

Northampton Arts Council

12 October 2021

Present: Dana Osterling, Thulani Davis, Kent Alexander, Eamonn Edge, Danielle Amodeo

Regrets: Jesse Hassinger.

Danielle made the announcement that this meeting is being held via Zoom and is also being audio and video recorded.

Danielle made introductions and explained Brian Foote's roles. She noted the shared love and importance of the arts and asked for the group to find common ground and maintain respectful disagreement and to keep meeting norms as guide. She read the meeting norms.

Municipal meeting called to order at ~7:10 pm

Agenda Changes Minutes tabled.

Grants Round

Before Danielle reviewed potential scoring criteria, she is requesting that Arts Council members read the American Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (page 35 & 36 document) which will help to guide the process. The grant deadline is October 15th. She noted that artists who received an event related grant last fall are eligible for this round of funding. She and Kent shared some of their specific outreach "sites" (social media) ahead of the 15th e.g., Danielle: Facebook posts Buy BIPOC 413, 413 stay woke stay active page, the Arts Council, and Rust Temple Collective and has been pinged to boost. {Brian shared in email that the NAC has a Mailchimp database with almost 10,000 email addresses. 2,000 are specifically artists who we have engaged with or have engaged with us} Kent noted he shared the call to his cohorts in Valley Creates (each cohort 15-20 artists) and Rhonda at Okatu Cultural Center. The rubric for evaluation shared: in the past the three areas guiding evaluations included with respective scores: artistic merit (0-10), community impact (0-3) and feasibility (0-3). The Grant subcommittee revised priorities and proposed to testing out this round They refined the other criteria but included a new area for evaluation: Accessibility and Inclusion, the details of which were defined and detailed in the discussion such as venue accessibility, affordability, inclusion of BIPOC identity and opportunity for dialogue not just didactic

Scoring criteria modified: 0-7 Artistic Merit, 0-5 Accessibility and Inclusion, 0-5 Community Impact and 0-3 Project Feasibility Kent asked about time for feedback as he questioned complexity weight and condensed for clarity sake. He will draft a revision to be discussed and voted in the next meeting.

Dates for Review and for Allocation: November two nights separate meetings read and review each Council member takes category score and assign finding based upon score. November 30th December 1st are the dates held for the review with 7th and 8th as backups.

As noted: Feedback to be voted in the next meeting

Public Comment two minutes: None.

Council Membership

Two members have resigned. Danielle sent out an email outreach for council membership and asked for new people for the grant rounds email outreach for council

Public Comment:: Ellen Koteen asked names of members who resigned and reason (Loretta Steiner and Freedman Stein). Danielle did not know whether she has permission to share their letters but believe it was because of the Biennial.

Equity Committee

Kent reviewed reason he sent out the Rights of Indigenous People as to understand all that is at stake and that group is a sovereign nation

Biennial

Danielle reported that there will be a working group to examine the Biennial. She and Brian are in active contact with the MCC and that Mina Kim was at the Council meeting at which the vote was taken and they have reached out to her and the senior leadership there and are getting guidance. No one who was on the Biennial Subcommittee are in this meeting and that this group is a public council so we are subject to open meeting law. No taxpayer money used.

Public Comment

Jessica Tam's letter read to group. Respond to questions: Racial stereotyping of Asian Americans - yes, we owe all our jurors an apology to make sure the work of the jurors work was acknowledged and included. Danielle reported that she did not know who the jurors were. It was all done "in a vacuum". She did not feel it was her role to interrupt and talk back when Jason Montgomery spoke.

Comment jury as white: We are not satisfied as our jury making process. Four other indigenous people spoke up just to keep on the table and not Jason alone.

Vote came as a result of the process of the entire event.

Ellen Koteen and Diane Palladino : Diane--No norms instituted at that meeting. Processes censorship and arts. Thought that taxpayer money spent on Biennial. Sat and thought about public response to think this through. Danielle: No taxpayer money spent on this as the money was raised through the Inc.. This is not an example of censorship. It is the purview of the arts council to decide what art we give a platform to. This was brought up as Jessica asked us to respond to letter. Ellen noted she felt that this was disrespectful of the 60 artists whose time and energy and disrespectful old white women.

Ashwin Ravikuma agreed with vote and made comment that indigenous people need to tell their own stories especially given the historical genocide and that the internal issues with the process needs to be examined worked on but not necessarily publicly. He voiced he did not think the

hurt feelings were germane to the event decision and that did not think that so much attention given to an individual was warranted.

Amiee Francaeas- partner of Jesse. Feel so strongly right decision under duress. Hearing from four indigenous people as not being represented by this council. The entire process needed to be assessed.

Doris Madsen- Jason told me to remove my piece, did not tell me that he would advocate for the show to be canceled. She noted she was censored by him which was repeated by the Arts Council in the use of his description; genocidal art.

JuPong Lin -heartbroken by the entire situation as Asian America artist challenging White Supremacy. Important to make space for individual freedom, this culture valorizes individuality and as society have a hard time connecting with the good of the collective and how colonialism gets perpetuated (the colonial understanding of censorship).

Ezekiel Baskin. Appreciates and thanks Council as volunteers and expressed appreciation for making arts spaces

Diane Palladino clarification as her interpretation was one of the four Indigenous artists noted she is from the Inuit community and people in Northampton do not know who the Inuit are that she is constrained as artists. She also noted the painful story she told about her mother in residential school but feels disappeared.

JuPong Lin – Amplify the objection that white settler culture on damage narratives and ways wounded & harmed. Not acknowledging the Resilience is just another form of invisibilizing these people

Stephen Petegorsky – letter disappointment- requested that members make selves accountable. He listed several questions. Kent thought we should take time to review but noted that the neglect indigenous people in this process was clear

Dan Kennedy- Access is valuable question what ways you would like to move forward to include diverse groups of people. Kent - we are learning. Understanding shortfalls create a brave place for Northampton artists. Each community can speak for itself.

Danielle noted that this Council now has an Equity statement and committee and has people of color on this Council. Using Roberts Rules of order exemplifies White Supremacy. We need to shift Board culture and address historic inequities that this Council has perpetuated.

Ya-Ping Douglas- thank this Council for what some white members of this community see as disrespectful but rather this decision is respectful and applaud the Arts Council for such quick and determined action in responding to people of color. These processes were constructed by white supremacy. Color blindness a form of racism.

Jesse Hassinger-Thank Ya-Ping about speaking with other BIPOC artists. This has come out internal dialogue as to what it means to be a public arts group in this town.

Meeting concluded at ~8:35 pm

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Service, Inc Board Clerk