

Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee

February 19, 2008

Item 1: Meeting called to order by Chair Ron Beach at 11:37 a.m.

Roll Call

Committee Members Present: André Van Schaften
Harold Stalf
Katherine Roy
Ron Beach
Edward Lipton
Stephan Schweissing

Committee Members Absent: Alan Friedman

Guests: Kirk Gustafson, Grand Junction Symphony
Roger Davison, Grand Junction Music Arts Association
Rich Keller, Shaw Construction
Dan Gartner, Chamberlin Architects
Ron Wilson, Sandstone Entertainment

Parks & Recreation Staff Present: Joe Stevens, Director of Parks & Recreation
Tim Seeberg, TRCC/Avalon Theatre Manager
Juli Adams, Event Planner
Tressa Fisher, Administrative Specialist
Dina Jones, Administrative Clerk

Item 2: Approve Minutes

Ron Beach stated there were a few errors in the January 15, 2008 Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee minutes: Kirk Gustafson's and Daniel Gartner's names were misspelled and the Avalon Theatre Advisory "Committee" was referred to as the Avalon Theatre Advisory "Board".

Harold Stalf moved to approve the January 15, 2008 Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee minutes with the above corrections. Katherine Roy seconded.

Motion approved by Avalon Theatre Advisory Board: Yes 6 No 0

Stephan Schweissing reported he received an email from Committee member Alan Friedman stating he has moved to Arizona for the majority of the year and has requested to resign from the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee. Mr. Friedman's resignation e-mail has been forwarded to the City Clerk's office, making the announcement and acceptance official.

Stephan Schweissing moved to accept Alan Friedman's resignation. Ed Lipton Seconded.

Motion approved by Avalon Theatre Advisory Board: Yes 6 No 0

Ron Beach requested an update from the user board representatives regarding whether or not their organizations are in support of the renovations. Kirk Gustafson stated the Grand Junction Symphony is interested in continuing the process. Ron Wilson stated he had no update at this time.

Ed Lipton stated he has been encountering dissatisfaction from the Avalon Foundation Board regarding the renovation process, stating it has been ongoing for over two years. Mr. Lipton stated the City voted to form the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee two years ago January, and expressed it appears that very little is happening in the renovation process and that the process could continue another year or two with very little happening. Ron Beach responded the Committee did not really start until September 2006, even though the Committee was designated in January. Stephan Schweissing stated, regardless of the slow process, the Cinema at the Avalon remains committed to the process.

Item 3: Acoustical Analysis Review and Discussion – Rich Keller, Shaw Construction and Dan Gartner, Chamberlin Architects

Ron Beach welcomed Rich Keller, Shaw Construction and Dan Gartner, Chamberlin Architects. Rich Keller distributed copies of the Avalon Theatre – Expansion and Renovation study, which illustrates numerous options for renovating and/or expanding the existing theatre. Mr. Keller stated the study includes a brief summary at the beginning of each option that highlights the main improvements. Mr. Keller provided a brief synopsis of the options along with the related costs. Rich Keller stated the options have incorporated the 2002 recommendations from Chamberlin Architects (at 2008 costs) and the recommendations from Kirkegaard Associates. Discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of the presented options.

Dan Gartner stated the question the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee has to ask is “How much do they want to spend on the renovations?” Ed Lipton asked if Option E includes putting in a support, as well as what the individual cost of the support would be. Rich Keller responded Option E “does” include the support, stating the cost of the support alone would be approximately \$80,000. André Van Schaften expressed the importance of knowing the seating capacity with each option prior to making a decision. Rich Keller said each option includes the specific seating capacity, stating Options B, D, and F will reduce the seating to approximately 770 seats. Ron Wilson expressed concern over the potential loss of seating. A brief discussion took place regarding the location of the utilities and how the location impacts the various options.

