

**MINUTES
FEBRUARY 4, 2009 ARTS COMMISSION MEETING
THE COACH HOUSE, OLYMPIA**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Leann Johnson, Chair
Cindy Hill Finnie, First Vice Chair
Steve Sneed, Second Vice Chair
Monte Bridges
David Brown
Elizabeth Conner
John Fraire
Robert Glatzer
Maureen Greeley
Kate Jones
Jean Mandeberg
Noël Moxley
Rosita Romero
Brom Wikstrom
Shauna Woods

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Kent Carlson
Senator Jim Honeyford
Representative Lynn Kessler
Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles
Bill McKay
Lanie McMullin

STAFF PRESENT

Kris Tucker, Executive Director
Bitsy Bidwell
Mark Gerth
Janae Huber
Lou MacMillan
Leslie Pope
Willie Smyth
Alice Taylor
Mayumi Tsutakawa

GUESTS

Sam Green, Poet Laureate
Mary Langholz, Washington State Arts Alliance
Kjris Lund, Lund Consulting Inc.
David Nicandri, Washington State Historical Society
Dennis Sellin, Lund Consulting Inc.
Ellen Whitlock, graduate student, University of
Washington

MEETING AGENDA - WASHINGTON STATE ARTS COMMISSION WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2009 / COACH HOUSE – OLYMPIA

Note: Public comment for each section will be taken prior to action by Commissioners; schedule and timeline may vary from listed.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Leann Johnson called the meeting to order at 9 am.

WELCOME

Chair Johnson welcomed Commissioners and led introductions around the room. David Nicandri, Executive Director of Washington State Historical Society (WSHS) since 1987, welcomed Commissioners and extended an invitation to *With Our Hands: World Folk Art Traditions of Washington State*, one example of many successful collaborations between WSAC and WSHS through the years.

Sam Green, Washington State Poet Laureate, read an excerpt from "Wind: Four Letters to Melinda Mueller" published in *Vertebrae: Poems 1972-1996*. Sam said during his first year as Poet Laureate he has met many teachers and students, and sees poetry as a way for students to learn patterns that help them understand how things fit together in their school work.

APPROVE AGENDA

Chair Johnson asked Commissioners to approve the revised agenda sent in the supplemental mailing. A MOTION to approve the revised agenda was made by Commissioner Shauna Woods and seconded by Commissioner Jean Mandeberg. It passed unanimously.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Johnson praised the turnout for Arts Day and thanked Commissioners for their participation. She was impressed by the number of people involved in arts organizations throughout the state. Chair Johnson mentioned several messages she heard throughout the day: that WSAC is well respected, concern about how to support the arts during this economy; and that the arts are now more important than ever. Arts Day provided Chair Johnson with an understanding of what legislators are thinking and why, and what role WSAC has in influencing future direction. She asked Commissioners to send thank you notes to each person they met during Arts Day, including a recap of their discussion. She asked that Commissioners return any feedback forms from legislative meetings to WSAC.

Chair Johnson asked Commissioners to share their impressions of Arts Day. Commissioner Woods stated there were so many people in some legislative meetings that the meetings had to be moved to conference rooms; it was good for legislators to know the number of people coming to lobby on behalf of the arts. She noted legislators focused on information that impacted their constituents. There was positive feedback about the Americans for the Arts (AFTA) Creative Industries report; she suggested this information should be published in color for greater impact.

Commissioner Mandeberg said she was impressed with the number of people participating. The meetings reminded her of the support WSAC has in the legislature and the relationships WSAC has built over the last few years. It was also a very sobering reminder of how daunting this session and WSAC's work will be over the next couple of years. She has read that AFTA is estimating that nationally, ten thousand arts organizations will be at risk of closing in 2009. Commissioner Mandeberg said Rep. Kessler, who is very supportive of WSAC, told her she's never seen a legislative session like this one.

