

Coles County Arts Council Strategic Planning Discussion and Board Elections

June 4, 2022 – Charleston Carnegie Public Library

Present: Erin Blitz, Charlotte England, Richard England, Pam Gutowski, June Hayden, Bill Heyduck, Amy Lynch, Jessica Mertz, Janet Messenger, Jennifer Seas, Heather Siegel, Ryan Siegel

The meeting was called to order by Charlotte England at 10:15, and began with introductions. It was noted that Daiva Markelis and Paul Hinson had engagements out of town that prevented their participation in today's meeting.

1. Vote for New Board Members – Following the adoption of revised bylaws, a new board was elected. The proposed slate was as follows:

President: Charlotte England Vice President: Daiva Markelis

Treasurer: Ryan Siegel Secretary: Richard England

Membership Chair: Pam Gutowski Grants Coordinator: Paul Hinson

External Relations Coordinator: June Hayden

Members at Large: Janet Messenger Jennifer Seas

Janet Messenger proposed and Pam Gutowski seconded the addition of Bill Heyduck to the position of an additional member at large. Following Bill's acceptance of this nomination it was unanimously approved.

Ryan Siegel moved to approve the slate of new board members, including Bill Heyduck, and Erin Blitz seconded. The slate was unanimously approved.

2. President's Report: Charlotte England presented a brief report. Chalk In will be held on July 4 (good news for the likely number of participants) and she will coordinate it with help from Jessica Mertz and Jackie Worden. She mentioned the possibility of a collaboration with the Urban Butterfly Initiative, but noted that it had its place later in the agenda. Finally she discussed the member event celebrating Elaine Fine (Sunday, September 18, 22). At a meeting with Ryan Siegel and June Hayden a rough budget was worked out –

~\$500 for the use of the Doudna Fine Arts Center (discounted for CCAC's 501c3 status)

~\$250 for printing of materials, publicity, mailings

~\$300 for decorations

~\$800-1,000 for food

The total cost (\$1,850-\$2,050) would be for an anticipated attendance of 100-125 people.

3. Treasurer's Report: Ryan Siegel noted that CCAC's current balance is over \$18,000 and the current budget for the year is \$12,000. He broke it down into several categories - \$3,000 for scholarships, \$3,000 for grants, \$4,000 for programming, and about \$2,000 for mailings, insurance, and other overhead costs. There was some discussion of what the balance ought to be for a non-profit of our size (generally between \$5,000 and \$10,000), and of the fact that COVID had allowed us to collect donations but slowed down our

spending. Approximately \$2,000 of the CCAC's accounts belong to the Past Forward writing group (from sales of their books and other donations).

4. Membership Chair's Report: Pam Gutowski noted that the invitation to members to join had been sent out with the spring newsletter on May 10, 2022, and that as of June 3rd, 36 members had renewed their membership, with a total of \$4,385 being collected in support. In addition, she mentioned that donations in memory of Debbie Kidwell, a former CCAC board member, had totaled \$2,455. Charlotte noted that these donations should be earmarked for projects in Debbie's memory, perhaps honoring her dedication to arts programs for children.

5. Discussion of New Scholarship Program Directions: Richard England noted that scholarships had traditionally been awarded to middle and high school students for art summer camps. Music scholarships were awarded through a competitive recital process, which was well established, but did not consider financial need. Scholarships for other art camps were available, but historically (even pre-pandemic) it was difficult to get any applications.

This year we aimed to recast scholarships for students attending summer camps so that they addressed financial need. We had been contacted by the organizers of EIU's music camp to see if we could help some needy students, and had voted to work directly with them to award \$1500 in scholarships to students identified by the camp organizers. We will be approaching the organizers of other EIU arts camps to see if we can make a similar arrangement (though for lesser amounts).

Given that in past years we have budgeted more in scholarships than we are able to award to summer camp attendees, and given strong member support for scholarships, we would like to offer at least one university / college scholarship for Coles County students attending EIU or Lake Land College and taking an arts degree. Our current plan is to award at least one scholarship for a student up to the cost of tuition for a particular class (over \$800 for an EIU 3-credit course) but no less than \$250. A deadline for applications of August 1 would leave time to make the award before the beginning of the fall semester, but late enough to prioritize summer camp scholarships. The materials for the award would include a description of the class in question, a written statement about the importance of the arts to the student's personal or academic development, and a note about financial need.

In discussion it was agreed that it was important to consider financial need and there was general agreement that working directly with camp organizers could help ensure that scholarship funds were being well used.

In discussing ways to ensure funds were helping children, Heather Siegel mentioned the "Art from Here" project, which supplies stipends to students and teachers for art supplies, and which results in a show of children's art. Jennifer Seas noted that such a show is currently on display at the Tarble Art Center. It was suggested that the CCAC might partner with other funding organizations to support this or similar projects.

6. Discussion of New Urban Butterfly Initiative Art Project: Charlotte England described a proposal to create a community art project with different avenues of participation for people of varied talents and ages and to foster cooperation with the Urban Butterfly Initiative and environmentally minded groups like Grand Prairie Friends. The project would have at least two parts –

a. A call for works of art, any medium, on a butterfly or “pollinators and native plants” theme to be created this summer and fall for inclusion in a show next winter or early spring as people are gearing up for gardening season. The show could go up at Douglas Hart and possibly visit the Link Gallery in Paris or another local art space.

b. The creation of an image bank of photographs taken by community members and shared for possible inclusion in a “quilt” collage celebrating pollinators and the butterfly plantings locally and in people’s own gardens. She presented a sample of this kind of collage, in a fence rail pattern, decorated with hand-dyed papers and featuring photographs of flowers and pollinators taken from her own garden: this was much admired. Since Paul Switzer does a regular butterfly blitz in July and some members regularly photograph birds and butterflies, we should get enough pictures to make something work.

Charlotte briefly presented an approximate budget. The sample quilt collage cost about . \$65.00 in photo printing and materials. A larger piece or pieces (depending on the response) could run \$150.00 - \$200.00. There would also be costs associated with sending calls for entries and running a show (postage, printing, etc. – perhaps up to \$150.00). In addition to a budget, there would also need to be a committee of individuals willing to help with the creation of the artwork and organizing the show.

There was some discussion of additional related projects that might arise from this:

- a fabric quilt that could be created, and then raffled off to raise funds
- a quilt project for children in grades 3-4 could be created with an environmental education piece for children
- other collages could be created with participation from local art students drawing or painting images instead of (or in addition to) making photographs.
- Jessica Mertz noted that the Walldogs, a group of muralists, might be organized to paint one or more murals along a butterfly related theme. Bill Heyduck noted that Scott Lindley, a Walldog organizer, is an EIU alumnus based in Mount Pulaski, IL. Jessica said that she would look into this.
- Jennifer Seas noted that given the timeline there might be tie-ins to an artist in residence coming to the Tarble next year. This artist is interested in the land and native plants, and so perhaps there could be some related programming.

Jennifer Seas moved that the CCAC support this initiative, with a budget of \$500, and the motion was seconded by June Hayden. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Discussion of Planning Priorities: Charlotte England asked members to look at the CCAC Strategic Planning Member survey (see appendix) to help organize a discussion of priorities and needs for the organization. A fairly wide-ranging discussion occupied the last 25 minutes of the meeting.

Some main themes included the necessity of having programming that appealed to adults as well as children, involving EIU art students and recent graduates, and the importance of events that created social spaces and allowed people to connect.

It was noted that while Kids Art in the Park is popular, it is also very challenging to pull off. The possibility of getting some student interns to run one off arts events for kids (perhaps in the public library) was discussed. An honorarium might be offered.

We also talked about how the CCAC might provide a “fertile infrastructure” for the arts and for artists, helping them feel that there was more in Charleston for them. Gaining visibility for the CCAC and the arts might also help in a campaign to have the city include space for the arts in its plans for future recreation areas/ buildings. The idea of regular social events for artists (Arts and Ale once a month or so?) was also tossed around.

In general there was a lot of discussion that will give the board something to think over at our next meeting.

Call to Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 am.