

## SEATTLE ARTS COMMISSION

Minutes

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Hybrid Meeting - In-Person @ King Street Station 3rd Floor Panel Room OR Zoom

**Commissioners present:** Vee Hua, Vanessa Villalobos, Chieko Phillips, Yeggy Michael, Ebony Arunga, Jessica Caudle, Kayla DeMonte, Leslie Anderson, Holly Jacobson, Danielle McClune, Mikhael Mei Williams, Sophia Fang

**Staff in attendance:** royal alley-barnes, Maritza Rivera, Allie Lee

**Guests:** Sharon Williams, Pamala Mijatov, Tana Yasu, Monique Courcy, Robert Basteri, Pinky Estell, Linda Lowry, Erin Fried, Jorge Enrique Gonzalez Pacheco

### **Call to Order, Introduction, Land Acknowledgement (4:05)**

#### **Comment**

Holly suggested the idea that commissioners take turns to each share indigenous artists at the start of each monthly meeting

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

Kayla moved to approve the commission minutes from September. Ebony seconded. Approved.

#### **Public Comment:**

- Sharon Williams gave public comment.
- Pinky Estell gave public comment.
- Linda Lowry gave public comment.
- Monique Courcy gave public comment.
- Erin Fried gave public comment.
- Jorge Enrique Gonzalez Pacheco gave public comment.

### **New Commissioners Update**

#### **Briefing: Vee Hua, Vanessa Villalobos**

- New Commissioners' Committee Participation – Committee Co-Chairs Holly, Chieko, and Vee shared information of each committee (CIC, FED, PAAC) for new commissioners to consider.
- New Commissioners Danielle McClune and Leslie Anderson introduced themselves. Ricky Graboski was absent.

### **Director's Report**

#### **Briefing: royal alley-barnes**

- royal congratulated newly appointed commissioners.
- **Mayor's Budget Proposal** – SAC's 2023 budget priorities letter was an underpinning platform for the ARTS budget. royal gave a high-level summary of [ARTS' budget proposal](#):

- All 42 ARTS staff positions and all ARTS programs will continue into 2023. There are no layoffs and no reductions.
- Funding to create Operations Manager Position: This change allows ARTS to support its growing infrastructure complexities while balancing a wider engagement with communities.
- Funding to reclassify Racial Equity Coordinator position to further ARTS's equity work: This action provides funding for ARTS to change its Race and Social Justice position to a Racial Equity Coordinator, elevating it to a Management Systems Analyst and better positioning it to be aligned with the external facing work in race and social equity that ARTS is committed to.
- Adding a permanent 0.5 FTE front-desk support for King Street Station: This change creates a new 0.5 FTE position to provide permanent front-desk support for the King Street Station gallery and administrative support for the Office.
- Also allow an entry level position for the arts sector to be aware of.
- Continuing Hope Corps Program: This change allows ARTS to continue its Hope Corps program through 2023 providing job opportunities to artists and creative workers in Seattle following the pandemic. This is \$1M dollars is a one-time proposed add in 2023.
- There seems to be discussions that ARTS budget is being reduced by \$3M; this is incorrect information. What has been reduced due to one-time funding was Covid-based federal funding, which was valued at \$3M, are those federal programs have ceased. Recovery programs do not continue into 2023. It is a loss to the arts sector, but not a reduction to the ARTS budget.

**Questions & Comments:**

- VH – Was the \$3M from the American Rescue Funds?
  - RAB - Yes, they were from ARPA and CLFR.
- CP – Thank you for the budget proposal overview; it's great to hear that all 42 ARTS positions are moving forward into 2023. Can you please provide an update on the hiring of the Cultural Space Liaison position? Is the position accounted for in the 2023 budget?
  - RAB - The position will not continue into 2023.
    - *(Members of the FED had the opportunity to meet with royal about what has shared in Oct meeting—that the Cultural Space Liaison position was not being rehired. royal clarified the position formerly called the Cultural Space Liaison at ARTS is accounted for in the 2023 budget as a cultural districts liaison. This is a full time, advisory level position. The scope of work for this position is not determined.)*
  - RAB - ARTS is backfilling some of the work that remained from the position including the Cultural Space Agency PDA (\$750k to date, \$250k in 2023 operating budget, and \$60k per year to support B.A.S.E. program). We are finishing up the parts of the work that will transfer over to the PDA. Tiny Cultural Space with Deaf Spotlight will also be one of the last projects.
  - RAB - Support to cultural districts is not aligned with the PDA, and that body of work will continue as part of recovery work at ARTS.
  - CP - Will Tiny Cultural Space transfer to the PDA?

