

# **Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee**

## **September 9, 2008**

### **Item 1: Meeting Called to Order by Andre' van Schaften at 8:00 a.m.**

#### Roll Call

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

Committee Members Absent: Ron Beach

Guests: Roger Davidson, Grand Junction Musical  
Arts Association  
Kirk Gustafson, Grand Junction Symphony  
Michael Schwerin, Grand Junction  
Symphony

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

### **Item 2: Approve Minutes.**

Stephen Thoms moved to approve the August 19, 2008 Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee minutes. Kathy Jordan seconded.

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

### **Item 3: Progress Report and Discussion - Presentation to Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra Venue Committee at earliest available date.**

Patti Hoff stated there is a lunch meeting with Greer Taylor, Roger Davidson, Kirk Gustafson, Michael Schwerin, Stephen Thoms and Tim Seeberg to discuss the Symphony's expectations and answer questions they may have. Greer Taylor explained a letter is being drafted designed to confirm formally a commitment to the proposed project from the Symphony. Kirk Gustafson stated the Symphony has a board meeting Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, a Venue Planning Committee meeting on Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> and an executive committee meeting on Thursday Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>. Stephen Thoms stated he had a very positive meeting with Karen Hildebrandt discussing how the Avalon Theatre project benefits downtown.

**Item 4: Progress Report and Discussion-Status of Tax Credits.**

Kathy Jordan said the Avalon Theatre would not be eligible for income tax credits because it is owned by the City of Grand Junction and doesn't pay taxes. The Avalon Theatre project is not a restoration project; it is a renovation and doesn't apply for historical grants typically. Kathy Jordan explained the only way the Avalon Theatre would be eligible for tax credit is if the City sells a portion of the Avalon Theatre to a private owner and the private owner qualified for tax credits.

**Item 5: Decision and Vote - In what style and format should the Fund Raising Feasibility Study Report be distributed to the interview participants and general public?**

Tim Seeberg stated Illene Roggensack suggested, as a courtesy, a summary piece be done that would say the study has been completed, giving key points on the findings, statistics on how many were interviewed and where the Avalon Theatre project is going from here. Debbie Kovalik requested to keep the summary as a letter and send out a press release after it is presented to City Council. Andre' van Schaften asked the marketing committee to assist in drafting the letter. Tim Seeberg will speak with Illene Roggensack to see if she would be willing to help them write the summary as part of the existing and paid for fund raising study agreement. Kirk Gustafson requested to Illene Roggensack through email if the details on page 6 of the feasibility study, suggesting that the Symphony commit to finding and raising \$5 million toward the renovation project, be reworded since such a commitment was never made. Andre' van Schaften doesn't feel total number of dollars or where the funds will come from is necessary in the summary letter. Tim Seeberg agreed to speak with Illene Roggensack about this concern as well.

**Item 6: Discussion - Preparation for Workshop Presentation to City Council in November or December.**

Debbie Kovalik stated it may be best to request a workshop with City Council on Monday, November 17 at lunch for an informal meeting. As a reminder to the committee, Tim Seeberg explained that the workshop with City Council back in July 2007 included a presentation on the original plan for a \$5 million dollar renovation and expansion of the Avalon. Mr. Seeberg stated the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee recommended at that time that an acoustical study and the fund raising feasibility study be conducted to confirm that the original plan would be adequate. It is confirmed following the studies that the renovations will cost considerably more than the \$5 million. Andre' van Schaften stated the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee should report back to City Council after the studies were completed. Debbie Kovalik asked the group what City Council's awareness is of the current state of this project? Are they aware that the cost will run \$14 to \$18 million dollar project now that there are numerous changes to the original plan? Ms. Kovalik offered opinions on what questions she thinks City Council members are likely to ask of the committee. Debbie Kovalik asked if any financial commitments have been made from any major stakeholders that will help this project move forward? Ms. Kovalik recommended the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee develop a strategic time frame for the process of fund raising and what has to happen to complete the project. Discussion ensued about meeting with different people involved in other fund raising projects in the community and others with expertise to get information on time lines and financing opportunities. Stephan Schweissing will invite Lena Watson to an Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee

meeting. Debbie Kovalik asked for a volunteer to “chair” a finance sub-committee of sorts for the ATAC who can contact various people to get the answers on some of these questions and concerns before meeting with City Council. Ms. Kovalik, Tim Seeberg and Andre' van Schaften will help but are not able to head it up. Stephen Thoms also offered to be involved.

