

Cultural Commission October 28, 2013

STATE OF TEXAS §

COUNTY OF TARRANT §

CITY OF BEDFORD §

The Cultural Commission of the City of Bedford, Texas, met in regular session at 6:30 pm at the Bedford Public Library, 2424 Forest Ridge Drive, Bedford, TX on the 28th day of October 2013 with the following members present:

Alicia McGlinchey, Chair
Tom Jacobsen
Lee Koch
David Medina
Barbara Speares
Paul Davis
JoLynne Jensen

Constituting a quorum

Others present included:

Debbie Savage
Mirenda McQuagge-Walden, Staff Liaison
Ray Champney
Patricia Nolan

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Alicia McGlinchey called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm

- 1. Consider approval of the following Cultural Commission minutes:
a) August 26, 2013 regular meeting**

Ms. McGlinchey made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the September 30, 2013; the motion was seconded by Mr. Jacobsen. The motion passed 7 – 0.

OLD BUSINESS

- 2. Discussion on development of a strategic plan for the Cultural District.**

The attendees received a copy of the information and comments gathered from the two community meetings in September. Ms. Jensen attempted to combine them into eight different task forces. She then took those eight and recommended combining into three and setting eight or nine objectives under each.

Ms. Jensen combined into the first group: cultural district, venues, and look and feel.

Second group: communication, marketing and collaboration.

Third group: events, programming, education, and services to arts organizations

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Ms. McGlinchey shared her ideas for combining as well and they were pretty similar.

The next step is a work session for everyone to review and comb through the findings.

Ms. Jensen suggested taking the combined findings and develop a plan.

How to do LOI (Letter of Intent?) – Ms. Jensen has vast and highly successful experience writing for and obtaining grants, and teaching others how to apply for grants, and working with members of the Texas Commission on the Arts. She advised the group that in her opinion, Bedford is not ready to apply for a cultural designation at this time. It will require some time and much work, and the City needs to show substantive examples that it has the elements and definitive plans for a cultural destination. Progress had been made, but two applications have been submitted so far and failed to achieve the designation. She strongly urged the Commission to consider that the failure of the two recent applications coupled with the current status of the cultural district/plans may likely result in the failure of a third application if the Commission determines that the City should apply by the next deadline which in June 2014. If half of what is identified in the strategic plan gets accomplished in the next year, then there is a much higher probability for approval.

In the next work session for the Commission, the goal will be to prioritize and highlight the items that should and can be accomplished and a timeline developed laying out the objectives for the cultural district development.

Mr. Champney expressed his concern that it was important on a broader scale to consider applying for the cultural designation at the next scheduled application date in June 2014. It would help in attracting developers and suggested that the recommendations and plan should be conveyed to the City Council before the March meeting, and to lay out expectations for the Council. It was also noted that if the City decided to apply for the designation, then the Council would need to know before January 15, 2014.

There was discussion about which individual should submit the application for the cultural designation. Kathy Hernandez with the ARTS Council applied in the past. Ms. McGlinchey said that Ms. Hernandez is now in a position as the head of the Louisiana Arts Council and has offered to advise the Commission and discuss with her colleagues in Texas.

Ms. Jensen shared that she serves on a panel with members of the Texas Commission on the Arts and conveyed that in her opinion, the Cultural Commission would still not be ready at this late date to move forward with a successful cultural designation application.

Ms. Jensen suggested that in parallel with working on the strategic plan and preparation work for the cultural designation application, the City could also begin pursuing TCA grants that she felt the City would have a high probability of success with. She suggested that if the City applied for TCA grants and successfully received several arts grants, then the history of that success in getting grants for the arts would help build a more powerful application.

The meeting attendees agreed that there is very good data collected so far, successful events and arts groups in Bedford, and a lot of good information to build a solid strategic plan.

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The next meeting is November 18 and the meeting can be used to solidify the organization of the data and begin a strategic plan and presentation for the City Council. By December, there should be a good list of recommendations for the city council.

3. Discussion on the October 5 ArtsFest event.

The Commission discussed the recap for the October 5 ArtsFest event. Ms. McQuagge-Walden shared that that arts groups met and discussed the items that worked well and areas of improvement. Overall, the comments were very positive.

The weather did not cooperate and there were discussions about moving the event to another date; possible options include: spring, April, leaving the date the same in 2014, but move it to a better date in 2015. The weather could be good or bad. The day before the festival, the weather was great.

1. Logistically the arts "trail" was only somewhat successful because there were too few tents leading to the Art gallery and ONSTAGE. The festival tents trailed off in front of Splash. More tents towards ONSTAGE were suggested and possibly moving the food trucks in front of ONSTAGE. There were too few tents and vendors outdoors. There was nothing to draw people towards the Trinity ARTS gallery or ONSTAGE because the weather did not cooperate so the outdoor music and performances were moved into the theatre. There was no outdoor festival music, so it was too quiet for a festival this time. Next year, even canned music should be played. All of the performers that were engaged with ONSTAGE were very happy with the opportunity and volunteered to return in 2014 despite having to move indoors.
2. The artists whose booths were indoors had mixed comments; some were not happy to be mixed with non-artisans. Some did not care. It was suggested that the fees were too low, so serious artisans did not perceive the festival to be an artistic event. The entertainment that moved indoors was well received by some and annoyed some vendors. It was suggested that artists should be separated into different sections including juried section and a student art tent, to charge different rates for different levels, showcase different levels of artists, and to separate community artists from professional artists.
3. Unpacking was an issue and it was suggested that more volunteers were needed.
4. There was discussion about advertising. More banners or flyers and posters in strategic areas were suggested. More advertising was suggested. Forest Ridge Drive did not have enough advertising facing both directions. The signage on the stone wall sign did not state anything about the festival in a timely manner. The digital signage was questioned as to when it was updated with festival information.
5. It was difficult to monitor attendance and in the future, handouts or drawings that can be counted should be offered.
6. All of the employees and volunteers helping with the festival did a great job.

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7. The booth for the Commission was manned by Commission members and there were suggestions about how to improve handouts and information for the booth next year.
8. It was suggested that there be more kid's activities. Also, that there should be more involvement from HEB and include them in the planning, and to include them in HEB contests such as decorating big trash cans, park benches, and having mini-arts classes.
9. Have signature events.
10. Possibly have quarterly events including a musical festival and to look at having them six months apart instead of having Arts Fest less than two months from the Blues Festival.

Next meeting:

- a. Look at social calendars – next agenda
- b. Texas Commission on the Arts program offers funding – putting on festivals – be in two different funding cycles – try to space six months apart
- c. Logo contest – start brainstorming
- d. Perhaps include the logo contest with the schools involvement
- e. Have a different poster every year – Mr. Davis's was great this year – keep the same logo year after year for brand recognition

NEW BUSINESS

4. Introduction to visitors.

The attendees went around the table and introduced themselves to the new visitor who is interested in the Cultural District development and joining the Cultural Commission..

- December 16 (potential social gathering)

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:44 p.m. by Ms. McGlinchey, seconded by Mr. Davis. The motion passed unanimously.

Approved:

Alicia McGlinchey, Chair