

MINUTES

Seattle Music Commission Meeting

Wednesday, January 20, 2021 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

MS Teams Conference

Commissioners Present: Reese Tanimura (Chair), Sharlese Metcalf (Vice Chair), Daniel Pak, Joleen Hughes, Ben Hunter, Sue Ennis, Terry Morgan, Nate Omdal, Jerry Everard, Paula Madrigal

Commissioners Absent: Ben Secord, Kitty Wu

City Staff Present: Alex Rose, Scott Plusquellec, Meli Darby, Ashraf Hasham, Randy Engstrom

Guests: Leigh Bezekoff, Shannon Welles, Shannon Halberstadt (Keep Music Live / WANMA), Simon Okelo (founder and ED of One Vibe Africa, musician), Mikhael Mei Williams (Seattle Arts Commission)

Call to Order: The was called to order at 12:09 p.m. by Reese Tanimura.

Public Comment: N/A

Welcome – Reese Tanimura

- Introductions – name, pronouns, affiliations
- Feels good to start our year here, with collaborators like yourselves

Regular Commission Business – All

- Review Agenda
- Approval of Nov 18, 2020 SMC Meeting Minutes: postponed to next meeting (Feb 17, 2021)

Guests: Shannon Welles, Leigh Bezekoff, Shannon Halberstadt

Shannon W

- Start by explaining the difference between WANMA and Keep Music Live
- WA Nightlife and Music Association, convened early in pandemic
 - powered by volunteers who advocate for venues at city, county, state, federal levels
 - currently operating without a legal structure, no staff
 - Priorities: 1) collectively advocate for policy issues as we reopen venues; 2) lower barriers and advance equity; 3) gather better data about live music sector; 4) health and social safety net for staff; 5) youth career pathways; 6) antiracist and antisexist trainings; 7) reopening guidelines
 - before everyone was a competitor, now there's a spirit of collaboration going forward

- Keep Music Live is an offshoot of WANMA
 - is a fundraising nonprofit with a board
 - Whatcom Community Foundation is its fiscal sponsor
 - Education/advocacy work

Leigh

- communication and collaboration with fans and music lovers led to legislation: Save Our Stages Act (dedicated efforts from folks at NIVA, who were looking at WANMA, as we were some of the first to organize, first to receive government support/funding thanks to King County)
- still learning the specifics of the Shuttered Venue Operator Grant (SOS → SVOG)
 - up to 45% of operating revenue from 2019 - represents a significant amount that eligible clubs are able to apply for
 - not every club in WA will be able to qualify for this (need to have full ticketing and other requirements of the grants), so will be continuing to fundraise via Keep Music Live WA to keep our music ecosystem intact
 - announced yesterday that the KML grant application is open now
 - Jan 19-Feb 2 application process (one of at least two granting periods) - need to get the word out
 - equity: we've talked a lot about "building back better" - BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, women-owned, or businesses that can demonstrate a commitment to equity will get preference

Leigh and Shannon are excited to work with SMC

Reese: thank you for your hard work on this!

Alex: How to best spread the word?

- Leigh: Like, share KML social media posts; thorough [FAQ page](#) and guidelines page; feedback from applicant was that it was easy to apply to

Reese: is SBA's site the best place to send people for info on SVOG?

- Leigh: best way to stay plugged in is for them to join [NIVA](#) or [NITO](#) (booking agents group)
- For KML grant questions, reach out to Whatcom Community Foundation: aspaulding@whatcomcf.org.
- Shannon: and yes the [SBA site has SVOG details](#), and they'll have upcoming webinars

SMC Top 3 Strategic Priorities for 2021

Alex shared her screen to review the 20-21 work plan

- Exec Committee
 - Leads charge on filling vacancies on the commission via Mayoral and CC appointments
 - City of Music vision - now outdated - where do we go from here
- A+ED
 - Advocate for legislative change + workforce development – gig workers, social safety net, admissions tax expansion to include men's professional sports
 - Build stronger ties with other sectors

- Y+C
 - Career pipelines for youth in music, entertainment, gaming, and other creative industries
 - Centering youth in this work as we're doing it

We know one priority is to get seats filled.

Reese

- Re commission vacancies and nominations, we had 100+ nominees identified between community, staff, and commissioners. Top 25 whittled down by committee – of those, we'll do outreach and see who's interested, and present those to Council/Mayor for appointment
- Inclusive Creative Industry / economy / ecosystem is something that has been talked about globally – as OFM moves towards ICI, let's think inclusively about how culture and creativity within other existing industries (tech, environmental) plays a part
 - Telling the story of the importance/value of culture, creativity, innovation in the 21st century workplace and the value our sector brings to other industries
- Work plan was created with these in mind - how does that sound? Anything else we want to call out specifically? What has popped up in the last couple months? What may need to be integrated into our work as we move forward?

Ben H

- As this is our first meeting of the 13th month of 2020, let's think about the macro - what do we want to accomplish in 2021?
- How can **nontraditional venues** fit into some of this work - engage new tactics, strategies

Nate

- Yes, what Ben said! Want to keep top of mind the state reopening plan – some inequities in the way that's worded. We can be vocal in **making sure the legislation and guidelines don't have too narrow a scope.**

Chris

- Ben and Nate, appreciate your comments. I like the idea of zooming out - what are the 3 pillars that SMC can have leverage, authority, influence on? There are a lot of things to address, to fix - we could go 100 different ways. Having a clear focus while onboarding new commissioners will be helpful.

Alex

- Onboarding new commissioners yes, and also bringing in a new ICI Director will also be part of SMC's body of work this year
- Seems like lots of 'navigating change' shows up in operations of SMC and of industry as well - given the state guidelines around reopening – **theme: navigating transitions**

Reese: something that came up at FED yesterday re cultural space and equitable development is the fact that there are lots of communities and grassroots coalitions that have put in years of work (scrappy, resilient) and when we talk about economy, how do we make sure we're honoring and incorporating those voices, and adding value by providing economic resources to those communities

- Traditionally, there has been a narrative or a binary around 'economy' and 'community'; which doesn't serve our greater goals - all cultural institutions that uphold music and artists centering community should not be 'othered' in these convos

Ben (in chat): Here here. It's not that we need to reinvent wheels, many organizations have already been looking to the future and have solutions that just need to be included

Theme: resourcing community generated and community led solutions (including innovative business models) during economic recovery

Alex: Role of SMC in resourcing community - is it about awareness building?

- Reese: yes, and it's a commitment to make sure, when we're putting policy solutions or proposals in front of funders - or even corporate partners - we make sure we know where those ideas are coming from, they're named, and communities are lifted up in those conversations
- Nate: To your question about resourcing, Alex, musicians' union is working on transforming 1099s into W2s to access social safety net resources, using systems that already exist
 - Alex and Nate follow up on this

Randy: state and local aid, plus Biden's \$1.9T plan could be interesting here (most CARES Act resources have been spent as of Dec 31, 2020; don't know all the specifics of SVOG)

- Three big opportunities I'm seeing at the federal level
 1. Reimagining worker protections (e.g. 1099s)
 2. Various local WPA models like Hope Corps
 3. White House policy focus on creative workforce (federal cabinet position on arts & culture & creative economy?)
- Need good partners at state level – recommends that **staff connect with Lily Wilson Codega at OIR**
- Nate: Sen. Cantwell is on national subcommittee for nontraditional trades - working on it with Nevada and NY senators

Terry: great goals; one thing I'd like to see the Commission do is administer a **501c3 so we can start fundraising, disbursing money to create events or subsidize projects**

- Access to funds, fulfill priorities more independently
- Reese: might be good to find an existing org to partner with! Harkens back to airport music pilot, and how we sparked the project but Gigs4U took it over - can be something we talk about further - connects to City of Music vision, Career Days, etc - manifesting some of interventions we're working on

Joleen: I've been saying this for a couple years, but can we **use our positions as commissioners to have conversations with local companies** – could help change the perception that the City of Seattle is not super business-friendly. I'd like to change that perception.

- We could reach out to the businesses that have done okay during the pandemic, and educate them on what we've been learning about, how they can help music/arts/culture
- Use our connections in a more sanctioned way; can't tell people to do stuff, but can raise awareness
- Ben H: I would expect that would be the job of this new Creative Industries Director, and SMC can help with those connections.

- We should be expanding the definition of business – e.g. as a musician myself, I am a business – but as currently defined, ‘business’ is overrun with industry that’s not quite inclusive
- Chris (in chat): Ben: Private/public, industry/community, connective building is a requirement and priority of the ICI Director position.

Joleen: one of the things I’m concerned about is we’re going to run into a shortfall of money, generally what happens is taxes increase

- hurts micro (1-2 person) businesses the most – musicians, small businesses
- can we **advocate for a tax deferral** (e.g. B&O)?
- Nate: Maybe we can **take this convo into a subcommittee or taskforce**? Would be great to hold space in the A+ED space. Low hanging fruit and even the men’s pro sports admission tax can help advance these priorities.
- Jerry: I think there is a big problem here with the definition "business" and what businesses do. Get recognition of the govt's tax system not affecting businesses equitably.
 - E.g. Trying to get property tax system changed, so that it’s clear that not all properties are taxed at their ‘highest and best use’, such as cultural and creative spaces
- Reese: Love that - we are storytellers as cultural and creative workers - how these new taxes affect small businesses and creatives - can tell the story to legislators and policy-makers - scale and scope of impact - making the story more accessible and 'in your pocket' when meeting with politicians who care about community

Nate: another example of educating/awareness building is work with SMASH around educating medical professionals to understand artists and creative workers roles being different

Joleen: CMs really like **reports and studies** - maybe if we can get someone, a tax firm that specializes in music tax, to **show these are the actual impacts**. Maybe do a case study on how the numbers work (**razor thin margins to show CMs**)

Ben: when I joined the Commission, noticed there wasn't a public awareness, transparency. **Building greater awareness can help SMC** harness other community members’ experience, knowledge, expertise

Reese: connect the impact of current legislation as it exists to actual gig workers, artists, venues, others that operate outside of the "factory" style systems (e.g. MS, AMZ, etc.)

- Ben: also humble ourselves to what we don't know
- Nate: anytime we can put a policy maker in the same room as an arts worker or business owner, it’s powerful

Reese: let’s continue this conversation in our committees

Government Updates

ICI Director update

- Request is to amplify this opportunity to our networks, ensure there's a great pool of candidates

- *[Chris's message in chat] Thank you for your help sharing the word with your networks about the ICI Director. There's opportunity to share more, with two weeks left in before the application window closes on 2/2.
As noted in my email yesterday, the City utilizes an array of sources to ensure an equitable process, and we're looking for feedback on any non-traditional, creative centered BIPOC groups that can fill in the gaps.
Once submission process closes, there will be an external interview panel in late February, which we hope to seat this or next week.
Goal is to have permanent director in the office by end of March*

New state performing arts/live entertainment guidelines (Scott)

- Webinar on Fri at 1:00 - Karen Hanan from ArtsWA reviewing reopening guidelines
- Phasing has changed - two instead of four
- We're connected to neighboring counties - we're dependent on larger population base to get our infection rates down
- Indoor - no more than 6 people permitted
- Outdoor events - ticketed groups only, groups of 10, max 75
- Phase 2 – time limit 2 hours; outdoor - groups of 15, max 200

Executive Session: Nominations

- Reach out to Alex with your contacts on this list (who you can reach out to)
- Alex to follow up with materials! Include a note about the option to attend committee meetings

Double check with committees that the existing times work

- Joleen: Nate/A+ED, mid day is tough for me

Pak: Y+C increasing the membership of the committee, incl folks outside of music/arts (Kirk Mead, David Keyes)

- what is the policy around bringing on additional members, starting task forces?
 - Reese: consider voting authority
 - Alex follow up
- Nate: would like to put our heads together on this, similar questions related to the conversation Nate is having with Jason/Vera and IATSE
- Reese: dedicate some of the time at Exec Cmte

Nate: keep an eye on Cornish - news is coming fast

- PDA might help here

Meeting adjourned at 2:05 pm.