Chair Johnson said the state budget shortfall may be close to \$8.5 billion. WSAC and Commissioners need to understand the urgency of the situation. She asked Commissioners to bring their “best brains” to the table today to discuss what that means for WSAC.

Commissioner Mandeberg said we need to meet with legislators more than once this session. Commissioner Noël Moxley agreed, saying her experience was that legislators were appreciative and receptive to WSAC because WSAC was realistic in not asking for more money than is available.

Commissioner Elizabeth Conner said the learning curve was steep, but Arts Day was enjoyable and worthwhile, and she is looking forward to keeping in touch with legislators she met during Arts Day. She is interested in participating in future legislative meetings, and noted legislators’ appreciation and receptivity for anecdotal storytelling to focus the conversation and keep it positive. Commissioner Moxley said it is important this year to invite legislators to WSAC-funded activities in their districts, to show how the money is being spent. In Yakima, she sees legislators often when they are not in session; she said this provides a way to relate to them about their district-related concerns, and to include them in arts activities in their districts.

Chair Johnson encouraged Commissioners to maintain contacts with legislators. Commissioner Maureen Greeley noted legislators appeared receptive to information that related WSAC accomplishments and goals to mandated programs. Commissioner Woods said the juvenile detention facilities story caught one legislator’s attention, showing the social justice and economic impact of art. She asked WSAC to ask arts organizations to share their stories so WSAC can better discuss the arts.

Commissioner Jones said connecting the arts as part of the economic solution will be valuable to legislators. She suggested bringing art to legislators for Arts Day. Kris Tucker, WSAC Executive Director, said she had recently learned of an arts agency in another state that brings framed artwork from K-12 students within each district to the legislator for that district on Arts Day. Some of those art images were made into tote bags for the following year’s Arts Day activities, so the legislator has art on the wall and art on bags they carry from place to place.

Commissioner Rosita Romero found that legislators are very aware of WSAC and want to know more about its activities. She suggested WSAC work throughout the year to keep legislators informed about WSAC activities and accomplishments. Commissioner Brom Wikstrom asked that Commissioners receive business cards, which would be useful throughout the year and on Arts Day.

Commissioner Conner said she noticed that legislators could relate to statistics about how people are supportive of art itself, but were not necessarily supportive or understanding about artists. She said WSAC should look for ways to increase their understanding. Chair Johnson agreed that it is very easy for arts to be an espoused value, but there is not much understanding of the importance and work of artists.

Commissioner David Brown said the Washington State Arts Alliance (WSAA) plays a primary role in Arts Day, organizing meetings with legislators, providing team captains, and prioritizing arts issues for discussion. Chair Johnson acknowledged the importance and hard work of WSAA not only for Arts Day, but its on-going advocacy efforts. Commissioner Robert Glatzer said more stories or practical

examples of how arts serve juveniles, the community, etc., would be especially helpful to new Commissioners. Chair Johnson said consideration could be given to how Commissioners are paired for these meetings, and whether they are meeting with legislators in their own districts. Commissioner Woods suggested experienced Commissioners should meet with legislators that sponsor bills affecting WSAC.

Commissioner Mandeberg said Rep. Kessler suggested WSAC should focus on the economic value of the arts, which is most important this session. Artists are small business owners that employ other people, and/or are part of the work force.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Tucker referred to her report (*packet pages 3-7*) and thanked Commissioners for their participation on Arts Day, which had record attendance in terms of arts advocates and participating Commissioners. Tucker said the Arts Commission has become more effective in advocacy and long-term efforts have paid off. Tucker clarified the role of the Commission includes three things: policy, oversight, and advocacy - all of which came together on Arts Day. The role of oversight involves living and operating within the law, representing issues across the state, and remaining relevant to current times. Tucker said Commissioners are not responsible for tracking legislation closely, as she will keep Commissioners informed. She invited Commissioners to forward their questions, feedback, insights or ideas about legislation.

