

CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Monday, February 8, 2010

Members Present: Tia Blassingame, Alderman Frances Clark, Dorreth Cole, Jennifer Delmonico, Dean Sakamoto. **Staff Present:** Barbara Lamb, Kim Futrell. **Members Absent:** Gabriela Campos-Matteson, Su-Lin Carbonelli, William Denby, Perkins Foss, Douglas Hausladen, Robert Parker, Aleta Staton, Janna Wagner.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by J. Delmonico at 5:55 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Revisit upon a quorum

III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Project Storefront: DCA with the support of New Haven's Economic Development Corporation will begin a pilot program (building on similar programs in various cities throughout the country) in which DCA will negotiate with property owners for the use of empty storefronts on a temporary basis for use by arts/cultural entrepreneurs interested in testing a business idea. Storefronts in Downtown, Fair Haven and Whalley Avenue are being reviewed as potential sites. Clusters of 2-3 stores in two locations will be selected based on property owner negotiations for this 2010 pilot. The goal of the program is to drive new and expanded foot traffic to these retail districts to help entrepreneurs evaluate their ideas/programs while helping property owners to call attention to their spaces for long term renters.

DCA will work with property owners to negotiate three month commitments with the potential to add months if the space continues to remain unrented and entrepreneurs are interested in continuing. Selected applicants will be given a small stipend for space fit out, signage, etc. Assistance will be provided for those interested in developing a business plan through the Economic Development Department. A Call for Artists is scheduled to be released later in January.

Upcoming Events: New Haven Public Library will be presenting a poetry contest with various age categories in March 2010. DCA has agreed to co-sponsor the event. There will be a formal reception in April.

Pecha Kutcha: DCA representatives attended the recent Pecha Kutcha night at Bentara. The event is designed to allow for discussion of new ideas by having individuals/groups present a total of 20 slides of work/concepts for which the individual/group can speak for 20 seconds on each. DCA plans to present storefronts for artists at the next event which is scheduled some time in April. We will keep Commissioners advised when the date is set and we hope many of you will turn out.

Other: DCA staff recently participated in an innovation workshop led by EmcArts, organized by the Arts Council of Greater New Haven as part of the "Greater New Haven Arts Stabilization Program" they have been managing for the last eight or so years. The workshop was designed for staff and board members to work through several "out of the box" thinking exercises that would help organization leaders consider their organization's mission and work from a new perspective. The program is designed to help organizations think innovatively about what they do and how they do it. EmcArts normally work with individual arts organizations intensely on innovative thinking over a 6-8 month period. In this case, New Haven arts organizations had an opportunity to experience an introduction to the process and were then allowed to apply through a competitive process for more intensive one-on-one work. Four organizations will be selected from those who applied and will be paid for by funds left over from the Arts Stabilization

Program. DCA staff was allowed to participate, but are not allowed to apply since we are not a traditional non-profit arts organization.

The Ethnic Cultural Heritage Center at SCSU will be transferring its current exhibition on the History of New Haven Immigration for display at city hall in March. DCA has agreed to co-host the reception along with New Haven Sister Cities. All Commissioners will be invited and are encouraged to attend the opening on March 23rd and to bring friends.

D. Sakamoto shared invitations to the upcoming exhibition "Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future". The exhibition will be on view at both at the Yale School of Architecture and Art Gallery February 19-May 2, 2010. An opening lecture on Eero Saarinen will be held on February 18 in the McNeil Lecture Hall.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Strategic Plan: Feedback from AMS on their meeting with the Mayor about the Dept of Cultural Affairs were positive and encouraging. It is apparent that the Mayor is very much aware of the work that we do and that he values it highly. AMS will facilitate a half day workshop with DCA staff to review all the research, community leader interviews, and community focus groups in order to define the parameters of the department's new Strategic Plan.

DCA Newsletter: Will revisit at the March meeting.

V. NEW BUSINESS

None discussed.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION IS SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, MARCH 8 AT 5:45 PM AT CITY HALL.