



Denver City Council

Public Amenities Committee Summary

Date: July 18, 2006 **Time:** 11:00 A.M. **Location:** Council Conference Room

Committee Members Present: Lehmann, Chair; Robb, Vice-Chair; Johnson, Linkhart

1. Denver Office of Cultural Affairs (DOCA)– Introductions

Summary of Discussion

Erin Trapp, DOCA Director, introduced her new staff members who briefed the Committee on their backgrounds.

Kendall Peterson, the new Public Art Administrator, Ms. Peterson discussed her background: she has a Master's in Art and Architecture from New York University, is a native of Denver, and produces and directs film documentaries. She is currently working on an inventory of Denver's public art. She is impressed with the prominent artists in the collection, its eclectic nature, and--most recently--its thoughtful placement. She said that some of the art is damaged and needs repair; she is particularly interested in preserving the City's older monuments as a part of Denver's western heritage.

Julie Rodriguez, who will head Architecture & Literary Initiatives, was formerly at the Mile High Montessori Academy and brings skills in fundraising, project management and marketing. She will head up special projects like Doors Open Denver, Poetry in Motion, and One Book, One Denver. She explained that the next book for the latter will be announced on September 14, 2006. Councilman Linkhart urged focusing on local authors.

2. Denver County Cultural Council (DCCC)

Summary of Discussion

Marty Robbins, chair, and Jane Potts, Program Manager, Denver County Cultural Council, provided a progress report on the DCCC, the Denver entity which distributes funds to the smaller Tier III cultural organizations eligible for funding from the tax.

Mr. Robbins said they are recruiting for at least two--and perhaps three vacancies--on the council. He noted that Ms. Potts has been working with Councilman Garcia to recruit Latino candidates. Applications are due on July 28, 2006, since they would like new members in place for the September board meeting. Mr. Robbins encouraged Councilmembers to solicit applicants—noting that membership requires a significant amount of time, especially during the grant award period. He asked for input regarding Council participation in the selection process—noting that in the past Committee staff and a Council aide represented Council on the selection panel. Councilwoman Lehmann said that she would confer with her Council colleagues to determine their preferences.

Ms. Potts reported on problems that have occurred in the Denver Public Schools (DPS) regarding canceling Tier III activities. She said that DPS has been focusing on academics to improve student CSAP scores. She has been working with the Lights on After School program and believes that cultural enrichment activities will be re-instated through that program. Councilwoman Lehmann noted that various studies indicating that cultural activities improve academic performance. Councilman Linkhart suggested exploring opportunities for arts organizations to co-locate with the schools.

Mr. Robbins also brought up the problem of Tier III organizations which—like the David Taylor dance group—have been priced out of the Denver market because venues are too expensive. He said that the organization was seeking affordable space in Denver so that no additional arts and cultural organizations move out of the city. Councilwoman Faatz suggested looking at a vacant Safeway building in her district.

Mr. Robbins distributed the attached list of 2006 Tier III allocations. A total of \$1.631 million dollars was allocated to 97 organizations. He explained that almost all the groups received an increase, as tax revenues are up. The allocation formula involves a cap of \$40,000 or 15% of the organization's budget, whichever is less. Applications are evaluated by eleven independent reviewers and then averaged. The grant awards ceremony is October 17 at Four Mile Historic Park and councilmembers were encouraged to attend.

Shelley Smith
8-2-06