Tucker noted the recap of 2008 (calendar year) in her report was intended to provide Commissioners with information they might use not only for Arts Day, but to realize what WSAC has accomplished. Legislators appreciate information on tasks accomplished, and this recap focuses on results already achieved, rather than current projects in process.

Tucker mentioned Arts Education Research Initiative (AERI) surveys are due on February 6 and thanked Commissioner Monte Bridges for his role in this project to gather updated data on the state of arts education in Washington. WSAC hopes to double its previous response rate of 21 percent so that WSAC can gain a clear picture of what is happening in arts education, gauge visibility of the work being done, discover issues, and determine leverage for change. Tucker asked Commissioners to encourage principals to respond to the AERI surveys. Commissioner Bridges added that from his perspective, the role of the survey is to dig deeper to find out what is happening in Washington State schools. Survey results will:

- determine staffing levels and arts curriculum currently in place,
- show whether activity and support is taking place at the school or district level,
- inform advocacy work by framing a future agenda for more focused support of arts education, and
- inform principals and school leaders about WSAC's arts education agenda.

Tucker discussed the Creative Vitality Index (*handout*), newly updated with 2007 data, which documents how the arts contribute to the creative economy. The pie chart shows arts participation and arts employment, and the data is organized geographically. She said this is a timely tool to contribute to the understanding of the role of the creative economy. She also noted the streamlined Strategic Plan 2009-2013 publication.

Tucker asked Commissioners to let her know if they need information about WSAC programs. Wallace Foundation is awarding WSAC \$1.6 million to develop learning opportunities in the Seattle region primarily, in addition to direct grants to nine Seattle arts organizations. Tucker recently received confirmation that the Wallace Board continues to be committed to this project. In mid-November, the Wallace grants announcement was made. Congratulations to Commissioner David Brown and the Pacific Northwest Ballet for being one of the nine recipients of a Wallace grant. Several weeks ago, WSAC convened a discussion with those nine recipient organizations to learn more about their needs for training, professional development, and communication within the context of this program, and to get their advice on the convenings that will begin this spring. Next week, WSAC will conduct a roundtable discussion about how technology can be used to advance the arts and the Wallace initiative, such as through social networking, roster applications, art journaling/blogging, and ticketing applications.

BUDGET REPORT: FY09 SECOND QUARTER

Tucker said no action is required on this budget information (*supplemental mailing*) and reminded Commissioners that the Toolkit includes a glossary of terms and a schedule of budget action items. Tucker reviewed the report. Program expenditures are mostly on track, although Commissioner Services has had higher than expected travel costs. Tucker said Lou MacMillan, Deputy Director, would respond to any questions from Commissioners.

Commissioner Brown asked for the percentage cut in the Governor's budget proposal for the 2009-2011 biennium. MacMillan explained the Governor's proposal has a state general fund reduction of \$199,000 (1.3 percent), but WSAC shows an overall budget increase because of additional Wallace and federal funding. Tucker clarified the FY09 budget reduction was \$86,000 in state general funds, which will be reflected in a supplemental budget to be passed soon by the Legislature. She explained \$86,000 is 3 percent of WSAC's entire budget for FY09, and the Governor's budget proposes that an additional \$86,000 or 3 percent be cut each year in the upcoming biennium. Tucker said the 1.3 percent budget reduction figure is calculated only on the state general fund portion of WSAC's budget. Legislators review a budget document that shows only the 1.3 percent cut from the state general fund, and this is the figure WSAC will use in any discussions with legislators.

Commissioner Romero asked if unspent funds could be rolled over to the next fiscal year. MacMillan explained state funds could not be rolled over. At the end of a fiscal year, half the unspent state funds go to OSPI and half go to the agency's savings incentive fund, which can be used only for specific types of one-time expenses. MacMillan said only private funds can be carried between fiscal years, such as from the Wallace and Allen Foundations. Commissioner Greeley asked whether further reductions in the budget might lead the state to eliminate the savings incentive fund, and whether the Executive Director has any say in where program cuts are made. Tucker said we don't know how much say we would have over those funds and future budget cuts.

