

Indiana Arts Commission
Quarterly Business Meeting
Friday, March 11, 2022, 9:30 AM (ET)
Noblesville City Hall
16 S. 10th Street
Noblesville, IN 46060
Alberta Barker, Chair

MINUTES

Members present: Chad Bolser, Ruth Ann Cowling, Dave Haist, Greg Hull, Walter Knabe, Jake Oakman, Kelsey Peaper, Allen Platt, Sofia Souto, Dusty Stemer, Anne Valentine

Members present via Zoom: Libby Chiu, Laurie McRobbie

Members absent: Lisa Abbott, Alberta Barker

Staff Present via Zoom: Connie Brahm, Stephanie Haines, Miah Michaelsen, Stephanie Pfendler, Chapin Schnick, Paige Sharp

Guests: Ann Fields Monical (RAP co-chair), Mayor Jensen (Noblesville), Aili McGill (Nickel Plate Arts)

1. Call to Order

a. Welcome. IAC Vice-Chair Anne Valentine called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. for IAC Chair Alberta Barker.

b. Noblesville welcomes the IAC. Mayor Jensen of Noblesville welcomed the Commission and noted the commitment and support the City of Noblesville has for the arts and non-profits. He noted Nickel Plate Arts is one of the top-funded non-profits in Noblesville due to the value the city puts on the arts and quality of place. He noted Noblesville is a growing community, the 10th largest in the state, and arts anchors the city. He thanked the Commission for all they do to tell the story of Noblesville and the state. Nickel Plate Arts Executive Director Aili McGill also welcomed the Commission and noted the commitment the city has to the arts and economic development. It was also noted Nickel Plate is the new Regional Arts Partner for Region 7.

c. Roll Call. IAC Executive Assistant Stephanie Pfendler called roll and noted the Commission had a quorum to conduct business. She noted protocol for electronic meetings and consent agenda voting. All in attendance as listed above.

2. Approval of Agenda and December 10, 2021, Meeting Minutes. Ms. Valentine presented the agenda and December 10, 2021, meeting minutes and asked for any corrections. Hearing none she called to approve. Commissioner Ruth Ann Cowling motioned to approve. Commissioner Jake Oakman seconded the motion. By roll call vote all were in favor. The motion carried.

3. Consent Agenda. Ms. Valentine presented the Consent Agenda for approval. All consent agenda item memos and supporting materials were submitted to the Commission and are attached as listed below. She asked if any member would like to move any items to the full agenda. Hearing none, Ms. Valentine called to approve. Commissioner Dave Haist motioned to approve. Commissioner Greg Hull seconded. By roll call vote, all were in favor. The motion carried. Approved items and reports as listed here:

a. Items Submitted for Commission Approval.

- i. FY22 Year to date financials
- ii. On-Ramp Cohort
- iii. Cultural Trust Draw Policy
- iv. CY2022 Agency Goals

b. Reports submitted for review.

- i. FY23 Budget First Look
- ii. Partnering Arts, Communities and Education (PACE)
- iii. Indiana Youth Institute (IYI)
- iv. Indiana Department of Education (IDOE)
- v. Cultural Trust Report
- vi. Commissioner Appointments and Staffing Update
- viii. Indiana Communities Institute Research Report

