Summary Minutes
Tacoma Arts Commission
Community & Economic Development

These minutes accompany the recorded meeting of the Tacoma Arts Commission, which is available at www.tacomaculture.org/arts/tac.asp.

Members
Robin Echtle, Chair
Traci Kelly, Vice Chair
Lauren Walker, City Council Liaison
Marty Campbell, City Council Liaison Alternate
Jan Brazzell
Rachel Cardwell
Antonio Edwards, Jr.
Sarah Idstrom
Donald Lacky
Bill La Vergne
Dane Meyer
Zach Powers
Scott Ramsey
Catherine Stegeman
Mike Sweeney
Jana Wennstrom

Staff
Amy McBride, Tacoma Arts Administrator
Naomi Strom-Avila, Cultural Arts Specialist

Date: March 12, 2012
Location: City of Tacoma Municipal Building North, Room 16
Time: 5:00 pm

Commission Members in Attendance:
Robin Echtle, Chair
Jan Brazzell
Rachel Cardwell
Sarah Idstrom
Don Lacky
Bill La Vergne
Dane Meyer
Zach Powers
Dawn Quinn
Scott Ramsey
Mike Sweeney
Jana Wennstrom

City Council Member Present:
Lauren Walker
Marty Campbell

Staff Present:
Amy McBride, Tacoma Arts Administrator
Naomi Strom-Avila, Cultural Arts Specialist
Martha Anderson, Assistant Director, CEDD

Public in Attendance:
Susan Warner
Ricky Powell
Laura Berry
Darcy Nelson
Kit Evans
Mark Reutlinger

Commission Members Excused Absence:
Antonio Edwards, Jr.
Traci Kelly, Vice Chair
Catherine Stegeman

1. Call to Order 5:05 pm (00:07) Chair Echtle
2. Excusal of Absences 5:05 pm (00:15) Chair Echtle
Vice Chair Kelly and Commissioners Edwards and Stegeman had an excused absence.
3. Approval of Minutes and Agenda 5:05 pm (00:46) Chair Echtle
Staff recommended moving Budget Update before 5% Admissions Tax Exemption for Non-Profits on the agenda.
Motion: Bill La Vergne
Second: Jana Wennstrom
Motion: Carried

4. Welcome to Tacoma City Manager T.C. Broadnax 5:06 pm (1:45)

City Manager T.C. Broadnax recognized the service of the Tacoma Arts Commission. He looks forward to working with the Commission to help move the City forward and highlighting what makes the City unique, including the arts.

Mr. Broadnax noted that Council is currently working to address a long-term budget issue and the problem can’t be solved by cutting budget alone, there must be revenue as well. The 5% ticket tax on non-profit organizations could bring in about $500K a year.

Mr. Broadnax noted that the City has looked at other revenue sources including: the non-profit healthcare tax, changing how the City approaches how they fund streets, reductions to non-essential services, and the mental health sales tax. Council Member Campbell noted that there has been an increase in business license fees, an increase in false alarm fees, an increase in red light ticket fees, and a fee for non-profit business licenses. Mr. Broadnax noted that most of the budget balancing will come out of the expense vs. revenue side and that he is looking to define what the City’s limits are and live within those limits so that the current budget situation does not continue on into future budget cycles.

5. Chair’s Report 5:15 pm (10:09) Chair Echtle

Chair Echtle noted that the Commission would be accepting public comment for the 5% Admission Tax Exemption for Non-Profits.

6. Staff Check-In 5:17 pm (12:00)

Public Works and Environmental Services are assisting in the moving of the Sun King sculpture to Fleet Services where it will be structurally reinforced. It will then be placed on a base and sited in the grassy area at Dock Street & S. 15th.

Six finalists – Kyle Dillehay, Diane Hansen, Ed Kroupa, Bret Lyon, Elise Richman, and Claudia Riedener - were selected for consideration for two public art opportunities at the Foss Waterway Seaport and along the Esplanade. These artists are participating in the Public Art: In Depth training program and will move on to be interviewed for the projects.

Historic Tacoma, the Planning Division, and Historic Preservation have begun discussing live/work spaces. Sharon Winters, past president of Historic Tacoma, will present to the Commission in the near future.