- RAB - ARTS is currently correcting an issue there was with the project with Deaf Spotlight and will see the work through.
- PE – This is the second City department meeting I’ve been in that says there are no cuts. This is concerning since the City has a shortfall they have to make up for somewhere. Do we know what departments are helping with that shortfall? It’s not realistic to think that we will end up with no cuts if the shortfall still remains.
  - RAB - The budget shortfall that this administration started off with was about \$200M in general fund. There have been different reductions, movements, and sources of money used to cure parts of that through ongoing negotiations going into the 2023-24 budget process. ARTS is not funded by general fund and therefore not impacted by that revenue shortfall.
  - PE – What about programming?
    - RAB - Same with programming – ARTS is not funded by the general fund, we are admission tax based, so programming will also continue fully funded.
- VV – With money coming in, will any existing granting programs get a boost from the Hope Corps \$1M – how are existing programs benefiting?
  - RAB - The \$1M Hope Corps will be an addition to our existing programming structure, but the \$1M will be dedicated and focused specifically to Hope Corps, and not used to supplement current programming. We will be listening to the community to help structure what that \$1M will look like.
  - VV – In last year’s description of Hope Corps, there were 12 cultural leaders who were the direct beneficiaries – will that remain the same? How many organizations or lead artists will be benefited?
    - RAB - There were actually [30 recipients of the prior \\$1.3M](#). Whether or not the different categories and levels of funding will be replicated will be a discussion within our communities to be as resilient and innovative as possible.
- SW – Is Cultural Districts part of recovery work or ongoing? Cultural Districts was part of ARTS programming prior to Covid.
  - RAB - The Cultural Districts contracts were initiated in 2018, in 2019 there was no movement on them, then we were able to continue the funding because the contracts were signed. Then Covid hit. It’s powerful that the Cultural Districts are willing to step in and continue that work coming out of the pandemic.
- SW – After seeing the budget proposal, would like to know what is the overall vision we can expect from ARTS once it is approved? What kind of initiatives?
  - RAB - We have to be looking at race and social justice, we have to be looking at curating, supporting, and incentivizing the new voices and opportunities that have come out of Covid, and we have to help artists stay working in Seattle. The arts sector has changed and has become highly diverse; we shouldn’t be looking at just the usual beneficiaries. ARTS and SAC need a close relationship to hammer what the top 3-5 statements should be, but we have yet to have that conversation.
- EA – Can you speak to the priorities that ARTS will have around cultural space and in what ways can the FED support that work now that the Cultural Space Liaison position will not be a continuing role?