ix. Partnerships

4. Committee Reports

a. Committee on the Future

i. Strategic Plan. Commissioner Chad Bolser spoke to the Commission about the conclusion of the current Strategic Plan which spanned the years 2017 through 2021. He discussed where the Commission has been through the past 2 pandemic years; serving the Plan while pivoting to focus on the survival of the sector. He continued that because the current Plan has ended a bridge plan is being submitted for Commission approval, based on Key Performance Indicator (KPI) assessment. IAC Grants, Research and Technology Manager Chapin Schnick discussed the KPI, showing where the Commission met goals, where data was not collected, and what we want to know in the future. Ms. Schnick also provided financial data for the agency which included state and federal appropriations as well as special funding to show grant dollar impact. She highlighted where grantees felt they were in relation to community engagement, financial, development, and Inclusion, Equity Diversity, and Access (IDEA) goals. All KPI information is attached. Ms. Schnick noted she is excited to continue to collect similar data to compare and strengthen the knowledge of how our grantees are being affected by IAC funding. Mr. Bolser noted these KPIs show us where the Commission currently is in a Plan the agency is no longer under. Mr. Bolser noted that instead of rushing to write a new Strategic Plan, the Commission is moving forward strategically by presenting a Bridge Plan, a continuation of the previous plan, to span the years 2022 through 2023. Mr. Bolser noted where the Bridge Plan is the same in terms of mission and vision and highlighted additions which included, *we believe* statements such as “we believe in equitable access to the arts for all” and “we believe all art forms and artistic traditions provide full and meaningful creative expression.” The new and continuing goals and priorities were also noted and included to “support Indiana’s arts and culture through all stages of pandemic recovery” and to “model and advance a culture of learning, reflection, leadership, and action in inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.” The full Bridge Plan was submitted to the Commission (attached). Mr. Bolser noted that part of this recommendation for the Commission is the adoption of the proposed Bridge Plan which will span from the current date to Dec. 31, 2023. The second part of the approval is the timeline to develop a new Plan. This includes the process and timeline which will be shared with the Committee on the Future in May and the full Commission in June of 2022. The process to start writing the next Plan will begin on January 1, 2023. The next plan will span the years 2024 through 2028. This will give the Commission a full year to assess the current state of the sector. Ms. Michaelsen added that we see the green shoots of recovery in the sector, but we need more time to plan in a stable environment. She continued that the most prudent action is to pass a bridge plan which will allow a year to see exactly where the sector is to better inform a longer-term plan. It was noted that many other state arts agencies are also adopting bridge plans in this moment. She continued that the last thing the Commission wants to do is run pell-mell into a plan that the Commission would have to pull back on. Ms. Michaelsen noted appreciation for Mr. Bolser’s leadership with his experience and expertise in strategic planning. Mr. Hull questioned if the agency’s equity consultant would be included in this process. Ms. Michaelsen noted the agency anticipates there will be alignment with the equity consultant in this work, especially as we go through the process of aligning equity in region 7. Ms. Valentine questioned, with current staff capacity and vacant positions waiting to be filled, if the Bridge Plan is reasonable to accomplish without asking too much of current staff. Ms. Michaelsen noted that the staff has discussed what we can do with current capacity and have bridged the areas in the current plan that were in progress or emerging as the foundation for the Bridge Plan. Ms. Michaelsen noted we could have been more aggressive but have certainly thought about where the agency is in its capacity and goals. Commissioner Allen Platt added that he appreciated the thoughtfulness in considering where the field is in our current environment. He felt it was smart to take this step as opposed to being artificially obligated to a timeframe just because the other Plan has ended. He further noted that the Bridge Plan distilled down the previous plan well. Mr. Bolser added that good strategic planning will not only help the agency move forward in things but will also help us get rid of things; if we are focused, we are better as an organization. Ms. Valentine called to approve the 2022 – 2023 Bridge Plan as discussed. Commissioner Ruth Ann Cowling motioned to approve. Commissioner Jake Oakman seconded. By roll call vote, all were in favor. The motion carried.

b. Programs, Grants, and Services.

i. Arts Learning Next Steps. IAC Arts Education and Accessibility manager Stephanie Haines reported on the partnership forged with the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) which has committed \$85K to support the continuation of arts integration. She noted this is in partnership with the title 4 funding office, which has funding to support teachers in growing well-rounded educations. The IAC will be managing the program which will take what

we have learned from our Partnering Arts, Communities, and Education (PACE) program approach to integrating arts learning developed over 7 years. The partnership will expand training opportunities to teachers across the state through a free learning lab. Once a teacher attends the training, they will have the opportunity to apply for a fellowship to implement arts integration in the classroom. The labs will be informed by an arts education advisory committee that includes Commissioner Ruth Ann Cowling. Ms. Haines noted the final PACE research report will be published in the summer of 2022. Ms. Haines noted the agency is also working with the Indiana Youth Institute (IYI) which has pulled data from the IDOE to analyze where access to arts education is lacking. Ms. Haines noted because we have limited resources for this program, this data will help us better prioritize those resources. The report is being finalized. Ms. Haines continued on the creative aging programs the IAC is involved in to highlight that arts learning spans all ages. Ms. Michaelsen noted that Ms. Haines has been tilling the field with IDOE for many years and she applauded her tenaciousness in building relationships and providing them with data that proves us a good partner with shared goals.

