

Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee

July 22, 2008

Item 1: Meeting Called to Order by Chair Ron Beach at 8:05 a.m.

Roll Call

Committee Members Present: Ron Beach
 Andre' van Schaften
 Stephan Schweissing
 Stephen Thoms
 Kathy Jordan
 Greer Taylor
 Patti Hoff

Guests: Roger Davidson, Grand Junction Musical
 Arts Association
 Illene Roggensack, Third Sector Innovations
 Kurk Gustafson, Grand Junction Symphony
 Ed Lipton, Avalon Foundation Board

Visitor & Convention Staff Present: Debbie Kovalik, Director of the VCB,
 TRCC & Avalon Theatre
 Tim Seeberg, TRCC & Avalon Theatre
 General Manager
 Dina Jones, Sales and Planning Assistant
 Chasity Gray, Administrative Clerk

Item 2: Approve Minutes

Chair Ron Beach requested corrections be made to the June 23, 2008 minutes, stating on page 2, second paragraph, line 2, the word “a” should be deleted. Under item 5, line 11, “Patty” should be spelled “Patti”.

Stephan Schweissing moved to approve the July 22, 2008 Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee minutes with the above correction. Andre' van Schaften seconded.

Motion approved by Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee: Yes 7 No 0

Item 3: Fund Raising Feasibility Study Interview Results Presentation & Discussion - Illene Roggensack, Third Sector Innovations, Inc. Q & A

Illene Roggensack distributed the Interim Report of the Fund Raising Feasibility Study. Ms. Roggensack stated the following items are not included in the report: names of individuals she has been given who can potentially lead the campaign, potential leading donors, and the list of names of those who are interested in giving cash and multi-year gifts. Illene Roggensack reported that the distributed Interim Report is an accumulation of 2/3 of the planned interviews. Nineteen have been completed. Ms. Roggensack is hoping to have all the interviews completed by next Friday, August 1st. Illene Roggensack will also be calling several foundations in Denver, who received the same packet of information, to see what they may see themselves doing in the next few years with regards to this or other projects.

Ms. Roggensack pointed out the highlights of the report. This included an analysis of what common themes were touched upon throughout most of the interviews. Following are some of the observations made that came about as a result of the interview process: Illene Roggensack stated the controversial issue seems to be Cinema at the Avalon and that some people love the idea of having a second theater and others who feel there is not enough attendance at the movies to waste money on such an expansion. There is also a common thread that the people who are involved in the community are aware of the need for this facility expansion, yet for those not involved, such as the general public, awareness is much lower. Illene Roggensack explained there is a feeling among the interviewees that this project must be a public/private relationship. Comments were made that the City of Grand Junction and the Downtown Development Authority need to be substantial partners in order to make this happen. Illene Roggensack reported most of those who are interested are only willing to give something in the order of about \$5000. Ms. Roggensack reported from a fund-raising perspective, it is difficult to reach the campaign goal without having a large significant gift from one or a small group of donors. Illene Roggensack reported generally everyone interviewed feels good about the timing. Those interviewed see other campaigns in the community almost completed and they don't see potential ballot initiatives in November as being competitive to this project. Ms. Roggensack explained the perception of the state of the economy is coming up more now in the interviews than when she started, and it may be skewing answers somewhat. Ms. Roggensack reported about 2/3 of the people interviewed are likely to give some sort of gift and that three or four of those interviewed would like to be involved in the project.

Ed Lipton asked Illene Roggensack if any comments came from those who did not want to participate in the study. Ms. Roggensack responded the number one answer was they really support this project but don't want to participate. Ron Beach requested an updated report after all interviews are completed be sent to the entire committee prior to the next meeting. Andre' van Schaften asked if it would make sense to go further and talk to 10 or 20 more people. Illene Roggensack feels the key people are being interviewed and she doesn't think it will offer any more insight.

Discussion ensued regarding building the excitement of the project. Patti Hoff agrees there is not enough being generated. Ms. Hoff expressed the key component in leadership is a strategic marketing plan that gets people excited about the project. Stephan Schweissing asked Illene Roggensack how the foundations and those who generate more money would react to this entire campaign. Ms. Roggensack responded, that major players will get involved, and the question is a matter of how much involvement.

