Arts and Culture Committee

Manhattan Community Board 9
May 4, 2009 Meeting Minutes
(DRAFT)

In attendance:
Committee Members: Miriam Aristy-Farer, Debra Ann Byrd, Vicky Gholson, PhD, Co-Chairs: Linda Walton, Diane Wilson
Public/Task Members: Christa Gieseke, Pat Lewis, Winston Majette, Magli Damas, John-Martin Green, Walter South

Meeting called to order at 6:25pm

Motion to adopt the agenda
Motion to approve the minute (correct spelling of Michael Palma's name, not Palmer)

Introductions/Information Exchange:
Brian Levinson (Chief of Staff, Senator Serrano), Sarah Crean (Director of Cultural Affairs, Parks, Recreation and Tourism for Senator Serrano), Jewel Kinch-Thomas (Executive Director of Theater at Riverside Church presenting "Earth Hours" at Riverbank State Park-May 11 and Family Arts Festival in June at Riverside), Asha Lindsey (Sankofa Opera Company), John Reddick (Harlem One Stop, a cultural website; organizing Pinkster Celebration on May 16 142nd & Amsterdam), Wolfgang Bush (Asst. Art Director, Chashama, a multi-discipline arts organization; provides short-term spaces for artists; produced "How Do I Look" a documentary on the Harlem house ball community), Michel Madie (Temple M, arts performance space), James Ratner (Columbia University reporter)

Miriam Aristy-Farer reported that Triple Candie has relocated and reopened on 148th between Broadway and Amsterdam. Triple Candie is a "conceptual gallery" whose purpose is not to sell art. There is an exhibition currently on view with a theme of preserving the store fronts on Amsterdam and Broadway.

Events
Harlem School of the Art student exhibition at the Overlook at 151st Street

Economic Stimulus Townhall Follow-up – Presentation by Brian Levinson & Sara Crean, Senator Serrano's Office New York State Council on the Arts will distribute $399,000 of the stimulus money.

Question posed: Are there ways for the arts community to collectively apply for dollars? What about discretionary funding? What are the other ideas for

Director Cultural Affairs, Parks, Recreation and Tourism

Brian Levinson – Serrano is interested in understanding the intersections between arts and government. Discretionary grants through Serrano's office allow for smaller organizations to access funding. Small groups may be disadvantaged from accessing grants because they may not have made proper filings and have limited capacity or staff to manage the layers of paperwork that come with grant requests. Senator Serrano allocated $250,000 of his discretionary monies for NYSCA to distribute, identifying what he felt was the most viable entity, with capacity and infrastructure to distribute these funds. Serrano is also interested in seeing more minority representative on the NYSCA board. Stressed the importance of organizations establish a relationship with his office, build awareness around the work/programs they offer. Groups should try to get staffer or electeds to go to an event. Serrano is hosting a press conference in Albany to stress to the Governor the need to improve accountability and efficiencies for accessing stimulus money. Levinson.nys@gmail.com.

Models for Arts and Community: Fourth Arts Block (FAB) is a non-profit organization founded in 2001 by cultural and community groups to establish and advance the East 4th Street Cultural District, between 2nd Avenue and Bowery.

From the FAB website: FAB is working with our members to create a permanent home for the arts and to preserve the unique cultural nature of East 4th Street, which has fostered creative diversity and experimentation for more than 30 years. FAB advocates for the cultural district, its members and our neighborhood; leads centralized projects that benefit our members and provides a model for sustainable development; creates opportunities for cultural expansion; directs marketing and promotion efforts; and supports the development and capacity of our members. East 4th Block Association is an example of a naturally occurring cultural district where several arts organizations work together, share resources, creates opportunities for cultural expansion; directs marketing and promotion efforts; and supports the development and capacity of our members. (Members include La MaMa E.T.C., New York Theater Works, Teatro Circulo, Creative Time, Rod Rodgers Dance School & Company)

Sarah Crean – recently joined the staff and has been interviewing organizations large and small, to gather information. Sarah distributed a document listing grants available through stimulus money. Information is available on the Governor's website as well as information on how non-profits can access money. These RFP's may not be specific to arts organizations, but arts organizations will have to thoroughly review the guidelines to see where there might be points of entry within the major sectors (Education, Energy, Health, etc). Discretionary monies previously reported as being available, have been used to plug the State budget gap. sarahcrean.nys@gmail.com
Hand book is on the governor's website under 'Recovery'.

Disussion
Current funding models do not work for small organizations. There is an enormous amount of work that goes into these applications which are for small amounts of money.

There was $50M in stimulus money awarded to the National Endowment for the Arts of which $30M will be administered by NEA, $20M will be administered through a number of State and local agencies. Although applications may be submitted to multiple agencies, organizations can only receive grants from one source. Deadlines are being coordinated between the various agencies.

It was suggested that a dialogue between government and arts group be organized where practical problems could be stated and where ideas for supporting the needs of organizations could be discussed. The power and influence of the Senator and Committee Chairs could be used to call together private and community partners pose approaches to how how we logistically approach stimulus funds. It is important to get government commitment over a period of time. District 9 has a number of internationally renowned organizations that have provided services and supports for over 30 years. A portion of the stimulus money should be allocated to these organizations.

A technical assistance workshop is needed to assists organizations with the application process.

Update on Community Benefits Agreement Update –
John-martin Green, Arts & Culture Chair - West Harlem Local Development Corporation

The Community Benefits Agreement is due to be signed tomorrow. A special meeting of CB9's Executive Committee was called for tonight to discuss the pros and cons of agreement.

WHLDC met with Elected officials (Perkins, Wright, Farrell, Jackson) to look at whether or not the WHLDC should go forward with a resolution by the Board to sign the agreement. Arts and Culture community made asks for support for institutions with proven track work, support for new programming, integration of arts into Columbia's programs, however, few of these asks remain in the agreement. 5000 sq ft of space will be made available. $150M available in cash and in-kind. An entity is to be created to put processes in place to determine how that money should be distributed. Nothing is really spelled out in the agreement about A&C. Need to ensure that there is a representative that will advocate for A&C within this newly created body.

A&C spelled out in great detail what the requests were, they were acknowledged, but the general feeling was that the new WHLDC will determine how the money is spent.

No New Business

Old Business
The A&C Committee would like to move forward with the following:

- The creation of a directory that lists arts organizations, businesses, and artists in the district (Stephanie Berry)
- The creation of arts think tank (Dr. Vicky Gholson)
- Updating and communicating via the web (Michael Palma)
- Increase Latino/Hispanic participation (Michael Palma)

The May 4th meeting of the A&C committee will focus on summer arts programs for youth. The A&C committee will work with the Education/Youth committee on this meeting and will invite parents from the district

The September meeting will be held at Chashama (in the Mink Bldg, on 126th and Amsterdam)

Motion to adjourned at 8pm