

**Virginia Commission for the Arts
Minutes
March 31, 2005
Chrysler Museum, Norfolk**

Members Present: Dr. Lucius F. Ellsworth, Chair: David Briggs, Gary Grant, Susan Hirschbiel, Bonita Lestina, E. A. McMath, Roddy Moore, Jackie Stone, Rod Taylor, Beth Temple, Will Trinkle, Deborah Valentine, and Eve Wilson

Staff: Peggy Baggett, Foster Billingsley, Amy Krawczyk, and Jennifer Warren

Guests: Minette Cooper; Marilyn Gould; Norma Kaplan, Arlington County Division of Cultural Affairs; and Stephanie Micas, Arts Council of Richmond

Introduction

Dr. Ellsworth, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. He welcomed Jennifer Warren, new Arts in Education Coordinator and webmaster, to the Commission staff. He thanked Susan Hirschbiel for making the arrangements for the meeting, particularly the dinner on the previous evening with performances by the Rhythm project and musicians from the Virginia Arts Festival.

Will Trinkle noted that the minutes of the previous meeting did not show that there was a vote on the Special Recognition Awards. Jackie Stone made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2004, meeting with this addition. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Presentation by Minette Cooper

Peggy Baggett introduced Minette Cooper, President of the Cultural Alliance of Greater Hampton Roads, who gave a presentation on major issues facing the arts in Hampton Roads. The presentation included information on:

- new cultural facilities in the area
- the recent economic impact study and perceptions of the arts information
- need for endowment funds for the cultural institutions
- impact of the large military presence on arts and culture
- need for better public relations on behalf of arts and culture
- need to attract younger audiences
- efforts to make decision-makers understand that the vitality of cities depends in large part on arts and culture
- efforts to educate artists about the fiscal realities facing nonprofit cultural organizations.

Report of the Arts in Education Committee

Beth Temple, Chair of the Commission Arts in Education Committee, reported on the committee meeting held on the previous afternoon. The committee had discussed the timeline for the evaluation of the Commission's Arts in Education program and the process for distributing the survey on the value of the current grant programs. The suggestion was made that a group from the Commission meet with Virginia Secretary of Education Belle Wheelan and leaders of the state Department of Education to discuss the impact of the recent changes in the Standards of Quality providing state salary support for elementary art and music teachers.

Lu Ellsworth said that he had learned at a recent meeting of the NASAA board of directors that arts education is being cut back at the high school level. He recommended that the Arts in Education Committee pay attention to this issue in the overall evaluation of the AIE program.

Beth Temple distributed a newspaper article on a successful new program of the Art League of Alexandria for young women in the juvenile justice system.

Evaluation of Art Works for Virginia Conference

There was a discussion of the Art Works for Virginia conference in which the following points were made.

- Ben Cameron was an outstanding speaker.
- The conference was successful and it works well as a joint event with the Virginians for the Arts Foundation.
- The Commission should look for ways to reduce the cost of the audiovisual equipment used during the conference.
- Legislators told David Briggs that the arts reception stands out among the many social activities for the General Assembly with creative and refreshing energy.
- The suggestion was made that the packets with coupons for Richmond arts events be distributed at the start of the legislative session rather than on Arts Advocacy Day.
- The Commission should do more to encourage grantees to thank their legislators for the grants given by the Commission.
- Some Commissioners questioned the overall value of Arts Advocacy Day, wondering if there should be more emphasis on talking to the legislators at home before the session. There was agreement that advocacy must be a year-round activity but that it is also important to have a presence for the arts during the General Assembly session.

Lu Ellsworth said that Virginians for the Arts was created to provide the year-round advocacy effort and that it is important to the Commission to ensure the stability of the organization.

Report of the Local Arts Agency Study Group

Marilyn Gould, Chair of the local arts agency study group, was introduced and presented the report of the study group. She noted that, following the Art Works for Virginia conference the Arts Council of Fairfax County had invited Ben Cameron to speak in northern Virginia on the value of the arts. She also stated that the Arts Council will present this year's Jinx Hazel Award for service to the arts to Delegate Vincent Callahan.

Gary Grant stated that he had been impressed with the depth of knowledge of the members of the study group and their commitment to fostering a healthy arts community and public involvement in the arts. He made a motion to commend the study group, particularly Chair Marilyn Gould, for their diligent work in preparing the report. The motion was seconded by David Briggs and approved unanimously. Lu Ellsworth added his personal thanks to Marilyn Gould and the study group for the preparation of a fine report.

A discussion followed in which the following points were made.

- The purpose of the recommendations is to build a strong network of local arts agencies throughout the state as a means to address the arts environment of communities rather than focusing solely upon individual arts organizations.
- The Virginia Commission for the Arts is still facing fiscal challenges. Any efforts to move forward with the study group recommendations must take into account the fiscal limits and the small size of the Commission staff. The recommendations may have to be implemented in stages.
- It is unclear how the recommendations of the study group will benefit rural areas of the state without existing local arts agencies.
- Since there is so much disparity among the structures, resources, and programs of the local arts agencies, it may be difficult to develop effective statewide policies for the local arts agencies.
- The professionally staffed local arts agencies tend to be in the urban areas of the state, and the Commission is responsible for statewide services, including the rural areas.
- There are many arts leaders across the state that are not convinced of the value of local arts agencies. Before making changes in the guidelines for funding, as a public agency the Commission is required to listen to a broad range of constituents.
- Building a stronger network of local arts agencies can leverage more local financial support for the arts and more public visibility for the arts.
- Making the public local arts agencies eligible for General Operating Support will require new financial resources for the Commission.
- The report is not specific on how the implementation of the recommendations will strengthen the grassroots advocacy effort for the arts.
- How can the Commission encourage local arts agencies to have a regional focus?
- The Commission could set up a statewide local arts agency panel without changing

the guidelines for funding, possibly with out-of-state panelists who are familiar with local arts agency issues.