Steve Thoms asked Ms. Roggensack if the interviewees feel comfortable about the project. Illene Roggensack reported most interviewees really like the look of the outside of the Avalon Theatre as designed in the rendition submitted by Chaimberlin Architects. Ms. Roggensack reported that many comments came up regarding the size of the theater, such as, should seating capacity be larger to attract larger stage acts?

Steve Thoms expressed his reservations having seen last year's plan for a 5 million dollar project. Mr. Thoms asked if there other options. Andre' van Schaften explained the initial objective of the other plan was to add a 5 million dollar addition and fix up the interior. Mr. van Schaften stated the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee felt the City and other boards were very light in terms of their support. Andre' van Schaften asked Debbie Kovalik what her thoughts are on trying to pursue this again. Ms. Kovalik responded that the City of Grand Junction would be more actively supportive if it is apparent that there is large public support and initiative surrounding this support. Debbie Kovalik agrees there needs to be a plan and recommends that an actual scale model exhibit be showcased to create a vision for the public to grasp onto. Ms. Kovalik expressed the City Council will want to know the boards interest and direction in the coming months, however they are dealing with many large issues, so getting agenda time may prove difficult in the near future. Ed Lipton suggested the changes that need to be made to the theatre, such as the seating, air conditioning, heating and ceiling replacement be done now to generate more interest. Mr. Lipton feels that even if the building going to go away in an expansion and reconstruction at a later date, it would be money well spent. Andre' van Schaften stated the first major objective is to put together a committee to create a strategic marketing plan to create excitement in the community.

Item 4: Public Access Web Site-Avalon Theatre Fund Raising Feasibility Study - Discussion & Decision

Chair Ron Beach explained that it may be wise to create a public survey covering the Avalon Theatre, which would be linked within the City web site. Mr. Beach feels this would help create some excitement about this project. Patti Hoff expressed there should be a link to the city web site with a marketing plan to promote the facility but not a survey. Tim Seeberg agreed that investing in a web-based presentation to promote the project, then possibly attach a survey later with questions in a more basic context asking for opinion and not money, would be a positive move to consider. Greer Taylor suggested the web site be part of the whole marketing plan in general. Ms. Taylor suggested volunteers from the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee should form a marketing committee to start development of a marketing plan immediately. Steve Thoms said the Downtown Development Authority Board (DDA) holds a retreat next month and they will be discussing what types of projects the DDA would like to support.

Ed Lipton asked if anyone has done any projections of the operating expenses for the Avalon Theatre; operating the theatre as it is intended after the project is complete. Tim Seeberg completed a very basic line item projection for the purposes of this study, covering a five-year span. Mr. Seeberg explained it is a conservative projection, given the size, capacity and the type of business expected for the first five years. Kirk Gustafson asked if it is the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee's responsibility to make a recommendation to City Council as to what to do with the facility. Debbie Kovalik explained it is the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee's objective to decide what to do with the Avalon Theatre from a capital enhancement standpoint. Ms. Kovalik stated the City is going to own the Avalon Theatre and operate it as it is now unless the community decides it should be something different and/or better than what it currently is. Ms. Kovalik reported the City Council will be supportive of which ever way the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee decides to go as best they can. She further stated the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee has the responsibility for helping to decide what direction the Avalon Theatre takes moving forward. Debbie Kovalik expressed her support for what the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee purpose is and will readily report as necessary to the City Council on what the committee's direction is.

Ron Beach asked for four volunteers for formation of the Marketing Committee. Patti Hoff, Steve Thoms, Greer Taylor and Kathy Jordan volunteered to form the committee and will supply a preliminary report at the next Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee meeting.

Ron Beach clarified the on-line survey of the public at large will be not be on the feasibility study at this time. Debbie Kovalik stated when the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee is ready to put survey or marketing plan information on the web site, there is a possibility that the City can have software available to enhance the process. Patti Hoff asked if there is a budget designated to cover the cost of marketing the project. There currently is not a budget available. Ron Beach recommended creating a proposal to see where the funding will come from as part of the marketing plan.