ii. **Region 7 & Equity.** Ms. Michaelsen presented information to inform the discussion on Region 7 and equity. (Handouts attached). It was noted this information and the suggested path forward come out of discussions with a study group comprised of Commissioners Lisa Abbott, Greg Hull, and Anne Valentine. Ms. Michaelsen set the stage for the discussion through the lens of equity and the current regional system funding strategy. Ms. Michaelsen noted that in line with the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan the agency moved forward in Inclusion, Equity, Diversity, and Access (IDEA) work where we adopted terminology, assessed and revised program policies to increase access, provided training for the field, and received input from focus groups of underrepresented stakeholders. In addition, the Commission adopted a cultural equity statement. She then provided information on the history of the Regional Arts Partners and the current strategy for grant allocation. It was noted that currently, each region is allocated a certain amount of funding based on population size according to the most recent census. Because the majority of funding goes toward Indianapolis (region 7) and we award based on budget size (the larger the organization budget the larger the grant award), this has resulted in inequities within the regional system. In addition, she differentiated between Arts Project Support (APS) and Arts Organization Support (AOS). Because all AOS organizations that are eligible through the paneling process are funded and the largest of those organizations reside in region 7 (10 out of 13) this leaves little room to fund APS organizations (only 2 funded in region 7). She noted APS organizations tend to be emerging, smaller, volunteer-run, and more diverse. Awards based on growth, while a success story, put smaller organizations at a disadvantage considering that larger organizations usually have trained grant writers and access to many streams of capital. Ms. Michaelsen concluded that the current funding strategy is not sustainable or equitable. In addition, while we use a push-pull strategy to retrieve resources from underperforming regions, those resources are put toward funding Region 7. This means little funding for other initiatives and an inability for the agency to respond to emerging opportunities. For example, the Commission put artist services initiatives on hold during the pandemic years due to the extra agency holdback percentage. Ms. Michaelsen added that the only reason why the agency is able to expand the PACE program is that we have a partnership with the IDOE. (Ms. Michaelsen's presentation is attached.)

Ms. Michaelsen continued on study group input and questions around the impact the IAC is looking to make with our resources and the regional funding program specifically. The study group requested staff recommendations on how to proceed. Staff suggestions include:

- A new vision: *Equitable access to arts for all.*
- A new programmatic vision: *Arts resources are equitably distributed and directed where they can deliver the most impact based on IAC priorities.*
- And, that we construct a new statewide AOS funding model that is developed:
 - o with field input
 - o under the guidance of an equity consultant
 - o and, adopted for implementation in the FY24-FY25 grant cycle (December 2022 QBM approval).

Ms. Michaelsen added that currently we define impact by the number of people served but there are many other ways to define this.

Ms. Michaelsen asked for Commission response. Mr. Hull thanked Ms. Michaelsen for the information and added that because Region 7 is growing and the Commission has made a commitment to equity, of which many of our partners have made the same commitment, it seems like an opportunity to do the work we committed to do. Ms. Valentine noted as a study group member there is a great depth behind the presented recommendations. She noted that she sees this has the potential to have a different impact. She noted the current sprinkling of grant dollars is important to show that taxpayer dollars are reaching the state since we measure by people served. She also noted that for a very large organization the impact of \$5K as a very small percentage of a larger budget would make a different impact for an emerging organization or a smaller rural organization as a larger percentage of a smaller budget. She continued that she is excited at the prospect of putting our money where our mouth is in terms of equity. She noted it is an aggressive timeline, but if we need to pull back, we can. She further noted it is a further opportunity to talk with legislators about the impact these changes can make in their communities. Ms. Cowling responded to the inequality in smaller communities that need help to grow. She added if one of the goals is to have access all across the state you are going to have to put focus on less populous places. Mr. Knabe noted that Ms. Valentine's comment on the impact of what a \$5K grant can have on smaller, emerging, or rural organizations really grabbed him as the focus. Ms. Stemer questioned how a smaller organization is supposed to grow if it is impossible to compete with professional grant writers and urban accessibility to resources. Mr. Platt suggested a bigger picture approach to restructuring the regions given the growth of organizations and population movement. He noted, that with the current proposed timeline, this might be something to consider for the future. He suggested consideration be given to dispersing region 7 to find a balance of urban and rural areas. Mr. Platt noted he is concerned about the survival of smaller groups in region 7, considering that larger organizations have greater access to more funding. Ms. Michaelsen noted discussion has been had around not only the potential for breaking up region 7 but thinking about a strategy for every region based on their unique assets. Ms. Michaelsen noted the current model of treating each region the same is certainly part of this conversation. Ms. Stemer questioned the process of asking for more money. Ms. Valentine provided an overview of the legislative process for state agencies which starts with a recommendation from the administration to the legislature. She noted it is important that the agency follows the recommendation from the Governor and not circumvent the administration. She continued that coming to the administration and the budget office with a new strategy does open the door to having a conversation. Ms. Michaelsen continued that the important message is that it provides an opportunity for us to serve others and to address pressure from communities to do more for them. The *ask* being that we need more resources to support the system, quality of place, and community growth. Ms. McRobbie questioned if in the current climate it was felt there may be an opportunity for a special allocation. She continued that going back to fundamental questions about what we want to accomplish under the IDEA rubric puts a higher priority on rural, smaller, and BIPOC organizations. She suggested perhaps a special allocation could be requested or promoted to move more resources out to those organizations and high-priority areas explicitly without changing the regional system. She felt that changing the regional system is a bit like rearranging the deck chairs and noted if we are to restructure the regional system, we would have to determine what we are trying to accomplish and keep in mind that the state is changing. Mr. Haist was cautious about the amount of work needed by the end of the year and wondered if it was a realistic timeline from assessment to action. He added that at the top of this meeting Mayor Jensen noted the City of Noblesville's commitment to the arts and quality of place through their allocation to Nickel Plate. He continued that the state needs to figure out how to make more of an impact in those terms with agency collaborations or funding from other foundations or sources. He noted he didn't know the answer but does know the arts have a huge impact on quality of place and economic development. He added that with the dollars we have at our disposal we can rearrange them but he felt we will continue to be short in certain areas. Mr. Bolser noted that the aggressive timeline leads to driving this analysis into the strategic planning process and determining what the goals are so we can answer these questions on an ongoing basis. He added that as concerns the legislature's decisions on allocations, it seems that their concern is the workforce since it seems to be top of mind, all of the time. He continued that making the case that arts are one of the best tools to develop a vibrant workforce may be the argument we need to expand our piece of the pie. Ms. Sharp noted she appreciated the Commission discussion, especially around special funding. She noted the agency is in a critical situation where the field is growing but the agency is not and thus cannot sustain future growth. She noted that the agency is in the midterm year of 2 years of funding as allocated by the legislature. She continued that the timeline provides for an opportunity to

make some changes ahead of the unknown budget for the 2024-2026 cycle. She emphasized that without knowing that we will have any type of special funding we are going to have very little to prioritize other things, so, we do have an urgency. She continued that the agency is not looking to significantly diminish the support we give organizations, since the agency deeply values that, but we do want to focus more on our priorities rather than rewarding organizations for simply growing in size. In reference to Mr. Bolser's workforce comment she noted that we know how much just a little can go in many communities in the state and that is impactful for communities in attracting the workforce. Ms. Sharp noted she is all for more funding, but she is worried about the next budget for the agency, hence the proposed timeline. She continued that if we are concerned about the timeline, we could develop a feasibility group to think through that with Commissioners. Ms. Michaelsen added that we have designed the suggested timeline to check in with the Commission during the quarterly meetings to see where we are and if we need to slow the roll or determine if we need to do this and not that. Ms. Michaelsen continued that what we want to do is design a system that expands and contracts in the lean times and then in the good times we have room. Right now, from a structural standpoint, we are out of whack and need to continue to have the flexibility to serve other things, as needed. She continued that impact is the most important question we need to answer. She continued that since we will never have enough funding to do what we want to do, defining the impact we want to see with what we have is key and needs to be investigated. Mr. Hull concurred on aligning goals with how we measure impact. Ms. McRobbie raised another point on engaging funders to catalyze the thinking of other potential funders in the state as something we can undertake this year. She continued that perhaps there are other small steps such as cutting back allocations by 1 or 2% to build a pool to be allocated in the current fiscal year. Ms. Valentine thanked the Commission for the great discussion.