- RAB - Want to have more conversations on the notion of “continuing role” because there is a terminus point. What is a huge celebratory point is that the Cultural Space Agency PDA is a real thing in the city and will be fully funded to a \$1M kick start by ARTS. The purpose of that is to be certain we have a highly visible long-term relationship in the city for the responsibility and ongoing place of cultural space – looking at the placemaking that communities need. This is why the PDA exists, a huge win, and a solid addition to Seattle with national and regional impact. When you say “not continuing” that’s a broader discussion – what pieces are you trying to curate, do you care about, or afraid might get lost? FED is an ongoing committee and SAC is aligned with the efficacy of its committees’ work. Want to have more conversations with ARTS, SAC and 3 committees – would like to work together to build meaningful statements and actions.
- EA – One of the priorities on the FED is the Square Feet Seattle conference which will be held early next year. This event had been supported by the Cultural Space Liaison position. Who at ARTS will support that body of work?
  - RAB - Through the end of 2022, Susano Surface will support in their out of class role. Going forward there is more discussion to have with the PDA, because the City has successfully completed the second B.A.S.E. program, which ARTS funds at \$60k/year. Need to further discuss what the role of that cohort will be in terms of spring-boarding, curating, and doing the work of Square Feet Seattle. The body of work is not dependent on one position.
- HJ – Not on FED, not very familiar with all this, and would just like to clarify – what we are talking about eliminating is the Cultural Space Liaison position and not the Director of the Cultural Space Agency?
  - RAB - Correct. The Cultural Space Agency PDA is a separate organization. ARTS has no ability to designate positions or programs for the PDA, and there is no impact to the PDA.
  - RAB - ARTS helped launch the PDA but did not have any involvement with naming its staff. The PDA has a board and is an independent body. It is not an ARTS program.
  - Find PDA charter here: <http://clerk.seattle.gov/search/results?s1=&s9=cultural+space+agency&s7=&s6=&s2=&s8=&Sect4=AND&l=200&Sect2=THESON&Sect3=PLURON&Sect5=LEGI2&Sect6=HITOFF&d=LEGC&p=1&u=%2Fsearch%2Fcombined%2F&r=4&f=G>
  - VV – sounds like cultural space and the Cultural Space Agency PDA is a topic of interest and perhaps we should continue the discussion at committee level.
    - RAB suggested that the SAC invites a Cultural Space Agency PDA director, board member, or staff person to come and talk about the charter, how it’s formed and funded, who it reports to, etc.
- VH – [SAC’s original budget priorities letter](#) included at statement about support to the Cultural Space Agency. We can think about including that in again.
  - RAB - 250k was dedicated to the Cultural Space Agency from ARTS in the 2023 budget. This is in alignment with SAC’s budget priorities letter.

## Co-Chairs Report

### **Briefing: Vee Hua, Vanessa Villalobos**

- **ARTS Permanent Director Position Strategy**
  - James Miles communicated that there is interest from Mayor Harrell to commit to a community process for the hiring of a permanent ARTS director. No other information has been provided at this time.

### **Questions & Comments:**

- YM - Was there a similar process previously? What did past processes look like?
  - VH - Ultimately the director hire is the Mayor's decision. When Randy left there was a community group that got together to discuss a community driven process, but that didn't end up happening. Also Randy held the director position over multiple Mayors, so it's been a long time since there has been a permanent ARTS director hire process.
- MR – Recommends that the SAC Executive Committee connects with someone from HR to ask questions about the ARTS director search. Maritza can reach out to HR to make the connection.
- SW – Having clarity on what it means to have a community led process would be helpful. Also hopes that is shared out with community.
- KD – Are there other Acting Directors in the City currently?
  - MR – Yes, there are others.
- CP – In addition to getting from info from HR, think it would be helpful to bring to the Mayor some visions we would like to see as the SAC; coming with a desire of community involvement, showing that we are thinking about the process, and a vision for who we would like to see direct the office. Would love to be able to bring something to the Mayor's Office so it's a two-way conversation. It would be good to have a vision from the start.
  - HJ – Perhaps we can take the initiative and write a letter. Getting sign on from the cultural districts would be good too.
- MW – Re: last year's director search community advisory committee – the group met 2-3 times, then the process changed, and the committee retired. There was a fair amount of confusion around the role of the committee and a lack of clarity from the former mayor on intent and willingness to engage in the process. It would be essential to have parameters for community if it is done again, and make sure to commit to it.
  - SW – It was a static process. The group came up with plans, but there was a disconnect with HR and the Mayor's Office, and the timeline wasn't realistic.
  - MR – It would be helpful for HR to talk to SAC Executive Committee about this.
- VV – Sounds like the decision resides with the Mayor and HR has a way that they operate. We also want to balance the respect to our current Acting Director and her contributions with the need for community to feel like they have a word and are not ignored in the process. Want to acknowledge that royal is in the room, but we are talking specifically about process.
- MW – Want to clarify that the discomfort with the advisory group last year was not with the Acting Director appointment but with the confusion around the process with the community advisory group.
- VH – Mayor Durkan also came to SAC last year saying she would commit to the process, so it was a shock when it didn't happen.