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Johnson asked Commissioners to identify any conflict of interest with items on the Consent Agenda. Commissioners Mandeberg, Glatzer and Fraire recused themselves.

Consent Agenda items include:

- Minutes of November 6, 2008 Meeting (*packet pages 9-23*) with corrections as requested:

- Commissioner Jones requested change from Methow to Okanogan County in the sentence, “She expressed concern about how these changes might affect Methow, particularly since Methow Arts Alliance is the only arts organization serving Okanogan County ~~the entire Methow Valley~~, and stated it would be a huge loss for the organization and Okanogan County ~~the Valley~~ to lose funding.” (*packet page 22*)
- Correction request by Alice Taylor, Art in Public Places Program Manager, to strike Washington State University from the sentence, “This list was derived from invitations and direct selection by ~~Washington State University and Western Washington University~~” (*packet page 23*)
- Grants to Organizations: Project Support Program FY09 - Round No. 2 (*packet pages 25-31*)
- Community Arts Development: Professional Development Assistance Program FY09 (*packet page 32*)

A MOTION to approve the entire Consent Agenda was made by Commissioner Monte Bridges and seconded by Commissioner Noël Moxley. The motion was approved with three recusals.

UPDATES AND FINDINGS

2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mark Gerth, Communications Manager, distributed *Legislative Report Update*. Gerth said several bills relating to Boards and Commissions are likely to encourage legislative discussion on what boards and commissions to disband or suspend for the coming biennium. These bills would not disband WSAC, the agency, but would end or suspend the roles of Commissioners. The bills are being closely monitored through the legislative process. The public art bills are also being tracked; none is currently scheduled for hearings. Gerth invited Commissioners to email him with specific questions or concerns about these or other bills as the legislative session continues, or Commissioners can view the progress of bills on the Washington State Legislature web page (www.leg.wa.gov). Gerth answered questions from Commissioners about bills listed on the handout:

- SB 5594 - directs WSAC to work with interested citizens and groups to promote the works of Seattle playwright August Wilson. Currently, there is no funding for this bill and it has not moved.
- SB 5711 - provides for the live performance of Taps at veterans’ funerals. There is only one sponsor to this bill and there are concerns about whether there are enough qualified buglers and money to pay them. At this time, the bill has not moved.
- HB 1276/SB 5046 – establishes a process for collective bargaining for performing arts organizations. Washington State Arts Alliance is actively tracking and responding to this bill.

ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON STATES, STATE ARTS AGENCIES AND THE ARTS

Tucker said she and Chair Johnson agreed to revise the agenda due to the economic downturn. She introduced a PowerPoint presentation (*see handout*) to discuss some of the indicators WSAC is monitoring to determine the context within which WSAC will implement its strategic plan.

Tucker reported that the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) says not one state Legislature in the U.S. is optimistic about their economic future. The four primary revenue streams for state budgets are personal income tax, general sales tax, corporate income tax, and other taxes. The source taking the biggest hit in FY08 was general sales tax, the revenue source on which Washington State and WSAC budgets are most dependent. The NCSL expects the recession is likely to continue through August 2009 and recovery will take at least two years beyond that date. It took 43 months for states to recover from

The Great Depression. After the 2001 bubble, states recovered in eight months. With this current recession, a two-year recovery period might be optimistic.

WSAC is one of 56 state arts agencies (including similar agencies in District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Virgin Islands). Collective legislative appropriations to state art agencies in FY08-09 totaled \$343.1 million; changes to these appropriations in the current year show that 21 are experiencing an increase in legislative appropriations and 24 are experiencing a drop. The appropriations trend is moving downward for state agencies. The aggregate percent of change is a 3.3 percent decline.

Tucker said arts organizations are also experiencing hardships and discussed data from the ArtsFund State of the Arts survey (January 2009). WSAC is participating in additional research to interview arts leaders in depth about how the budget downturn is affecting them, and what arts funders can do, perhaps collaboratively, to help arts organizations recover.