- It is good to have a specific definition of a local arts agency as a starting point to understanding the issues. Even people who have been involved with local arts agencies have struggled to understand the field.
- Should the presenting series that call themselves arts councils be considered a part of any future local arts agency program?
- Should support for local arts agencies be tied to specific services rather than unrestricted operating support?
- Could the Commission work with the Virginians for the Arts Foundation to provide professional development for local arts agencies? Perhaps the Commission and the Foundation could co-sponsor a series of workshops around the state on public/media relations.

Deborah Valentine said that as a new member of the Commission board, it is not clear how the recommendations of the study group are different from existing policies and practices.

Eve Wilson made a motion to accept the report. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Lu Ellsworth referred the report to the Policy/Planning/Budget Committee for consideration as the Commission revises the guidelines for funding and updates the agency strategic plan. David Briggs commented that he had no sense of the collective will of the Commissioners about the report and was concerned about the charge to the Policy Committee. Will Trinkle suggested that a second discussion of the report be placed on the agenda of the June Commission meeting after the Commissioners had had time to think about the recommendations. Lu Ellsworth stated that the report would be distributed to all local arts agencies in the state, in addition to the ones represented on the study group, and would be posted on the Commission web site with an invitation for public comments.

Report from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

Lu Ellsworth reported on the recent meeting of the board of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

- NASAA is working with the National Conference of State Legislators on a study of the arts as a state policy asset.
- The Education Commission of the States, the membership of which is primarily state superintendents of public instruction, has endorsed the No Child Left Behind legislation which encourages schools to consider the arts as a core subject.
- Although Congress has approved level funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, funds were shifted from the Challenge America line item to the new American Masterpieces initiative.
- Dana Gioia, Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, has created a national poetry recitation competition. The competition is being tested in the Chicago and

Washington, DC, areas. At least one Arlington County school is involved.

- There is interest in the ideas of former NEA Chair Bill Ivey about broadening the constituency of the NEA and state arts agencies to include for-profit organizations.

Planning for 2006-2008

Peggy Baggett reviewed the Federal and state requirements for agency planning and the timeline for updating the Commission strategic plan and guidelines for funding. Lu Ellsworth then asked what issues, in addition to the Arts in Education evaluation and the report of the local arts agency study group, should be referred to the Policy/Planning/Budget Committee for consideration. E. A. McMath reminded the board that the planning for the future must take into account the limited financial resources and small staff size of the Commission. The following issues were named.

- How to better communicate the value of the arts
- Governor's Arts Awards
- Role of the Commission in the Jamestown 2007 commemoration
- Should the amount of the Technical Assistance Grants be raised?

- How can the Commission provide services to the field at the local level, given the small size of the Commission staff?
- Should the Commission consider purchasing small advertisements in regional magazines as a way of raising visibility for the Commission and for the arts?
- The Commission should talk about the basic concept of the agency and whether the current focus on grantmaking is still the best role, particularly in light of the diminished resource.
- The Policy/Planning/Budget Committee should look at the Federal and state mandates on the agency to determine whether these mandates provide additional opportunities or limit the work of the Commission.
- How can the Commission help arts organizations in audience building, in attracting younger audiences for the arts, and in increasing cultural diversity?
- Should the Commission do more to promote cultural tourism?
- How can the Commission work with the gubernatorial candidates to build support for the arts in advance of the election?

Discussion of the 2005-2006 Grants Budget

Peggy Baggett presented updated information on state and Federal funding of the Commission in 2005-2006 and a sheet showing the impact on General Operating Support grants. Because of the transfer of funds by Congress from the Challenge America program to American Masterpieces, the Commission's NEA Partnership Grant will decrease by \$38,500. Several Commissioners commented that with the new state funds proposed by the Governor, it is important for General Operating Support grantees to see an increase in their Commission grants. David Briggs asked if the information on the sheet about the impact of funding changes on the General Operating Support grants would be shared with the legislative staffs.

Election of the Nominating Committee

Lu Ellsworth opened the floor for nominations to serve on the Nominating Committee. E. A. McMath nominated Jackie Stone and Rod Taylor. Beth Temple nominated Gary Grant. Bonita Lestina made a motion to close the nominations. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Bonita Lestina then made a motion to approve the three nominees. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Old and New Business

Susan Hirschbiel gave a report on the upcoming Virginia arts festival in New York. Lu Ellsworth commended her for her volunteer leadership of such a large undertaking. Gary Grant then expressed gratitude for her work in planning the Commission meeting in the midst of planning for the New York event.

Will Trinkle distributed a photograph of the design for the new building for the Art Museum of Western Virginia.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.