

MINUTES
Seattle Music Commission Meeting
Wednesday, November 17, 2021 12-1:30 p.m.
Zoom Conference

Commissioners Present: Kitty Wu (Chair), Daniel Pak (Vice Chair), Nick Vaerewyck, Sue Ennis, Denise Burnside, Adra Boo, Eric Lilavois, Casey McCay, Paula Madrigal, Keola Kama, Shannon Welles, Bunnie Moore, Jason Clackley, Terry Morgan, Nate Omdal, Jovino Santos Neto

Commissioners Absent: Joleen Hughes, Andrew Joslyn, Anne O’Dowd, Jessica Toon

City Staff Present: Alex Rose, Shaprece Richardson, Scott Plusquellec

Guests: Vivian Hua, James Miles (Seattle Arts Commission); Lacey Leavitt, Myron Partman (Film Task Force); Amy Lillard, Carmen Orange (Washington Filmworks/Whipsmart); Kate Becker (King County Creative); Reese Tanimura (SMC Emerita)

Call to Order: The was called to order at 12:04 p.m. by Kitty Wu.

Public Comment: N/A

Welcome – Kitty Wu

Kitty welcomed everyone, shared a land acknowledgment, and congratulated Kate Becker for her leadership role on mayor-elect Harrell’s transition team.

Guest Panel: Opportunities for Creative Sector Alignment

(Guests listed above) Nate introduced/moderated the panel. SMC would like to align on common goals.

Q: What are your current City legislative priorities?

- Vivian/James (Seattle Arts Commission)
- Asked for stable funding for the ARTS office – seems to be looking good
 - Concerned about Cultural Space
 - Rent forgiveness for arts orgs that the City houses (e.g. LANGSTON)
 - Concerns around the leadership transition at the ARTS office

- Amy Lillard (Washington Filmworks/Whipsmart)
- Mostly has a statewide focus
 - Concern: no Creative Industries Director that has policy authority within the city

Myron/Lacey (Film Task Force)

- Stability and support within the city
- Creating a Film Commission that is in line with SMC (outgrowth of the Film Task Force)
 - o In April, were going to present work plan at a public event
 - o Instead, were asked to meet privately with OED leadership and DM Washington
 - Not moving forward with Film Commission – wanted to prioritize economic recovery and managing federal funds
- Everything with an equity and inclusion lens

Shannon (Washington Nightlife and Music Association)

- WANMA formed during the pandemic – venue owners, operators, workers, music stakeholders
- Engaged a bit with Bruce Harrell toward end of campaign season; only candidate who included nightlife along with arts, culture
 - o **Harrell said he would restore a cabinet-level position to support Creative Industries**
 - o **Also committed to meeting quarterly with WANMA**
- Want to build relationships
- Want to maintain Nightlife Advocate position, nightlife advocacy to be integrated into other departments (e.g. enforcement of Musicians' Priority Load Zones)
- Safety and transit issues
- Healthcare options for cultural workers and artists

Kate (King County Creative)

- At KC, focused on equitable recovery
- \$34.4M to cultural sector – most of this is going to Seattle
- Opened Harbor Island production facility during the pandemic
- Concerned about the diminishment of support for the Office of Film + Music / Creative Industries
- Film Commission and work that Film Task Force did should be honored
- Looking out for workers – some creative workers have had to leave the city/region
- Wants strong Creative Industries leadership at the City

Q: Who have you been talking to (elected officials, stakeholders)?

Vivian/James

- SAC as a whole has talked with City Council (some individually, written and verbal); Council has been pretty responsive
- Met with Mayor Durkan and DM Washington
- Inspire WA
- ArtsFund (Sung Yang – board chair, Michael Greer – pres/CEO)
- 4 cultural districts

Amy

- All City Council members and/or their staff

- Sent letter to Mayor Durkan and all deputy mayors (film, music, special events) requesting meetings – no response
- Working on a bill for Olympia in 2022, so have talked with Seattle area legislators at state level

Myron/Lacey

- Same as Filmworks
- OED’s Director Banks, Deputy Director Inay
- County

Shannon

- More engagement with City Council last year than this year
- Shannon represented nightlife on the Recovery Task Force, so had some engagement with Dir. Banks and Durkan’s office, but not much came out of that

Kate

- Seattle Film Summit held a session to hear from candidates (OED sponsored this session)
 - o Bruce Harrell and Sara Nelson stood out as supportive of film
 - **Consider reaching out to CM-elect Nelson**

Q: How are you quantifying success (dollar amount, positions)?

James/Vivian

- Money! Financial support
- Seeing people do what they say
- **Request to share with us Music Commission's alignments that you see after hearing our download**

Amy

- If we generate 8.3% of Washington’s GDP, don’t we deserve a full staff?
- Ask for all staff, resources and branding to be returned to OFM

Shannon

- True investment of resources, restoring the OFM positions, making arts, culture, film, music a priority
- People doing what they say they will do

What about career-connected learning and digital equity?

