Society.

Ms. Briggs described their 3 major functions: 1) 17 orchestra events/year with family-priced tickets; 2) an international piano competition which will be live streamed (this year they received 149 applicants), and 3) youth programs via musicians teaching in schools and at the Boys and Girls Club.

Obstacles for the Orchestra were described as: 1) could be more successful if all the arts are celebrated together; and 2) the constraining church and Arts Center venues (church pews, sound in some areas, what music they can play, time for all concerts and practice sessions, conflicts with church event schedules) and with lack of opportunity for growth due to limited space. The cost at the church is \$42,000/year and \$9,000 at the Arts Center. The inability for the Orchestra to expand their attendance and programs is hurting them, as they cannot stay stagnant or they will 'go backwards.' They have grown to 1000 tickets subscribers this year. An ideal Concert Hall setting would contain 1200-1500 seats with good acoustics at each seat. The Orchestra needs Town help with such a hall, but can also help to get private funds to support its construction. The time to get this done is challenging to them.

Ms. Briggs outlined areas the Orchestra supports: 1) creation of an Office of Cultural Affairs (with Town and Chamber of Commerce support); 2) the Town giving more direction to the Chamber for marketing the Island as an Arts Destination and not just for golf, beach, and tennis; 3) the creation of a shared calendar of events; and 4) assistance in planning for the arts in the future of the Town. They are also looking at ways to attract younger attendees (having shorter concerts, different locations other than a church), and having more music events to celebrate Island Gullah and Latino cultures.

Chairman Joseph thanked Ms. Briggs for her presentation.

5. New Business

The Committee discussed Janice Gray's power point presentation on the Residents Survey taken at the Latino and Italian Festivals, a Native Islander Church and at 2 Community Forums held in September. They found out the results were similar to the survey completed by the Cultural Planning Group in 2014.

Jim Collett discussed the African Children's Festival where 650 people showed up as an example of the kind of program that can draw a very diverse audience in terms of age and ethnicity. The Jr. Jazz Festival was cited as a similar type of program.

The Committee also discussed the need to have other funds available for any new central 501(c)(3) group so that all arts organizations would not 'feed from the same trough.' They

discussed different ideas such as having a ‘Day for the Arts’ event, which could possibly become a fund-raiser for a central arts organization. This is similar to a ‘Stampede’ event held in Hopewell Valley, NJ where fiberglass steers were painted by groups and auctioned off and events in many other arts towns.

Chairman Joseph described a recent event held at Penn Center by the SC Arts Commission, where speakers from ArtPlace America (www.artplaceamerica.org) discussed a set of grants to create ‘models to solve’ ten community problems, such as Public Safety and Economic Development. Their goal is to use the arts for creative place making in problem solving. These grants range from \$50,000-500,000. South Carolina is one of seven states which has not yet applied for these grants. This is a 10-year program (ending 2020), which will award 25 grants/year. Other attendees from Beaufort and Bluffton suggested applying as a county to tackle bringing diverse ethnic groups together.

Chairman Joseph announced that at the next meeting, Ms. Eberly will present the results of her surveys. The four October meetings of the Committee will focus on their proposed recommendations. Chairman Joseph emphasized that she wants the Committee members to feel good about their final recommendations and to reach consensus. She would like everyone to voice their opinions and find compromise if needed.

Councilman Kim Likins also discussed the possibility of a presentation at the November Town Council workshop. Councilman Likins said that because the Arts and Cultural Strategic Planning Committee is a Council-created special committee, similar to the Circle to Circle Committee, that the new facilitator hired to conduct the Workshop thought it was appropriate for a presentation.

Chairman Joseph asked that for the next meeting, all Committee members take their Statement of Work and think about what their answers would be to each item, and be ready to discuss those ideas with the other Committee members. The Committee will determine which to keep, which to combine, and which to put into something like an appendix for future reference.

6. Public comment

Jo Qualiana introduced her company, HiltonHeadNightOut.com as a free calendar for the community open to all who want to post on it.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m. by general consent.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

October 5, 2015

Jill Foster
Secretary

Jane Joseph
Chairman