Grand Junction Commission on Arts and Culture Minutes April 28, 1999

Commissioners Present: Seth Brown Peter Ivanov

Beth Buys Bill Reidy
LeRoy Donegan Priscilla Rupp
Karen Kiefer Dennis Woodrich

Jeanne Killgore

Others Present: Thea Chase (Western Colorado Business Development Center)

The regular meeting of the Grand Junction Commission on Arts and Culture was held on the above date. Chair Priscilla Rupp called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. A motion was made by Kiefer, seconded by Brown, to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on March 31, 1999. The motion carried unanimously.

ARTS INCUBATORS: Thea Chase, Executive Director of the Western Colorado Business Development Center, explained the business incubator concept of a shared use facility, reduced space rental fees, and a nurturing environment for new businesses. She discussed the national business incubator conference she attended in Chicago in March, specifically the pre-conference session about arts incubators. Chase reported that most existing arts incubators are for arts organizations rather than artists or arts businesses. Incubator services provided for artists include business training, marketing, and facility space, while services for arts organizations include board development and funding, as well as facility space (offices, exhibits, etc.) Chase explained that before starting an arts incubator, a decision must be made about what will be accomplished, or what problem needs to be solved, and that this is best accomplished through a community needs assessment, followed by a cultural planning process and a business plan. The incubator should address issues in the cultural plan.

Information packets about the Entergy Arts Business Center in New Orleans and the Chicago Southland Arts Incubator were distributed. Chase noted that the Entergy Arts Business Center was this year's award winning incubator facility, the first time an arts incubator has been so honored. She noted that the local business incubator currently includes two arts businesses, but that they do not have any ongoing programs specifically for artists or art businesses. Julie Morey with the business incubator is currently helping teach a seminar on business issues for artists through the Art Center, which the Arts Commission is sponsoring. Sarmo noted that many of the types of incubator-style workshops and classes for arts groups and artists are already being done by the Commission, and that the Commission completed a cultural plan for Grand Junction in 1991.

Chase explained that no business incubators are self-supporting although all work toward that goal. The Western Colorado Business Development Center is almost self-sufficient but still receives funding from the City, County, and local banks. She stated that an arts incubator could be 80% self-supporting after the first few years. She presented the Commission with a manual entitled Incubating the Arts, which explains how to set up and manage an arts incubator facility.

The Commission discussed what the next step is with regard to a possible arts incubator and/or foundry in the Public Service Steam Plant building at 5th and South Avenue. Sarmo noted that the building's roof and water problems have been repaired, but Tim Woodmansee, City Property Manager, is too busy with the new City Hall to formulate a Request for Proposal, which the City Council approved after completion of the building reuse study. Woodmansee has no problem with Sarmo drafting an RFP and she offered to contact Mark Smith, City Purchasing Agent, about what needs to be done to advertise the availability of the PSC building.

No decision was made about the future involvement of the Arts Commission in starting an arts incubator, although the consensus was to first see if an RFP would generate any interest from another group in the community who might want to do something in the building.

NEW BUSINESS: The Commission decided to again staff an information booth at the Art & Jazz Festival downtown June 12-13, Brown, Killgore, Ivanov, and Donegan volunteering. The Commission decided not to staff an information booth at the May 22nd Mesa Mall Community Fair because too many Commissioners will be unavailable that day.

There was a discussion about what potential grant project to apply for through the Colorado Council on the Arts for the year 2000. The consensus of the Commission was to again request \$7,000 in additional funding for the re-granting program which supports arts and cultural events, projects, and programs.

The Coordinator distributed a draft of an invitational brochure for the November Arts Expo for review and approval. There was a discussion about whether to jury the arts organizations and artists, and the consensus was not to jury participants, but to add a sentence in the brochure about wanting only the highest quality art and entertainment and that the Commission could request audition materials or photographs of artwork if necessary. It was also decided to limit the participants to just arts and cultural groups and artists, and only local ones, due to space restraints, and not to do a live remote radio broadcast this year. Ivanov will contact Ann Sanders at the college about borrowing a dance floor surface.

Thank you letters for Commission grant support were read from the Museum of Western Colorado, the DooZoo Children's Museum, Very Special Arts, and Independent Media Network.

A letter was read from the Arts Extension Service about the first annual Robert Gard Lecture and Award in June, 1999, asking for a donation to fund the award endowment and attend the event. Sarmo noted that Robert Gard is the father of Maryo Ewell, associate director of the Colorado Council on the Arts. She noted that the Commission has used the Arts Extension Service as an information resource, and that while attending the Gard lecture in Massachusetts is not a consideration, she felt the Commission should think about making a contribution. A motion was made by Ivanov, seconded by Kiefer, to donate \$50 to the Arts Extension Service for the first annual Robert Gard Lecture and Award. The motion carried unanimously.

A letter was read from a new advocacy organization, Arts for Colorado, asking the Commission to join. The organization is an outgrowth of the Colorado Cultural Trust legislation promotion to fund the Colorado Council on the Arts. Kiefer reported that the bill to establish the trust just died in Senator Ron Teck's Finance Committee, but will undoubtedly be introduced in the state legislature again next year. Kiefer also reported that the Colorado Arts Consortium will no longer be doing advocacy, because of the formation of this new association. Kiefer noted that a half time staff person has been hired by the Consortium to be shared with other arts groups, and a primary function of that staff person will be to do grant writing and coordination, and he will also help put together the annual Consortium conference, the first weekend of October in Denver. A motion was made by Killgore, seconded by Buys, to join Arts for Colorado for \$100. The motion carried with eight in favor and Kiefer abstaining because she is a board member of the Colorado Arts Consortium.

REPORTS: The Coordinator report for April was distributed and Sarmo noted various specific items. As there was no further business before the Commission, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison Sarmo
Cultural Arts Coordinator