iii. Cultural Districts. Ms. Sharp presented information on the history of the Cultural District program, where the program is now since its inception, and where it is going (handout attached). The Commission and Districts have started asking value proposition questions on where the districts are going; if there will be a cap on designation; and how the program is to evolve. Ms. Sharp asked Commissioner Walter Knabe to share his experience with the Indianapolis Cultural Districts in which he noted branding was used as a strategy to revitalize areas that were in decline as evidenced in the Meridian-Kessler and Ft. Square city cultural districts. Ms. Sharp noted that these Indianapolis districts are branded areas of arts and cultural activity like the statewide Cultural Districts used to revitalize areas. Ms. Sharp noted differences between the state and city designations which included a dedicated management team and budgets allocated around actions and inclusion in the community economic development plans. She noted, that on the state level, the program was developed to encourage communities to leverage arts and culture for economic development, revitalization, and quality of life. She continued that designation is a rigorous process with the program having only 12 Districts since its inception in 2009. She noted the long view wasn't considered when the program was initiated. While attempts to tie funding to the districts through legislation have not succeeded, the agency provides \$5K per year for project grants to meet the consortium goals. She added, the agency has evolved the program to include a capacity-building component for spotlight communities moving toward, but are not quite at, designation level. Ms. Sharp noted the goal and future of the District program is something the Commission needs to start thinking about. Thinking about how many cultural districts are too many, what are the impacts and metrics, and what the IAC does for the districts are just a few things to consider. She suggested a study group with Commission input would be a good starting place. Ms. Sharp noted Mr. Bolser brought up a great point in the Executive Committee that no resources are attached under the legislation. Mr. Bolser noted that he went back to his community to get buy-in into the application process but there wasn't the momentum he assumed there would be. He noted because it is difficult to make that value proposition, it would be valuable to help with legislation to elevate these sorts of things and diversify the areas we are seeing designation. It was noted Walter Knabe, Dave Haist, and Chad Bolser would be interested in looking at the District program. Ms. Stemer questioned what feedback communities who don't achieve designation receive. Ms. Sharp noted that the designation process is also a capacity-building process where communities receive a large report which includes recommendations and examples for further resources. In addition, a meeting is set up for a feedback session. Mr. Hull commented on connecting the dots between Cultural Districts and gentrification and that the agency has a responsibility to navigate those discussions as well. Ms. Sharp responded that this is certainly an unintended consequence and something that needs to be addressed.

iv. Indiana Arts Homecoming Next Steps and Fee Establishment. Ms. Brahm reported on the last 5 years of the Indiana Arts Homecoming which has been the primary capacity-building program for the agency. She noted in

the past the conference has been held as a 3-day in-person event which was held virtually during the pandemic. She continued that given what we have learned in the past 5 years there is a demonstrated need for more targeted areas of education and the need to be flexible amid changing public health recommendations for the coming year. Ms. Brahm presented the next steps and fees for commission approval. (Handout attached.) She noted the suggested plan changes the conference from a multiday conference into 3, one-day learning labs that focus on a single topic within a fee structure not to exceed \$75. She added that the goal is to keep the fee as minimal as possible with the consideration of scholarship opportunities. She noted the first learning lab will be the arts integration learning lab that Ms. Haines discussed earlier in the meeting and will take place in Indianapolis. Mr. Hull noted if we return to fees, we need to make sure those are not a roadblock for anyone. Ms. Brahm noted the intent is to offer scholarships as well. Ms. Valentine called to approve the IN Arts Homecoming next steps and fee establishment as presented. Mr. Oakman motioned to approve. Mr. Bolser seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all were in favor. The motion carried.

5. Regional Arts Partnership

a. Consortium Report. Regional Arts Partner (RAP) Co-Chair Ann Fields Monical provided a report on current partner activities. She noted the RAPs presented the Arts for All IDEA series which was held over 3 separate days and saw 150 participants. She noted Dr. Pascale Losambe developed and presented the workshops. She noted the sessions included setting the stage for the biological impetus for bias, barriers to belonging, breakout sessions coordinated by region for discussion, and a panel Dr. Losambe assembled to discuss this work. Ms. Monical noted she was impressed with the participation of attendees, especially in the virtual format. She further reported that they have had great feedback that the presentation was really engaging. Ms. Monical noted the RAPs are working on follow-up discussions that may take place by region or statewide.

6. Consent Agenda Items moved to full agenda (if any). No items were moved to the full agenda.

7. Old Business and New Business. Ms. Haines provided a presentation on the Poetry Outloud and Poetry Ourselves programs. Ms. Michaelsen asked Commissioners to share the open staff positions in their circles. Commissioner Libby Chiu gave a heartfelt goodbye to the Commission in which she has served for almost 8 years. She announced her resignation as she will be moving to Boston to be closer to family. She thanked the Commission for the years of friendship.

8. Adjournment of Quarterly Meeting. Ms. Valentine thanked Libby on behalf of the Commission and said she would absolutely be missed. Ms. Valentine called to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.