Commissioners volunteered to attend and evaluate funded events as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>date</th>
<th>organization</th>
<th>event</th>
<th>volunteer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/27/12</td>
<td>DASH Center for the Arts</td>
<td>Winter Musical &quot;Cinderella&quot;</td>
<td>Jan Brazzell</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/29/12</td>
<td>DASH Center for the Arts</td>
<td>Winter Musical &quot;Cinderella&quot;</td>
<td>Zach Powers, Don Lacky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/10/12 - 5/12/12</td>
<td>Hilltop Artists</td>
<td>&quot;The Lost Tribes of Hilltop, Shared Values&quot; exhibit</td>
<td>Rachel Cardwell</td>
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### 7. Discussion

**A. Prairie Line Trail Plan**  
5:40 pm (35:45)

Ms. McBride presented highlights from the Prairie Line Trail Public Art Plan including influences and themes. Goals for art along the trail include enhancing people’s experiences, responding to the site, and looking at a combination of short- and long-term projects. Some possible projects suggested in the plan including a trail-wide text project, a project that responds to the hill climb and arc of the rail, and meta-mapping of historical narrative.

Commissioners were invited to submit comments to Ms. McBride before the April 9 meeting of the Commission.

**B. Budget Update & 5% Admission Tax Exemption for Non-Profits**  
5:54 pm (49:32)

Ms. McBride gave an update about the currently-known status of the City’s budget situation. There has already been a $209,000 reduction (17.4%) to the Arts Program’s overall budget in 2012. The Commission was working under the direction that 100% of Ms. Strom-Avila’s position would be funded out of public art funds vs. general funds beginning April 1. This would mean that she would no longer be able to work on specific programming such as Art at Work Month, the Tacoma Poet Laureate Program and others.

Council Member Walker and Council Member Woodards met with Mr. Broadnax recently at which time he committed to finding the funding to retain arts staffing positions in order for programming to continue.

Ms. Walker noted that there were currently two options:

1. Go with the current 5% tax proposal to keep the City’s Arts Program alive
2. Kill the 5% tax proposal and look at other ways of keeping staff and make sure there is adequate arts funding to make programming viable
Chair Echtle gave background on the Commission’s notification of and involvement in discussions and votes on the 5% ticket tax to date.

City Council will hear the first reading of the ticket tax ordinance on March 13th.

Mr. Campbell gave an overview of the current ordinance. The proposal addresses the sustainability of the City’s Arts Program by creating a separate funding stream for the arts. It exempts fundraisers, school events, and memberships; it would change the effective date from July 1 to October 1, 2012; and it would be reviewed in 2015. Mr. Campbell is interested in looking other options such as a 0.1% sales tax to replace the ticket tax at that time.

It is estimated, based on 990 Forms, that this tax would generate $567K per year.

Commissioner Brazzell requested a clarification of “Admission Charge.”

Commissioners questioned if the proposed tax is the only way to secure funding for the arts and asked what secure funding looks like.

Ms. Walker suggested that the City take more time to look at the situation and find a solution. Council Members Woodards and Walker met with Mr. Broadnax and asked for a guarantee that the City not cut any current arts positions, ensure that there is some freedom in the funding sources for staff to produce programming, and ensure that funding to arts organizations and programming is not slashed.

Mr. Broadnax noted that he has not heard of other cuts to the arts in 2012 or 2013. He pledged that, for 2012, all the remaining arts program’s flexibility will remain intact and that Ms. Strom-Avila’s position will be secure.

Commissioners discussed the impact of the tax on all affected organizations.

The discussion was opened to public comment.

Susan Warner, Interim Director of Museum of Glass, asked the City to take more time in figuring out a solution and asked for a more strategic community conversation. She noted that the tax would set an unfortunate precedence.

Kit Evans, Executive Director of Hilltop Artists, noted that the arts are the greatest strength of Tacoma and they serve the needs of citizens. She is concerned about unintended consequences of the tax and asked that the City to use the urgency of the situation to come up with strategic, long-term solutions.

Ricky Powell, Executive Director of First Night, is against the tax and noted that any money going into non-profit organizations leverages much more in return.

If the Ordinance moves forward, the first reading by City Council would be on March 13.

C. Tacoma Arts Commission Retreat Wrap-Up 6:57 pm (01:52:43)

Chair Echtle asked, “Can I get a motion to table that for next time?”

There was a motion: “So moved.”

Motion: Sarah Idstrom
Second: Jan Brazzell
Motion: Carried

8. Report Back

A. Arts Events Attended

There were no comments.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm