

AARC Workgroup meeting for the AAQoL

Wednesday, January 10, 12pm-1:30pm

In attendance: Vince Cobalis, , Taja Beekley, Laura Esparza, Shubhada Saxena, Debasree DasGupta

Note: The AARC Workgroup meeting will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month from now on.

### **1. Artist in Residency Program:**

Has been renamed Artist Access Program, open to artists wishing to be cultural contractors with Economic Development and PARD for funding, and expected to be a breakthrough for grassroots artists. Operations and maintenance issues are being addressed as well as questions on how widespread it might be. The cultural arts division has provided a list of Latino artists who have been contacted. The deadline for applications has been in effect for 3 months and has expired but is likely to be extended. There is a selection process from a Panel that comprises of two citizens from each cultural center who score and rank the artists. 2-3 Asians artists have submitted applications thus far.

Commissioner Saxena had questions regarding this being offered to artists from sister cities and other established artists as well. Ms Esparza said the city is open to that but placing more emphasis on a cultural exchange. Opening the program to sister cities etc face further challenges ie tariffs and other taxes, which could perhaps be waived under the “Cultural exchange banner”. We need to increase the focus and explore the potential for a more permanent place for Asian arts.

The AARC is one of the facilities participating in the program but faces challenges such as remaining open afterhours and also an inadequate stage for performing artists. Some of these performers might need to rehearse at a facility but perform at a different one. The Carver center might be able to remain open for late rehearsals. The artists choose the space dependent on their needs.

### **2. FY 2018 PARD Fee Schedule:**

The fees for FY 2018 are rising significantly (please see attached documents) which could have an impact on rentals. Fees for the ballroom have been increased by \$40/hour while classroom fees have doubled. Please note that the classrooms at the AARC are smaller than other facilities but are being charged the same rates as larger classrooms

Non-profits used to receive the same discount or rates as non-residents, but these categories no longer exist. However, resident and non-resident rates will continue to be provided for the upcoming summer programs.

The work-group recommends that the AAQoL passes a resolution requesting the Austin City Council for Austin's PARD to allow non-profit organizations to rent city owned facilities at a discounted rate. This could be done after seeking feedback from the non-profit organisations, such as NAAO CSA, Taiwanese Society and IACT, to name a few, who regularly rent the facility for their events.

### **Senior Meals Program:**

The current catering contracts expire in June. They could possibly be extended by a year. The usage of the new kitchen has not been as expected. The caterers all prefer to use their own kitchens, as that is more convenient for them. The possibility of hiring a quality chef at living wage is unlikely. This also creates challenges about the menu which needs to cater to different ethnic palates. The group discussed considering a standard fare for the meals with 1 item that is specific to a particular group on a rotating basis. However, there are already complaints from the seniors about the quality/monotony of the food menu.

### **Status of Lawn Equipment:**

The equipment is waiting in storage and it might be the middle of the year before they can be installed.

Aproximately \$50K is required for design of walkways, landscaping and installation. There are concerns about children running out into the parking lot. Community grants from the Austin PARD, donations and other sources are being considered.

### **HR Report:**

Not available for this meeting.

### **Ongoing Activities:**

Please see attached documents.

This month the AARC is hosting an exhibit "Where I belong" about mixed race families as well as "Beyond Bollywood" (Indian Americans shape the Nation) which will continue until April.