

Rhode Island State Council on the Arts
Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 23, 2010
4:00 PM
RISCA Offices
Providence RI

Council Members Present: Bill Bracket, Chairman; Carrie Zaslow, Vice Chairman; Mary K. Talbot, Secretary; Ann Clanton, Dana Neugent; and Regina Partridge

Council Members Unable to Attend: Nancy Chapman, Carolyn Peck, Jean Rondeau, David Wax; Beverly Blais; and Andrea Valentini

Staff Members Present: Randall Rosenbaum, Executive Director; Steven Feinberg, Director RI Film and Television Office; Sherilyn Brown, Education Director; Cristina DiChiera, Director Individual Artists & Public Art Program; Elizabeth Keithline, Project Grants for Organizations/Public Art; and Donna Fiske, Fiscal & Office Manager

Public Present: Adriana Thomas, Policy Analyst, House of Representatives

Chairman Bill Bracket called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes – February 23, 2010 Council meeting:

(Motion: Mary K. Talbot, seconded by Carrie Zaslow)

Financial Report – FY10 – Second Quarter

Executive Director Randall Rosenbaum presented the financial report for the second quarter of fiscal year 2010. He reported that all discretionary grant funds, stimulus funds & RI Foundation funds have been spent. Legislative grant spending is where we expected to be. Our finances for FY10 are in line with the budget and the time of year. He reported that we are currently reviewing the public art fund to ensure that it is clearly reflecting what has been received and spent project by project over the past several years. This is something we are doing as part of our due diligence toward the public art program.

After discussion, a motion was made to accept the financial report for the 1st Quarter of FY10 and place the report on file for audit review.

(Motion: Mary K Talbot; seconded by Regina Partridge Passed: Unanimously)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Art update:

Elizabeth Keithline gave a report on the status of public art projects in progress.

- RI State Police Headquarters: 3 finalists have been selected and the panel will make their selection the end of March.
- URI: The Graduate School of Oceanography: 3 finalists have been selected and the panel will make their decision April 15th.
- URI – College of Pharmacy – RFQ went out on February 23rd. Randy and Liz met with Dean Jordan and they agreed to increase the commission to \$500,000. In addition we were able to firm up URI's commitment to site lighting, construction of the perimeter, including sidewalks and a stone wall, as well as entry to the buildings and emergency access.
- URI – The College of Biological & Life Sciences has been put on hold, but should be ready to reactivate soon.
- The Dunkin Donuts Center is due to begin installation in July.
- Pawtucket Arts Collaborative: We have a public art panel discussion, sponsored by the Pawtucket Arts Collaborative on Thursday, March 4th at 7PM.
- The American Institute of Architects has given an October slot for an exhibition on public art in RI.
- DMV: Forand Building at Pastore Center: This project is just getting started.
- TF Green: Working on getting plaques placed on the completed work at the airport.

RISCA in Massachusetts at the Attleboro Art Museum:

Elena Calderón-Patiño reported on an artists' reception for the "Celebrating Diversity" show that will take place February 27th. The exhibition, supported by RISCA in collaboration with the State Diversity Office, will include work by artists from a number of Rhode Island multi-cultural communities.

Fellowship Show:

Christina DiChiera reported on the annual fellowship exhibition. This year's show was held at the Imago Gallery in Warren, and was very well received. It consisted of an opening as well as separate evenings featuring the work of literature artists and filmmakers. All events were well attended.

Poetry Out Loud:

Sherilyn Brown reported on this year's Poetry out Loud competition, which will be held on Saturday, February 27th, at Bishop Hendricken High School. Poetry out Loud is a national competition similar to the spelling bee, which RISCA sponsors in collaboration with VSA arts of Rhode Island. The winner goes on to a national competition in Washington DC.

Film and Television: Mr. Feinberg announced the premiere of Hachi on Thursday, March 4th. He then screened a video put together by the Film and

Television Office speaking to the benefits of the film industry for the Rhode Island economy, and how the motion picture tax credit and has helped establish the industry here in Rhode Island.

OLD BUSINESS

Big Yellow School Bus Grant: Mr. Rosenbaum gave the Council a report on the Big Yellow School Bus program, a new program that was established at the end of January 2010. Mr. Rosenbaum reported that the program is going very well. The Council initially set aside \$20,000 in federal funding for this program, which is designed to help school students attend arts and cultural events in the community. Nearly half (\$8,344.00) of the money is spent, with thousands of students getting the opportunity to experience the arts in the coming months.

The Council expressed support for this program, which is a valuable way to support the arts in schools throughout the state, and which provides opportunities to get arts funding into every community in Rhode Island.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget Cuts:

Mr. Rosenbaum reported to the Council on Governor Carcieri's proposed budget for FY 2010. In his budget recommendations, the Governor is proposing eliminating all state dollars for grants in the arts, eliminating the public art program, and eliminating the film tax credit.

The Council has an extensive conversation about these proposals. While these are challenging financial times, the council was unanimous in its opposition to these recommendations. Chairman Brackett made the point that each of these proposed cuts would have a devastating effect on the Rhode Island economy, and were contrary to the Governor's expressed position that the arts are an important part of our states economy. Chairman Brackett said that he would be working with members of the Council and staff to prepare the arguments necessary to advocate for restoration of these cuts.

Request from Rhode Island Film Collaborative:

The Council reviewed a request from the Rhode Island Film Collaborative regarding the commissioning from Dr. Edward Mazze from the University of Rhode Island of an economic study exploring the impact and financial benefits of the film industry and the motion picture tax credit here in Rhode Island. Chairman Brackett explained that this had long been a priority for the Council (it is referenced as a goal in our most recent strategic plan), which has seen studies in other states -- most recently in Massachusetts -- that have spoken to the positive economic impact that film productions offer. Some here in Rhode Island question the value of providing incentives to attract film productions, and there has been a

long-standing need for a definitive and credible study on this question. Dr. Mazze is well respected here in Rhode Island, and a study by him would be conclusive.

Discussion by members of the Council showed their strong support for this request. Chairman Brackett referred the question to the Film and TV Committee for their review and recommendation.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 PM
(Motion: Regina Partridge; seconded by Carrie Zaslou)