- Digital equity came up a lot at state level in terms of needs of creative industries
 - o Federal dollars for infrastructure development going toward this
- Creative youth development important to prioritize, investment in future of our industries
 - o Much of Film Task Force’s work was focused on youth programs, but need staff and funding

Debrief Panel and Identify SMC Priorities

Noticings, learnings, priorities?

- **Cultural districts might present new opportunities for SMC, advocacy pathway**
- Sad to learn about Film Commission being halted
- Effectiveness of WANMA as a non-City entity
 - o **Form a coalition between SAC, SMC, Film, WANMA – an affinity group that can work toward collective impact** (lots of support for this idea)
- Cultural spaces
 - o As long as a building sits empty, it becomes a detriment
 - o Warehouse spaces, underground
 - o “For and by” – give money, make it safe, and then leave it alone
 - Vera has safety kits but no program (due to lack of funding)
- **Resounding desire to advocate to restore all OFM positions**
 - o Restore and evolve all creative industries positions, especially those that can affect policy and support cultural spaces via The Cultural Space Agency. (Only 6% of all arts and cultural spaces in Seattle are owned/managed by communities of color)
 - o What is the role of the transition team? To guide the mayor in filling these roles?
 - Very little info at this point
- **Priority should be the musicians, the people who have spent nearly 2 years without work**
 - o Alex mentioned Hope Corps, the City’s initiative to put creative workers back to work
 - o **Address health care/health insurance, rent, or other artist living and working assistance** to keep artists in Seattle/Puget sound region
- **Ensure that Black folx in arts/music don’t get de-prioritized** (especially since there’s not even Black representation on Council)

Focusing again on the “Why”

- November is historically the month when SMC develops work plan for the following year
- Want to make sure our time is impactful, and that we support our city
- Displacement is real
 - o Consider how to use King Street Station 2nd floor as a jumping off point – a model that can be replicated with various arts/cultural uses
 - KSS wasn’t occupied for 60 years (aside from the train station portion) – what other vacant space might be put to use?
- Hurts to hear that people feel burned after doing lots of advocacy with no accountability
- Together we have lots of power as leaders, influencers
 - o Previous advice from CM Herbold to SMC: If you see a problem, speak on it – contact Council and let them know because it might not be on Council’s radar
 - o More power with more coalition building!

Additional thoughts:

- There’s a different language that is used in these meetings (lots of City acronyms) – some new commissioners are doing lots of learning and absorbing
- Downtown Seattle – so many spaces are empty, music is invisible. **Have local music businesses set up pop-up spaces in vacant spaces.**
- **Advocacy, networking, collectivism – SMC is an incubator for all of that, but how to take it out to our individual networks**

- Re restoring positions – fought for this in 2020
 - o Between music, film, arts communities – hundreds of hours of time were put into Creative Industries Director position – if we’re not **insistent about honoring community input**, then it’s all for naught
- OFM has always had very little budget to work with, but consider other departments’ budgets that could support our work. Examples:
 - o HSD has millions of dollars that go towards workforce
 - o Digital equity money in IT
 - o Fee recovery for special events
- ^ if the City is going to hold up arts and culture as a central part of recovery (or to attract World Cup etc.), need to show that investment across the board
- Panel was a chance to get comfortable with habitual communication with other stakeholder groups

Next steps

- Letter to new mayor
- Invite him to a meeting

Regular Commission Business

Approval of 10/20/21 minutes – Terry moved and sue seconded. Unanimous approval.

Committee, Government, General Updates

Update on bylaws

- Bylaws work group made good progress on proposed updates!
- Let’s hold off on voting on changes until new mayoral administration is in place
- Vote at March 2022 Commission meeting

Shop to the Beat has [launched!](#)

- Already have 5 business applicants since it launched yesterday afternoon
- Performances start on Nov 27 (Shop Small Saturday) and go through the holidays (= pilot phase)
- Putting ARPA/federal recovery \$ to work to provide living wage gigs to musicians, pair them with local businesses
- Application for business owners: <https://seattle.surveymonkey.com/r/ShopToTheBeat>
 - o Bunnie commits to mentioning Shop to the Beat to owners when visiting favorite local businesses, encourages SMC to do the same
- Marketing/promo plan?
 - o Social media campaign running now (see OED and Gigs4U Instagram)
 - o OED’s Only in Seattle, business districts team are promoting to their networks
 - o Press release went out, Scott doing an interview later this week
 - o Nick can share with key contacts and ask about amplifying

Hope Corps

- Alex is managing this program to get creative workers working. Approximately \$2M in federal recovery funding for this program
 - o Contact Alex if interested in shaping this program

Storefronts activations

- On hold currently, but OED plans to bring vacant spaces downtown back to life with pop-up space for BIPOC-owned businesses and arts/culture
- Will keep SMC posted about this

SMC social gathering brainstorm

Lots of interest in getting together in person.

Kitty checked with Nick, who offered walk through of Climate Pledge Arena! Save the Date: Dec 15

Meeting adjourned by 1:30 p.m.