- YM – Perhaps we can get a word from Mayor Harrell committing to this? It would be nice to hear from him.
- HJ – This is a process discussion. Can we invite cultural districts to collaborate on this process?
  - MR - HR processes are confidential. It would be best for HR to meet with SAC Executive Committee first then the SAC Executives can discuss how to share that info publicly.
- HJ – SAC will be working on a process for a qualified permanent ARTS Director - royal do you plan to apply for the director position?
  - RAB – I am here listening to the SAC Strategy discussion, and I am privileged to be doing so.
- **Budget Letter Discussion - how to respond to the ARTS budget proposal**
  - KD – Clarifying that of the three priorities mentioned in the SAC budget priorities letter - Arts Integration into City Planning, Funding for the Cultural Space Agency, and Retain & Maintain Current Assets, Staffing, and Programs of the ARTS Office – the latter two were reflected in ARTS budget proposal?
    - RAB – That is correct. SAC has the ability to curate and to innovate the arts sector and represent many voices. So the SAC letter is the beginning point and SAC is critical to the arts sector.
  - EA – I do not see in the budget \$5M for Cultural Space Agency, but it is getting \$250k next year. Can we push for a dedicated funding stream for the Cultural Space Agency?
  - VH – The other ask we had that is not a part of it is Arts Integration into City Planning. This might be a big step for them to just suddenly provide City funds for, but perhaps we can ask for an incremental step funding?
  - EA – One of the ways we had talked with CM Morales about this earlier this year was, for instance 4Culture has a 1% budget for construction costs that go towards arts, so whether there's a way to incrementally and ongoingly get funding for the Cultural Space Agency.
    - RAB – Correct me if I am wrong, but 4Culture is a PDA and gets funding from lodging tax and reports to the King County Council.
  - DM – Asked clarifying question about what is the SAC priorities letter vs. Mayor's proposed budget (ARTS line items).
    - SAC priorities letter:  
[https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Arts/Downloads/SAC/SAC\\_Budget\\_Priorities\\_Letter\\_2022.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Arts/Downloads/SAC/SAC_Budget_Priorities_Letter_2022.pdf)
    - Mayor's proposed budget for ARTS:  
<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/FinanceDepartment/2324proposedbudget/ARTS.pdf>
    - City budget process and timeline info:  
<https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/select-budget-committee>
  - VV – Aware that ARTS is not funded by general fund. Would it put us in jeopardy if we did request to have a portion of the ARTS budget year to year to be in perpetuity coming from the general fund? Might be wrong, but it looks on paper when we are not funded from the general fund that we are constantly having to port these temporal things like Hope Corps. Or does it give us more independence in some way? Wondering

if overall for the health of future artists, does not being funded by the general fund mean we are being treated through a band aid approach for money. Can we have a dedicated percentage that pairs to any other fund (like transportation) that is considered essential and is maintained year to year? This could be advocacy that the SAC does for the life of arts in Seattle. Not sure if this is a correct interpretation though.

- MR – General fund is subject to taxes collected by the city and is not static; every year it changes depending on the economy. Currently, the way admissions tax is dedicated to ARTS bodes in ARTS favor. (Admissions tax is also subject to the wax and waning of the economy, but it is 100% dedicated to ARTS) Also general fund goes towards most things at the City, so it's actually a harder fund to pin down in terms of being static every year.
  - RAB – Admissions tax is wholly dedicated by legislation to ARTS, and a more predictable fund in this economic climate. There is far less variability to structure. The City's \$200M budget gap was general fund and did not affect ARTS.
  - MR - This is why ARTS' base budget was able to maintain and retain what it has this year - because it was not subject to the wax and waning of the general fund. Admissions tax was sustainable and stable enough.
  - VH – Since the ARTS budget is unstable, this doesn't mean we can't also ask for general fund, correct?
    - RAB - Correct. However stable and unstable are not financial terms and don't apply to the office.
  - RAB – SAC should frame forward opportunities and possibilities and advocate for the arts sector.
- Postponing discussion on SAC workplan (post-budget advocacy, opportunities, audience) & SAC messaging for external engagement to next month's meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:32pm.