The ArtsFund survey indicates declines in corporate giving. Government grants are not changing immediately because they have already been committed, but arts organizations are very cautious about the future and are experiencing a slight decline in ticket sales. These organizations are approaching “pain management” – not making immediate changes to the workforce, but holding off on expansion plans. Some organizations are considering mergers and others are exploring ways to work together. Forty-eight percent expect to scale back programs. Arts organizations are seeking ways to increase revenue, including marketing, targeted requests to individuals and major donors; 15 percent are considering using a line of credit or other short-term financing.

Tucker said she was part of a briefing recently organized by Philanthropy Northwest to look at how foundations have responded over time to recession activity or budget changes. Overall, giving increased slightly from major funders in each of the previous recessions. Some funders may shift their priorities, but the majority of funders do not.

Commissioner Woods asked how Bernard Madoff’s actions will affect arts organizations and Tucker said she did not know at this time. Tucker said she had heard recently that Americans for the Arts (AFTA) is predicting a large number of arts organizations may close their doors in the next year; WSAC is concerned about the trickle-down effect, but the results have not yet been seen. Invested income has decreased; boards are likely to be cautious about funding decisions. Tucker said this recession may be unlike anything we have seen prior, due to a confluence of events including reduced foundation funding, mortgage foreclosures, rising unemployment, and the nation’s increasing deficit.

Tucker suggested three models for economic recovery:

V = economy quickly bottoms out and then sharply bounces back up

U = economy bottoms out slowly, with a slow recovery

L = economy reaches bottom and does not bounce back up, but stays at a new, lower level

Tucker said WSAC needs to position our work based on where we want the state, communities, and the arts to be when the economy recovers. She quoted The National Governors Association’s 2009 report, *Arts and the Economy*: “Governors increasingly recognize the importance of the creative sector to their states’ economy and ability to compete in the global marketplace.” Tucker said WSAC needs to

determine how to help the Governor position Washington State to compete in the global marketplace using the creative economy.

Tucker reported on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan (aka economic stimulus plan). The House of Representatives version includes \$50 million for the NEA to connect arts and culture to revitalize the nation's economy. If this plan passes, some of the money will come to state arts agencies; typically 40 percent.

Tucker noted that WSAC has a new strategic plan that must be used to move forward in unpredictable times. Kjris Lund and Dennis Sellin of Lund Consulting Inc. assisted WSAC in developing the strategic plan and will lead Commissioners through the next part of this meeting.

Tucker asked for questions or comments:

- Commissioner Brown said the ArtsFund survey comments may be understated, because the arts lag behind other indicators of the economy and arts also recover later. He said the real issues and difficulty at Pacific Northwest Ballet are in next year's budget, and that the ArtsFund survey (completed in December 2008) may not have captured the full possibility of what the future might hold. Tucker appreciated the comments, saying that the survey does seem optimistic and that things have not improved.
- Commissioner Mandeberg asked whether there was data about projected population shifts across the country. For example, graduating seniors [from The Evergreen State College] lately have been saying they are moving to the east coast where jobs are, as they don't feel there are jobs in the Pacific Northwest at this time.
- Commissioner Moxley said a recent news segment on "Good Morning America" (ABC) showed homes in the Midwest or the East that can be purchased for the same price as a new car or truck.
- Commissioner Cindy Finnie noted two other shifts: 1. Donations from corporate America are very tight; there is no funding and the projection is that funding will be flat for a long time; 2. Baby boomers are working longer due to loss of retirement funds. The loss of disposable income means a possible reduction in donations to nonprofit arts organizations.
- Commissioner Moxley said a regular supporter, who retired from a prestigious and well-paid position and still works part-time, is unable to contribute approximately \$1,000 to support a chair position with the Yakima Symphony Orchestra, a donation that had been made for years previously without any reservation.
- Commissioner Romero stated that art is getting back to basics, and that a positive attitude typically brings about positive results. She said people are finding that art classes and performances are more rewarding than shopping for goods indiscriminately, although they are asking for discounts on admission and class fees. She encouraged Commissioners to look at the big perspective, that interest in the arts might shift but it won't disappear, and that it is up to WSAC to look for opportunities in these difficult times.
- Commissioner Wikstrom said his gallery in Seattle has been affected by the economic downturn in an interesting way. He and his brother approached an arts group and offered use of the gallery space for meetings. They found that funds are available to pay for rental space to hold meetings and workshops; he said this may be an example of collaboration amongst groups with different needs, and consolidation of one space for multiple uses.

