

Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee

August 19, 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
 Kirk Gustafson, Grand Junction Symphony
 Ed Lipton, Avalon Foundation Board
 Michael Schwerin, Grand Junction
 Symphony
 Rich Keller, Shaw Construction
 Dan Gartner, Chamberlain Architects

Visitor & Convention Staff Present: Debbie Kovalik, Director of the
 Visitor & Convention Bureau,
 Two Rivers Convention Center &
 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 item 3, second paragraph, the word “competed” should be “completed”. Another correction, on item 4, second paragraph, line 5, Mr. Gustafson's name is spelled incorrectly and needs to be corrected to “Kirk”.

Patti Hoff moved to approve the July 22, 2008 Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee minutes with the above corrections. Kathy Jordan seconded.

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

Item 3: Appointment of Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee Vice Chair, One Year Term Expiring June 30, 2009

Mr. Beach stated the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee does not have a Vice Chairman. Ron Beach proposed with the board's approval that Andre' van Schaften be the Vice Chairman. Motion approved by the board that Andre' van Schaften would be the Vice Chairman for a one year term that will expire June 30, 2009. Andre' van Schaften thanked the committee for their support.

Ron Beach indicated that due to the nature of this week's meeting, that the committee may need a second meeting in September. A decision on this will be made at the end of today's meeting.

Item 4: Fund Raising Feasibility Study Final Results and Recommendations – Presentation and Discussion, Illene Roggensack, third Sector Innovations, Inc

Illene Roggensack asked the floor if there were any questions in regards to the study emailed on Monday. Ms. Roggensack indicated that during the study questions were presented regarding the second theatre. Ms. Roggensack then opened the floor to comments and questions. Ron Beach asked Ms. Roggensack how much money could be raised to get the project off the ground. Illene Roggensack feels it is about leadership; that the more people you have backing the project, the more money that could be raised. Illene Roggensack iterated that people feel there is a lack of leadership at this time in the arts and theatre arena in general. Patti Hoff stated that leadership is going to be the key in getting this project off the ground. Illene Roggensack passed out a list of names that were either interested in the project, those that weren't interested and other names that were given out by other community members. Ms. Roggensack did suggest that these names remain confidential to the committee. During the interview process, Illene Roggensack stated the sentiment is, that it is time for the younger generation to take charge and they need to be the ones to be stepping up. Ron Beach asked if any prominent names in 40's to 50's group that stick out. Illene Roggensack stated that yes, there are recognizable names on the list, however those that step up and want to make an impact need to have the “fire in the belly” to realize any success. It did not seem that any of the people on the list presented themselves as if they wanted to do this at this time. Illene Roggensack said there is also a very strong sentiment that the City needs to be involved. There is a strong suggestion that the more money contributed from the city, the more money others would be willing to donate. Andre' van Schaften asked Illene Roggensack besides the City, who are the other key players in this equation? Illene Roggensack stated that the internal players are the biggest key players at this time. The internal examples would be the GJ Symphony and the Downtown Development Authority. Illene Roggensack suggested that the center of this project needs to be strong, and then branch to outside organizations. It isn't seen that everyone in the community is going to benefit from this theatre project, but rather serving a much smaller audience. Ms. Roggensack went on to suggest that this is about being an anchor to downtown and main street, the importance of the historical significance, and home for the GJ Symphony. These are the driving motivators from the people that Illene Roggensack spoke with and interviewed.