Zoom Chat:

16:05:18 From *vee hua (they/them)* to *Everyone*:

*that's fun I love that*

16:05:22 From *Kayla DeMonte* to *Everyone*:

*Great idea*

16:06:09 From *vee hua (they/them)* to *Everyone*:

*<https://www.instagram.com/myindigenouslife/> :D*

16:07:20 From *Pamala Mijatov (she)* *Uptown Arts District* to *Everyone*:

*I just finished reading Tanya Tagaq's fiction/memoir/poetry novel "Split Tooth" — highly recommended!*

16:07:55 From *Sharon Nyree Williams* to *Everyone*:

*Sharon*

*16:08:02 From Pinky Estell (He/Him) to Everyone:*

*Pinky He/Him President of Uptown Arts and Culture District*

*16:08:07 From Linda Chavez-Lowry to Everyone:*

*Linda Lowry - Arts Unlimited*

*16:08:39 From Monique Courcy (she/her), UACC, TeenTix to Everyone:*

*Monique Courcy (she/her) Secretary of UACC, TeenTix ED*

*16:10:11 From Erin Fried (she/her) - Capitol Hill EcoDistrict to Everyone:*

*Erin Fried, she/her, co-chair of Capitol Hill Arts District*

*16:11:22 From Linda Chavez-Lowry to Everyone:*

*Settle Latino Film Festival [www.slff.org](http://www.slff.org) Is happening this week with closing night celebration on Saturday- October 15th*

*Pride Fashion Week (<https://www.pridefashionweek.com/>) – Sunday, October 16th*

*16:14:35 From Chieko Phillips to Everyone:*

*Danielle is also a new commissioner! Welcome :)*

*16:18:02 From vee hua (they/them) to Everyone:*

*I think it's last Tuesdays of the month @ 9:00am-11:30am.*

*16:20:05 From vee hua (they/them) to Everyone:*

*i also wanted to give Danielle and Leslie an opportunity to introduce themselves as new commissioners. :)*

*16:39:09 From Allie Lee to Everyone:*

*ARTS Budget 2023-24: <https://artbeat.seattle.gov/2022/09/27/mayor-bruce-harrell-releases-proposed-2023-24-arts-budget/>*

*16:41:09 From Allie Lee to Everyone:*

*Hope Corps Awardees: <https://artbeat.seattle.gov/2022/09/09/seattle-office-of-arts-culture-selects-inspiring-projects-for-hope-corps-funding/>*

*16:43:07 From Sharon Nyree Williams to Everyone:*

*Thank You Royal*

*16:50:09 From vee hua (they/them) to Everyone:*



*for the new people, what we are discussing is the cultural space agency:  
<https://culturalspace.agency/>*

*16:51:40 From Allie Lee to Everyone:*

*Cultural Space Agency Charter:*

*16:54:32 From Allie Lee to Everyone:*

*SAC budget priorities letter:  
[https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Arts/Downloads/SAC/SAC\\_Budget\\_Priorities\\_Letter\\_2022.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Arts/Downloads/SAC/SAC_Budget_Priorities_Letter_2022.pdf)*

*17:00:07 From Pinky Estell (He/Him) to Everyone:*

*I concur with Sharon's point*

*17:02:13 From Pinky Estell (He/Him) to Everyone:*

*I'm sure the districts would be happy to review that letter and help with whatever community process comes out of it.*

*17:02:42 From Sharon Nyree Williams to Everyone:*

*Yes what Pinky said.*

*17:03:50 From Kayla DeMonte to Everyone:*

*sign on from cultural districts to that letter would be awesome*

*17:04:49 From Holly Jacobson (she/her) Path with Art to Everyone:*

*Would be great to collaborate with Cultural District Chairs on many things. Actually, tho.*