- Commissioner Woods said she found Commissioner Romero’s statement “art is getting back to basics” profound and said WSAC could develop ways to work in this economy to help “art get back to basics,” to turn the elitist concept of art on its ear, and allow WSAC to position itself for new opportunities.
- Commissioner Sneed also responded to Commissioner Romero’s comment. He shared a recent experience from his work with both large and small festivals and organizations. The Vietnamese community almost cancelled their annual Lunar New Year event, but decided to stage the event and reduce the budget by using only local entertainment. Attendance was the biggest ever, primarily because it was a free event, but also because the performers were from the community. The event provided an opportunity for the community to come together in these difficult times.
- Commissioner Glatzer said he notices a trend that art is becoming more direct, not modulated by large organizations.
- Commissioner Conner said the inability to travel compels people to find local activities. This contributes to the success of those local events.
- Commissioner Romero said few public venues provide event announcement in multiple languages. State of the art systems are expensive, so organizations are looking for simple processes that will allow for multiple languages to be broadcast.
- Commissioner Bridges said today’s comments center around bringing people together and WSAC has a unique ability to convene people. The need for this skill is escalating as people and organizations seek solutions and opportunities to deal with these economic times, and WSAC could be part of a great synergy as communities pull together. He said it is time for WSAC to look at our convening role and position WSAC now so that we are in a place of potential for the future. He encouraged Commissioners to focus on WSAC’s role of convening, creating partnerships, and focusing on relationships. WSAC could be seen as a leader for convening and development.

REVIEW OF WSAC’S STRATEGIC PLAN (SESSION #1)

Kris Tucker introduced Kjriss Lund and Dennis Sellin, Lund Consulting Inc. She noted that Lund and Sellin were consultants for WSAC’s recent strategic planning process.

Lund asked Commissioners to form three groups; she asked each group to discuss one of the three pathways in the strategic plan (Education, Communities, Stewardship), and to prepare a sample letter to WSAC constituents about priorities and considerations for allocating funds during this economic crisis, specifically for the next biennium (2009-2011). Lund explained that this discussion will guide staff in preparing budget proposals and anticipating possible decisions in the near future. All groups will present their sample letter or key discussion items to the entire Commission. Lund said after each presentation, there will be discussion of each group’s key points to explore Commissioners’ concurrence or reaction.

Following the break-out sessions, each group reported to the full Commission:

STEWARDSHIP PATHWAY

Chair Johnson identified key points of the group’s discussion:

- Remember the bigger picture and long-term impact of actions.
- Reaffirm commitment to Washington State’s quality of life, which includes art.
- Organize for economic recovery.

- Restate WSAC’s stewardship mission.
- Note WSAC’s role as convener, and its ability to assist local arts organizations during the economic crisis.
- Art in Public Places program and the state art collection create jobs and activities.
- Support underserved populations, including the folk arts program.
- Provide grants to arts organizations; consider temporarily streamlining the grant application process.

Tucker recapped themes of the stewardship pathway discussion:

1. The letter is positive, encouraging, and also straight-forward – investment is a key word.
2. Consider reversibility of the cuts so WSAC is positioned for economic recovery. Don’t assume all current efforts will be continued forever.
3. Focus on what WSAC can uniquely do.

Lund noted the discussion also emphasized WSAC’s core values (“life is short; art is long”).