Kirk Gustafson commented that the Symphony's view point is unwavering in regards to this project. Mr. Gustafson and Roger Davidson have reported back to the symphony, however, the original proposal that was presented to the symphony board has since changed. The symphony has not had time to react to the current proposal. Patti Hoff commented that the Avalon project and concept at this point is not defined. Illene Roggensack commented that confusion is going to be a big part of the problem when it comes time to perform the fundraising activities. Discussion continued in regards to coming to a clear consensus on what the focus is and should be on the current project, as well as how to run the current facility more efficiently. Andre' van Schaften commended Illene Roggensack on the work she has done. Ron Beach asked Illene Roggensack her opinion on how the additional 100 plus seat theatre was perceived? Did it have a negative impact on those who were questioned during the study? Illene Roggensack indicated that this was the most controversial aspect of the project. There were questions asked on where the Cinema at the Avalon fell into all of this. The general tone was that a big movie night for the Cinema is 30 people in attendance, so why are we building another theatre? Greer Taylor asked the question if there was a better facility, would it attract more people. Illene Roggensack did not receive any comments regarding comfort. Andre' van Schaften asked Stephan Schweissing what the Cinema at the Avalon view is. Stephan Schweissing indicated that not being able to continue showing movies while other performances are going on, would add to the Cinema's difficulties. If a second theatre was going to be a drag to the project, then it would be the committees' job to make that decision, but then the Cinema would probably not be as involved. Stephan Schweissing wanted to let everyone know that when this project started the Cinema was not having problems. Other issues came into play that changed the current situation. Ron Beach commented that as the market grows in the arts, the Cinema could have a bright future. Stephan Schweissing agreed, however if the theatre was closed for Cinema's use on the weekend, it would hurt the over all monthly income and business of the Cinema. Also it would prevent the number of movies brought in as promoters want these movies shown in a certain way and generally uninterrupted during the movie run. Ron Beach reminded the board that the new theatre would have many other uses than just for the Cinema and the facility would need to be marketed as such. Andre' van Schaften asked Illene Roggensack if her work of the fund raising study is finished based on the contract? Illene Roggensack indicated that the board originally asked for advice and structure recommendations, but that was not in the written in contract; it was dialog and inquiry to that effect. Ms. Roggensack would be glad to continue helping present this to other organizations, however the basis of the duties have been fulfilled. Ron Beach thanked Illene Roggensack for all her hard and professional work. Ron Beach suggested that everyone really go over all the information and make recommendations at the next meeting.

Item 5: Acoustics Survey and Action Plan – Explanation of Study's Recommendations and Costs. What Can Be Reduced or Eliminated from Kirkegaard Associates Plan Without Jeopardizing Quality of Acoustics? Rich Keller, Shaw Construction

Ron Beach said that himself and Andre' van Schaften needed to revisit the acoustics study again to go over the costs of construction surrounding the acoustical findings, and decide if there are aspects of the project that could be left out to save costs. Rich Keller from Shaw construction and Dan Gartner from Kierkegaard are present to answer questions and go over the details of the acoustics study. Rich Keller explained how the figure went from \$5 million to the current \$18 million. When the original figure was given of \$5 million, it was using the facility as is, and upgrading the Avalon from there. The vision has since diverged from the original idea. Rich Keller said that after looking at what would need to be done to get this project off the ground and looking at all aspects that need to be upgraded to meet everyone's standards is where the monetary amount switched from \$5 million to the \$14 million figure. Rich Keller and Dan Gartner then tried to be proactive in regards to costs with the new facility, acoustics, etc based on an estimated time frame when the project would actually start. Rich Keller iterated that they did take into consideration inflation, increase in material costs, etc when the price went from \$14 million to \$18 million. From the point of what could be taken out of the project to save costs, Rich Keller suggested that the Kierkegaard group would be the ones to suggest those ideas. Rich Keller wanted to remind everyone that price would increase on items that were left off over the years. Rich also reminded everyone the need to remember that if the project is scaled back, there will be the perception that something should have been done that wasn't. Stephan Schweissing iterated that the committee would not want to propose a \$17 million theatre (maybe saving \$1 million off the original cost) and not have the right acoustics. Tim Seeberg gave some perspective on the acoustics study. To get the minimum standard of what the symphony would need, the interior of the current building would need to be redesigned and completely re-built. Tim Seeberg asked the committee to keep in mind that cost savings would likely be found in cutting back on some of the cosmetic features; however these savings would be minimal. Dan Gartner from Kierkegaard indicated that if the board is going to add onto the building, it doesn't make sense to just to do part of it. If Illene Roggensack's numbers are right in regards to donations, maybe the board needs to upgrade the existing theatre. Andre' van Schaften asked if anything can be taken out of this plan without compromising sound and can anything be delayed? Are there any luxuries people will not notice, that can be eliminated? Rich Keller said that a lot of cosmetic additions were not added. Andre' van Schaften feels that it is an all or nothing project. Ron Beach indicated that what is good for the symphony will be good for productions that we do not have now. Proper promotion and proper marketing could attract more customers and cycle through.