**Item 7: Final Discussion - Results of Feasibility Study.**

Kirk Gustafson asked if the fund raising feasibility study could be taken to the Symphony's Venue Planning Committee or if there needs to be confidentiality exercised in such sharing of information? It was agreed by the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee that the entire study content is best served for this committee to access and review if needed, and that a summary of this information can be shared with stakeholders and other interested parties. Andre' van Schaften stated the marketing sub-committee can help Mr. Gustafson create a summary of the Feasibility Study to present to the Symphony.

**Item 8: Discussion - Strategic Marketing Plan Presentation and Recommendations (web site, fund raising drives and events, renovation project materials and model development).**

Greer Taylor stated the Marketing Committee is working on getting the kick-off party organized and planned. Stephen Thoms expressed the need for money for marketing to even exist. Debbie Kovalik stated that the source of such money likely cannot be the City at this point, since any attempt to City fund marketing would serve as City Council endorsement of the plan, and this would be inappropriately assumptive and premature. Ms. Kovalik suggested the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee find out where City Council stands on this entire project and proposal. Debbie Kovalik stated the time line should include an educational process offering ideas on where money will come from for the project. Patti Hoff explained the kick-off party is to raise awareness and generate interest in the Avalon Theatre. Ms. Hoff stated it is not to support the marketing plan or raise funds. Debbie Kovalik stated meeting with City Council also involves media and it is imperative to be well prepared. Greer Taylor volunteered to be involved with a financial sub-committee with Stephen Thoms, Tim Seeberg and Debbie Kovalik as well as a representative from Shaw Construction. Stephen Thoms asked if anyone has approached the county for their support. Debbie Kovalik will speak with Janet Roland on Grand Junction Partnership Board to gauge any initial reactions and impressions. Roger Davidson stated in his opinion the Avalon Theatre is going to add to the economic development of the community. Mr. Davidson continued by recommending someone who is educated in that area may be someone the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee would want to have on the financial/marketing committees.

**Item 9: Discussion - Transferring 501c3 from Avalon Theatre Foundation Board to Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee and/or Board, including timing and necessary follow-up.**

Kathy Jordan stated the 501c3 the Avalon Foundation Board has, could transfer to the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee if the Foundation Board rewrites its bylaws. Ms. Jordan said Ed Lipton will help and will meet with the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee to discuss what needs to be done when he returns in October. Kathy Jordan explained the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee is in the Enterprise Zone.

The Enterprise Zone goes along with and helps facilitate a 501c3 creation. Ms. Jordan will continue to follow through with this process of discovery. Kathy Jordan stated the Avalon

Foundation Board is not active. The board has not had a meeting in over a year. Stephen Thoms would like to see the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee move forward with this, and now. Stephen Thoms would like to approach his fellow DDA board members to find out if they would be willing to contribute money towards the many efforts ahead of this committee; namely marketing. Kathy Jordan stated the Avalon Foundation Board is still in existence and can still accept money if they wish. Ms. Jordan will meet with Helen Sweeney to discuss how the pledge and tax-credit process works in all these scenarios. Debbie Kovalik will check with John Shaver, City Attorney, to gain similar knowledge. Kathy Jordan again reiterated that the Avalon Foundation Board and Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee can “merge” by rewriting bylaws, thus allowing for transfer of the 501c3 status. Kathy Jordan will arrange to get members of the Foundation Board together to vote on changing bylaws to get things moving forward.

**Item 10: Other Business**

Tim Seeberg stated the purpose of today's luncheon with members of the Symphony is to update everyone on the current renovation/expansion plans before going forward to talk with the Symphony's Venue Committee and Symphony Board as a whole. Mr. Seeberg said the ultimate goal of this process is to have the GJ Symphony indicate formal support of the latest project plans. Tim Seeberg was asked by Karen Hildebrandt to have the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee draw up a letter describing the plan and asking for support. Greer Taylor has offered to draft the letter, and Tim Seeberg will edit for final draft before the committee formally sends it off to the Symphony. From there the Symphony needs to reply with a formal letter confirming their support of the project plans.

**Item 11: Next Meeting Date, Tuesday, September 23, 8:00am-9:30am. Two Rivers Convention Center**

**Item 12: Items for Next Meeting**

Progress report from the “Finance Committee”  
501c3 and Foundation Board - Kathy Jordan  
Symphony's reaction & support - Kirk Gustafson  
Downtown Development Authority financial commitment status - Stephen Thoms

**Item 13: Adjourn**

Patti Hoff motioned to adjourn the Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee meeting. Stephen Thoms seconded. Motioned approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20am.

Unanimously Approved:

Yes 6

No 0

Respectfully submitted,

Dina Jones

Sales & Planning Assistant, Two Rivers Convention Center and the Avalon Theatre