COMMUNITY PATHWAY

Commissioner Jones identified the main points of the group’s discussion:

- Use an opening message that states WSAC values the arts, whether or not there is funding; embrace the entire scope of art.
- Maintain the quality of what WSAC does to keep from having to rebuild that quality after recovery.
- Show how the arts provide jobs and play a role in economic development.
- Focus on WSAC’s core activities, especially conserving programs.
- Urge people to think differently; different times require different responses.
- Encourage arts organizations to collaborate and focus on common goals, share resources, and seek innovative ways to encourage access and engagement in art.
- Seek innovative ways to encourage access to the arts while maintaining “excellence.”

Commissioners discussed how quality was defined in the strategic plan and through WSAC programs. Commissioner Brown said WSAC should focus on quality and excellence, even if WSAC may not be able to accomplish as wide a scope as in the past. Commissioner Jones said there are innovative ways to expand people’s experiences of art without compromising quality.

Commissioner Woods said the group discussed whether WSAC could collect and share anecdotal information about how organizations are responding to budget constraints. Commissioner Mandenberg said the group discussed whether WSAC could collect successful models of collaboration, merging, or retooling and disseminate this information. Tucker said limited WSAC resources should be considered before taking on new strategies.

Commissioner Woods said she thought innovation should be included in WSAC’s focus, so that WSAC remains open to creativity.

Tucker recapped themes of the community pathway discussion:

1. This community pathway group focused on stewardship and concepts of value, excellence and quality.

2. Innovation is also part of the discussion. Conserve and ensure excellence, even if on a smaller scale.
3. Recognize some arts organizations, despite their excellent work, innovation, and history, will not survive. We are unclear about WSAC's role in assisting troubled organizations, but don't see WSAC as a hotline or provider of bandaids and bailouts.

Commissioner Glatzer noted that it can be expensive to maintain excellence and quality. Commissioner Romero said that people in small or underserved communities may never go to the ballet or symphony, but depend solely on one small local arts organization for arts events and activities.

EDUCATION PATHWAY

Commissioner Bridges identified key themes of the education pathway discussion:

- Remain focused on the strategic plan.
- Commit to focus on partnerships.
- Recognize the reality of a reduced budget.
- Remain optimistic in the power of community and partnerships.
- Create a call to action around partnerships, consortia and communication.
- Outline specifics on consortia grants.

Commissioner Bridges read the education pathway letter as “considerations we have taken into account as a result of the financial crisis” that would state:

In these challenging financial times, WSAC commits to maintaining its strategic focus in building education, community, and stewardship in the arts. Our partnership with you and the partnerships you create together are even more vital to fulfill the mission of conserving and developing artistic resources across Washington State. Times like these compel WSAC to do our work with reduced resources, but we remain optimistic. Our optimism is sparked by our own commitments and our belief in your ability to stimulate a renewed focus on local, grass-roots arts consortia, collaborations, and activities.

Then the draft letter would outline specific calls to action around partnerships and consortia.

Commissioner Greeley said the group's call to action focused on communities and partnerships. WSAC should encourage constituents to look for ways to leverage dollars and partnership efficiencies. WSAC also could identify community resources and be a convener to share and communicate information. She noted that a state organization can communicate broadly and on a large scale, and should document what organizations are doing.

SCENARIOS FOR WSAC'S FUTURE (SESSION #2)

Lund recalled the enthusiasm and excitement of the recent Inauguration Day, and asked Commissioners to connect with that enthusiasm as they proceed with the next small group activity. Commissioners were asked to prepare a letter to Governor Gregoire and President Obama about how the Washington State Arts Commission is responding to new realities. Tucker reminded Commissioners to focus on what WSAC can do with limited resources; she said the results of these discussions will be further discussed by the Interim Committee.

Following the break-out sessions, each group reported to the full Commission.