Item 6: Strategic Marketing Committee Progress Report

Patti Hoff reiterated again Illene Roggensack's report was right on the money in regards to getting the word out. Patti referred back to Illene's report in respects to making the following points clear, "Making the public aware, needing a catching slogan, work at a grass roots level and need to arouse desire and involvement." Patti Hoff shared the mission for the project, "To inspire and educate the community on the value of a new and improved Avalon Theatre." Ms. Hoff explained the issues that needed to be resolved. The project needs a marketing person who understands the concept at hand and offers experience on managing an art venue. The project needs a marketing budget, and a business plan. The marketing committee suggests having a kickoff party for the community, which would include the unveiling of an Avalon brand logo, along with making it fun by putting on a talent show. Andre' van Schaften feels that the idea of the kick off is a great idea. Ron Beach asked if the committee has identified someone to take on this project. Patti Hoff stated that the marketing committee has volunteered to organize the kickoff party. Andre' van Schaften asked if the committee felt that a marketing manager is needed right away? Patti Hoff along with the marketing committee stated that the sooner a marketing manager is placed the better. Greer Taylor emphasized that this person would watch over the entire project from start to finish. Stephan Schweissing said the Cinema could show a brief presentation of the marketing concept before every movie showing and promote the project. The marketing committee suggested other ideas to raise funds and educate the community, which included hosting an Oscar party, Casino night, benefit concerts, booths at local festivals, brochures, direct mail pieces, radio spots, etc. Ron Beach praised the presentation. Andre' van Schaften second the job well done and thinks the kick off is a great product and feels that we owe the committee to vote and stand behind this project.

Andre' van Schaften moved that the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee stand behind the recommendations of the strategic marketing committee. Stephan Schweissing seconded.

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

Ron Beach asked what needs to come first in order to establish a time line? Tim Seeberg asked if the entire committee is fully supportive of moving towards the "all or nothing" plan of renovation and expansion. Patti Hoff asked if there been a study to do an assessment on what the community supports. Tim Seeberg stated that when the marketing of this project and the theatre starts, the questions from the public as to what the plan is going to be will start and clear answers will need to be communicated. Tim Seeberg suggested the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee come up with a solution on how to fund the entire expansion project and the marketing campaign. Tim Seeberg suggested he could try and budget money from the City for some pieces of a marketing plan. Ron Beach asked if the city will need a marketing plan to view while reviewing the entire project, including a formal request for funds. If the marketing funds are not available now, it may be possible to request them again around the middle of 2009 during the revision phase of the existing budgets. Andre' van Schaften suggested that the marketing committee to put a one page proposition to present at the City budget meetings.

Discussion continued in regards to the possibility of the City taking part in backing the project along with other community entities.

Stephen Thoms moved to have Tim Seeberg ask the city for \$25,000 in marketing promotion budget for the Avalon theatre in 2009. Andre' van Schaften seconded.

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

Tim Seeberg said he would have answer at the next meeting. Stephen Thoms asked when the board was going to decide what type of building was going to be built in this project.

It is still unclear as to which committee members support which renovation plans. Ron Beach said right now we need to decide the course of action. Stephen Thoms asked both Rich Keller and Dan Gartner if the current \$18 million dollar building is the right building for the purposes laid on the table (accommodating the Symphony in particular). Rich Keller said his company responded to the recommendations made by Kierkegaard and Associates (acoustician who completed the acoustics study). Shaw construction could not guarantee that this project would not go up in price. Stephen Thoms stated the quality of the project is the biggest concern. Dan Gartner stated as long as the building design currently on the table is the one to be built and it doesn't change significantly, the construction company is good to go. Mike Schwerin did voice a concern with the symphony's long range plan in regards to the administrative office space. The Symphony needs more space for administrative staff. Stephen Thoms suggested that there may not be enough space to house the symphony's administrative staff.

Stephen Thoms moved to accept the current plan on the table. Patti Hoff second.

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

Item 7: Public Access Web Site – Is Timing Right to Obtain Community Feedback?

Ron Beach suggested carrying this item over to the next meeting

Item 8: Planning for Proposed November Workshop with City Council

Ron Beach suggested carrying this item over to the next meeting

Item 9: Other Business

Ron Beach suggested a second meeting to be held on September 9th at 8am at Two Rivers Convention Center. Agenda need to be emailed to Ron Beach by Friday of August 29, 2008.

Item 10: Next Meeting Date, Tuesday, September 23, 8:00am-9:30am. Two Rivers Convention Center

A second meeting has been scheduled for September 9, 2008.

Item 12: Adjourn

Greer Taylor motioned to adjourn meeting. Stephen Thoms second. Motioned approved.
The meeting was adjourned at 10am.

Unanimously Approved:

Yes 7

No 0

Respectfully submitted,

Chasity Gray

Administrative Clerk, Two Rivers Convention Center and the Avalon Theatre