

## **Holiday Display Task Force Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

City Hall, 300 LaPorte Avenue

Meeting began at 5:00 p.m.

Tess reviewed the meeting agenda with the task force.

Guests: Cheryl Donaldson, City of Fort Collins Museum Director and  
Marianne Lorenz, Executive Director of Museum of Contemporary Arts (MOCA)

Observers in attendance declined the offer to comment.

Task force members reported on status of outside assignments:

Steve summarized his discussion with Marianne Lorenz from MOCA. He explained the idea that as one part of a three tiered community participation project the task force would like to recommend inviting the local artist community to create art which would educate and inspire inclusiveness. Marianne felt the concept had merit but many details would need to be worked out. If this is implemented it would more than likely begin in 2008.

A discussion began on how the task force could provide assurance that the seasonal community poster or art medium would be inclusive. Suggestions included setting guidelines with an identified theme and clear instructions that the submitted work would be secular in nature. Selection criteria would need to meet specific guidelines. Guidelines could be similar to what is given to the City of Fort Collins Museum. Perhaps an advisory committee could be formed to help establish and operate this project.

The discussion turned to where/how the art would be displayed. Suggestions included: City website, t-shirts, create collectible art work, banners displaying the art work hung on the exterior of City buildings or other places downtown, and at bus stops. A suggestion was also made to tie the art program to the First Night celebration that occurs on New Years Eve.

Cheryl Donaldson was asked to report on the Museum staff input. The staff are very interested in working with the task force to develop a display. They did note concerns about whether they would be able to produce a display with the existing budget and time frame. Their thoughts are to utilize 9 trees facing Mathews (West entrance) and decorate them with white lights signifying a "season of light." The trees would be in conjunction with the 9 seasonal symbols provided by the task force, which would be illustrated using light boxes (lit panels displaying symbols) which would include educational text messages. They envision the panel boxes to be 6' high and 3' wide. The initial estimate to implement this display is \$5,000.

Marianne Lorenz, Executive Director of MOCA, arrived and was asked if she would speak to the group to elaborate on the idea of the community art project. She suggested an open invitation to submit art and noted that the guidelines need to be very specific. The winning submission could be used to create a defined number of posters or banners. The location where the posters or

banners would be displayed would be specified ahead of time. She noted that the MOCA building is registered on the historical preservation list and there are some restrictions in how art can be attached to the exterior of the building. Also there are a limited number of banners allowed by City code. Marianne stressed that the process to implement a program like this is extremely important; diversity needs to be built right into the program and should be inclusive to the entire community. Any program would need to be developed first and wait until 2008 for implementation. She is willing to summarize their suggestions for this type of program for the final task force recommendation.

Marty reported that he had made multiple attempts to connect with the Muslim community, but had not been successful. Parker offered to contact Dr. Siddiqui whom he worked with on the Human Relations Commission.

Saul reported that the CSU Director of Native American Studies will be out most of the month, but he was able to speak with Irene Vernon, Director of the Center for Applied Studies in American Ethnicity. She thought that Dr. Peter Jacobs would be a good contact; Professor Jacobs teaches Native American Art and material culture at CSU. Irene mentioned that there is great diversity among the Native American tribes with over 500 tribes and each with its own unique customs and solstice celebrations. Some carvings and costumes might be included, but the City would have to be careful not to display certain sacred objects. A suggestion was made that the task force could select from local tribes or Colorado native tribes.

Howard made several attempts to contact CSU Black Student Services and Griot to discuss Kwanzaa. He has not had any return calls or emails yet but will continue to try in order to get feedback on the symbol.

Tess reported that she spoke with City facility staff to ask them to not install any holiday displays on City buildings until the outcome of the recommendations is known (after November 20<sup>th</sup>) and they are happy to do that. She also asked them to consider interim plans in the event the Council accepts the recommendation to use only white lights.

The recommendation by the task force has been moved to November 20<sup>th</sup> with written materials due to the City Clerk by November 7<sup>th</sup>. The following additional items need to be included in the final recommendation:

- 1) Clarify which City Buildings the recommendation will apply to. (The existing policy has different standards for downtown buildings than for the rest of the City buildings.) Task force members agreed that the recommendation will encompass all City buildings, not just those downtown.
- 2) Will the recommendation include the interior of City buildings, and if so, which parts of the interior? The current policy states that “the content of indoor holiday displays at all City facilities are at the discretion of the heads of the department or departments located at the facility and must be secular in nature.” Members agreed that the standards set for the exterior of City buildings should also apply to public interior spaces, but decided to continue discussion about which spaces (e.g. lobbies, conference rooms, etc.) at the October 17 meeting.

3) What will be the recommendation regarding interim plans for the 2007/2008 holiday season?

Members noted that they would like to meet with representatives from the Downtown Business Association (DBA) and Downtown Development Association (DDA) to talk about where the recommendations are headed and ask if their displays and/or programs could be aligned with the recommendations being made to the City. The group asked Tess to invite representatives to the October 24 Task Force meeting (unless they are only available on the 17<sup>th</sup>, in which case they are invited to attend then.) Members will discuss this in more detail next week to clarify just what it is the group wants to review with these two organizations. Steve volunteered to invite the Choice City Singers as well given their involvement with Carol Fest, but the group thought it was too soon to do so.

Tess noted other follow up items:

- 1) The task force should choose one or two members to act as spokesperson during the Council meeting and perhaps in other venues, e.g. for media interviews. Members were asked to email Tess with their recommendations.
- 2) At some point the task force should discuss a “communications plan” for how to inform the community about the Council meeting and any resulting changes to the policy
- 3) A few volunteers are needed to help write the final report. Again, members were asked to email Tess if they were willing and able to help with this task.

October 17 agenda will include:

- Further discussion re: interior spaces in City buildings
- Oct 24<sup>th</sup> meeting with DBA and DDA reps: what will be the topics?
- Task force spokesperson(s)
- Developing the written recommendations: who, by when

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.