Stephan Schweissing asked what it would cost to build a performance theater from scratch. Rich Keller responded the existing structure is worth an estimated \$4 – \$6 million, and that it would cost approximately \$20 - \$25 million to build a similar theater from scratch, not including the land. André Van Schaften questioned whether or not it makes sense to invest up to \$14 million in the existing structure. Ed Lipton asked if the renovation is a good value based on the cost benefit analysis. (Would 1,100 people benefit from a \$14 million building?) Harold Stalf responded by asking how many people are going to benefit from a \$45 million police station. Harold Stalf stated the mission of the Committee will be to review the utilization of the Avalon Theatre, then complete the fund raising analysis to determine what the community will be willing to contribute. Harold Stalf stated the role of the Committee is to look at the needs of the community for the next 20 years. Ron Wilson expressed the Committee’s goal should be greater than 20 years, as this type of renovation will benefit the community much longer than that. André Van Schaften suggested the Committee pursue the \$14 million option. Ron Wilson requested the Committee refrain from any options that reduce the amount of seating, stating “more” seats result in increased affordability for the community. Dan Gartner expressed, should the Committee choose the \$14 million option, the end result will still consist of a hall with a lot of problems (stage too high, only 1,000 seats, etc.). Mr. Gartner expressed concern that

the community may not be willing to support the project, as they may question the reason for spending such a large amount of money (approximately \$500/sq. ft.) on a facility that would still have problems. Harold Stalf asked what it would cost to build a new facility that would meet the desired standards and suggested the Committee pursue the answer before asking the community for support. Ron Wilson stated that selling the concept of a \$14 million renovation of the current Avalon Theatre would be a challenge; however, selling the “redevelopment of an entire corner in Grand Junction” will be the “real” sell. Harold Stalf agreed, stating the sell should be fairly easy, as no one wants to see the Avalon Theatre go away.

Ron Beach thanked Rich Keller and Dan Gartner for their work on the study and invited them to attend the next Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee meeting. Tim Seeberg also thanked Mr. Keller and Mr. Gartner, on behalf of the City.

Item 4: Fundraising Feasibility Study RFP and Timeline

Tim Seeberg reported the Fundraising Feasibility Study RFP went out last Monday, February 11, 2008, and is currently in motion. Mr. Seeberg stated the aggressive timeline includes the submittals being due on March 6, 2008, with the execution of a contract scheduled for March 23, 2008. Tim Seeberg recommended a subcommittee be formed to evaluate the credentials of the consultants. Harold Stalf said the final results will most likely be received approximately 60-90 days after the execution of the contract. Mr. Stalf recommended the study test for both options (with or without the orchestra). Kirk Gustafson asked if it was possible to send out the RFP without a specific dollar amount for the feasibility study. Harold Stalf responded yes, as it will require the same amount of research during the feasibility study, regardless of the amount. Harold Stalf said the Committee will also need to be prepared for specific questions, as well as being prepared to identify “who” the study should include in the community.

Ed Lipton asked how long the current renovation plan, consisting of a 900 seat auditorium, will serve the community with the present rate of growth. Ron Wilson answered, from his perspective, the facility will serve the community forever, as it will get booked more frequently as the community grows. Mr. Wilson stated the current size of the theater will just result in multiple performances versus not using the theatre at all. Ed Lipton asked how soon the community will need a bigger venue. Harold Stalf stated an event center will be available for future “large” events, and will only compliment the Avalon Theatre, not replace it. Kirk Gustafson reported the Symphony is considering hosting two performances, regardless of whether or not the seating capacity changes. Ron Beach and André Van Schaften volunteered to serve on the subcommittee, along with Harold Stalf.

Item 5: Next Meeting Date

Harold Stalf recommended moving the March Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee meeting back a week, in order to allow time for the consultant interviews. The next Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee meeting will be determined at a later date, based on the results of the consultant interviews.

Item 6: Adjourn

Harold Stalf moved to adjourn. André Van Schaften seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m. by acclamation.

Unanimously Approved: Yes 6 No 0

Respectfully submitted,
Tressa Fisher
Administrative Specialist