*17:05:01 From Pinky Estell (He/Him) to Everyone:*

*^^^*

*17:05:27 From Erin Fried (she/her) - Capitol Hill EcoDistrict to Everyone:*

*Agreed*

*17:05:43 From Sharon Nyree Williams to Everyone:*

*Yes Holly, we would love to see how we can collab with the Commission.*

*17:08:08 From vee hua (they/them) to Everyone:*

*well-stated vanessa!!*

*17:09:13 From Vanessa Villalobos to Everyone:*

*A learning process to draw from moving forward indeed.*

*17:09:47 From Seattle Latino Film Festival to Everyone:*

*Thank you Vanessa for calling Seattle as so white city.*

*17:10:22 From Pinky Estell (He/Him) to Everyone:*

*I find the best is to build the process and ask them if they support it. going to them with a idea tends to go no where.*

*17:11:05 From Vanessa Villalobos to Everyone:*

*Its not a negative comment, just a fact that we are up against when attempting to build a "ONE Seattle"*

*17:11:14 From Vanessa Villalobos to Everyone:*

*\*what*

*17:12:38 From Kayla DeMonte to Everyone:*

*thats what I understood you and others to be talking about Sharon!*

*17:16:07 From Sharon Nyree Williams to Everyone:*



*17:17:26 From vee hua (they/them) to Everyone:*

*[https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Arts/Downloads/SAC/SAC\\_Budget\\_Priorities\\_Letter\\_2022.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Arts/Downloads/SAC/SAC_Budget_Priorities_Letter_2022.pdf)*

*17:21:58 From Pinky Estell (He/Him) to Everyone:*

*Should this be a request/statement vs a question. "Will the council consider including direct funding to the Cultural Space Agency PDA (chartered in Jan 2021) during its crucial start-up period and in perpetuity?"*

*17:22:42 From Ebony Arunga to Everyone:*

*Thank you Pinky*

*17:23:17 From Holly Jacobson (she/her) Path with Art to Everyone:*

*great wording, Pinky. Thank you.*

*17:23:35 From Erin Fried (she/her) - Capitol Hill EcoDistrict to Everyone:*

*Regarding the Comprehensive Plan, public art has come up in issue identification as an area of priority through some of the community engagement efforts. I wonder if there might be more opportunity in the Transportation Plan for detailed strategy for involvement of the arts in right-of-way planning in a formalized way.*

*17:24:07 From vee hua (they/them) to Everyone:*

*not sure what you're meaning erin, feel free to unmute / raise hand if you want to comment!*

*17:24:20 From Pinky Estell (He/Him) to Everyone:*

*Public hearings on the budget are Oct. 11, Nov. 8 and 15*

*17:24:28 From vee hua (they/them) to Everyone:*

*thanks pinky*

*17:24:43 From Pinky Estell (He/Him) to Everyone:*

*<https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/select-budget-committee>*

*17:25:07 From Tana Yasu to Everyone:*

*public comment is going on right now. I'm number 98. folks are limited to one minute. best to write that letter. Many, MANY LETTERS!*

*17:25:48 From vee hua (they/them) to Everyone:*

*lol*

*17:25:51 From Holly Jacobson (she/her) Path with Art to Everyone:*

*I have to jump. Thanks, all. Thanks also to community members for being here.*

*17:25:58 From vee hua (they/them) to Everyone:*

*thanks holly!*

*17:26:48 From Danielle McClune to Everyone:*

*thanks pinky and tana !*

*17:31:48 From vee hua (they/them) to Everyone:*

*last Tuesdays, 9am! PAAC*

*17:31:56 From Kayla DeMonte to Everyone:*

*CIC: Third Thurs, 2pm. [Kayla.demonte@gmail.com](mailto:Kayla.demonte@gmail.com) if you want more info!*

*17:32:00 From royal alley-barnes, Acting Director Office Arts & Culture to Everyone:*

*Thank you all -- royal*

*17:32:00 From Ebony Arunga to Everyone:*

*FED Third Tuesdays at 4pm*

*17:32:02 From vee hua (they/them) to Everyone:*

*[hellomynnameisvee@gmail.com](mailto:hellomynnameisvee@gmail.com) meow*

*17:32:15 From ARTS @ King Street Station to Everyone:*

*[email allie.lee@seattle.gov](mailto:email.allie.lee@seattle.gov) if you need a calendar invite*

*17:32:16 From Seattle Latino Film Festival to Everyone:*

*Great meeting!!*