STEWARDSHIP PATHWAY

Chair Johnson said convening was a key theme of the group's conversation, such as streamlining grant-making or policy (such as arts in the economy or arts education). The group also discussed the "do-it-yourself" economy and how to leverage partnerships. Commissioner Woods suggested following up on successful consortia and partnership models to keep informed and involved in discussions on WASL and early childhood education.

COMMUNITY PATHWAY

Commissioner Moxley said this group suggests starting the letter by saying, "Dear Michelle [Obama]; enclosed please find two tickets to..."

Commissioner Moxley said the group's discussion identified themes for a letter to Gregoire and Obama:

- Explain how WSAC works with local arts organizations to help them better do their work.
- Advocate for the creative workforce.
- Provide leadership and direction about the contribution of arts.
- Highlight arts components of every capital project and economic development efforts similar to those in Connell and Yakima.

The group also noted that technology can be used to diversify, enlarge and enhance audiences.

EDUCATION PATHWAY

Commissioners Sneed and Conner said the group suggested focusing on new and innovative ways arts and arts organizations accomplish goals. The letter should recommend that the arts are involved in efforts to address problems such as transportation, the economy and health care. Other key themes included:

- Art enhances the built environment and esthetic components of civic spaces.
- Communicate with Ron Sims about artists' roles in redoing and restructuring buildings for arts purposes.
- Artists build both psychological and physical bridges; artists are leaders, conveners, and entrepreneurs.
- Art in schools is necessary to prepare students for the work force.
- Artists in our region have been at the forefront of sustainable practices.
- Expand WSAC's Art in Public Places program to include shovel-ready transit projects.
- Artists provide hope and document local stories of this time.

Lund observed that all three pathways of WSAC's strategic plan were represented in compelling messages about why arts really matter at this point in time; the groups also specified how arts fit into the priorities of Washington State and the nation. She noted that the discussions today began and ended with comments about how artists will tell the story of this time. Lund thanked Commissioners for their time and efforts during this discussion.

Tucker explained that the notes from today's discussion may be helpful in upcoming meetings with legislators during the 2009 Legislative session. In consultation with the Interim Committee, staff will distill today's discussion to inform development of budget proposals to be considered at the May Commission meeting.

Tucker said an online survey will be sent to Commissioners asking their thoughts about the logistics of Arts Day and this Commission meeting. She said notes from this discussion will be included in the meeting minutes to be approved at the May meeting.

Chair Johnson thanked Commissioners for being part of this conversation and to Tucker and Gerth for bringing the reality of the current economic situation to the Commission in clear terms.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mary Langholz, Executive Director of the Washington State Arts Alliance (WSAA) spoke about Arts Day, saying today she received positive feedback from the Legislature; legislators felt respected and were impressed with the huge Arts Day turnout; participation helps legislators identify arts supporters in their communities. Langholz announced the Cultural Congress, with *“Survive or Thrive: What are the Artful Solutions?”* as this year’s theme, will be held April 27-29, 2009 at the Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat in Leavenworth. The Cultural Congress is a state-wide convening of arts organizations to share best practices and network to help each other.

Chair Johnson said yesterday’s Arts Day was an opportunity that helped to shape the work done by the Commission today. Past discussions, such as strategic planning, and future events like Cultural Congress are all part of creating a framework to answer important questions such as determining WSAC’s role in a broader sense than that of being a granter of funds. Chair Johnson reemphasized Tucker’s earlier statement that the Commission’s role is policy, oversight, and advocacy. She said the Commission has had two fantastic days to fulfill that role, involving partnership with each other, other agencies, and WSAC staff. She assured Commissioners their work has given Tucker and WSAC staff valuable information to move forward, and thanked Lund and Sellin for their involvement, noting that a good strategic plan will provide focus regardless of where WSAC finds itself.

Commissioner Greeley asked what WSAC plans as an acknowledgement of Rep. Mary Skinner to her family. Commissioner Moxley said the family of Rep. Skinner plans to hold a memorial service in the spring and hoped the Commission would play some part.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 pm.