

## **MINUTES: Arts & Culture Advisory Committee 2/19/2025**

**City Hall, Baltimore, MD**

**Call to Order: time 5:40 pm**

**Attendees:** Tonya Miller Hall, Robin Murphy, Abby Becker, Julia DeBusalo, Von Vargas, Shamir Cassell, Gail Cooper, Obed Gant, Cara Ober, Sean Brescia, Loucia Hamilton, Thea Washington, Nicholas Cohen, with Ed Gunts (press)

**Approval of Minutes:** Cara Ober

Motion to open Sean / Cara 2nd

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

**Opening Remarks:** Tonya Miller Hall

**Announcement:** Stacy Handler is the new chair of this committee but is out sick, after Tonya Miller Hall served as committee chair last year, Typically meetings are every other 3rd Thursday

**Introductions:** each committee member, some 2nd year and some new members

Not present: Amy Friedman, Jeannie Howe, Eze Jackson, Asma Naeem, Eric Souza, Jason Steer, Von Vargas, Jenenne Whitfield, Savannah Wood

**Committee Ethics Waiver:** Every member needs to fill it out, a new link has been resent

### **2. Administrative Business / Updates**

**Robin Murphy, Interim BOPA Ceo, BOPA Announcements:**

Robin is serving as Interim CEO since November 2024, after serving formerly as board member, chair of board (BOPA bylaws state that when the CEO leaves, the chair of the board serves until another CEO is appointed)

- Last year, the city determined to sever the previous relationship after several years of a contentious relationship, with a plan to dismantle, turn over assets, sunset the organization since the city funds most of BOPA's projects
- However, an agreement has been reached to continue based upon a new relationship with the city - it is much improved and changed, keeping BOPA both independent and quasi governmental
- In hindsight, found that significant financial difficulties that were not fully disclosed to the city or the board
- Now, working with city hall, the relationship with BOPA has completely changed to a collaborative leadership model, city is now on board with the mission
- The major issue was digging out of financial problems, and they are 99% there, with a slimmed down the org, staffing that has stayed is committed and creative

- City allowed it to retain designation as arts council
- Actively working collaboratively with the city - fireworks, artscape, in July the org will have a new contract with the city
- 4 part goal - repair relationships with city hall, reset programming and granting, administratively set up for success, search for a permanent director
- Keeping School 33, Cloisters, and Bromo

#### **Tonya Miller Hall, Legislative gains and process:**

- Introducing a new 1% for art legislations, changing cumbersome ordinance for CIPL capital improvement grants, public art commission overseas
- New changes - now artists can use for mural projects, landscaping and green space, restoration / preservation - biggest change is the legislation will come off the top of the CIP budget as opposed to waiting until building project is done
- BOPA and Arts Council will continue to oversee Public Arts Committee

#### **Tonya Miller Hall, Graffiti Task Force**

- Baltimore DOT / DGS currently cleans up graffiti, with specific concerns for writing on 83/295 traffic corridor, they paint white over and then a fresh crop comes up
- Research - In Philadelphia - they have a more robust mural program, came out of a more robust task force - use that as a model, can we deploy our own street team of artists to create murals along highways and in covering up graffiti
- Baltimore City can only clean up city property
- We need an administrative policy on street art, working to draft language sent to legislative reference to create an ordinance or executive order
- Goal: to build a case to use funding for cover up paint, instead to fund art and seal it, which will be easy to power wash, working with Innovation Team at City Hall

#### **Tonya Miller Hall, Capital Support for Cultural Spaces**

- Dept of Planning will open a call for cultural space capital support - closes 4.30.25
- This helps to support capital improvements on art institutions and facades

#### **Tonya Miller Hall, ARPA Grants Part 2**

- The second round of ARPA Grants will open this spring
- Eligibility simple, application includes tax returns for 2 COVID years, other qualifying questions
- All those who apply and qualify will be selected at random
- \$500,000.00 will include individual \$4000 grants to 125 artists

#### **Tonya Miller Hall, Inviting Light Public Art Project**

- Baltimore City received \$1M from Bloomberg Philanthropy, public art project in Station North, first program activation will be March 28, with 4 additional artists through spring and summer

#### **Nicholas Cohen, MD Citizens for the Arts: State Policy Updates**

- MD Citizens for the Arts represents the entire state, with Cohen as a registered lobbyist, working to advance public policy and legislation, mainly to make sure MSAC is one of best funded state agencies in the country
- Currently, MD has a \$3 billion deficit, so the arts are “on the chopping block”
- MSAC has had a 30 year formula, over \$31.2 million this year, but Gov Moore’s team felt the state arts council needed a mandate / guiding funding formula, he wants more budget flexibility in the future, wanted legislature to remove the formula, but MD Citizens has been working to convince the legislature to reject this plan and keep the formula
- According to Cohen, it is unacceptable to change this formula and this message was repeated at MD Arts Day in Annapolis last week, when his org and many volunteers and supporters met with every MD lawmaker,
- The artist-advocates held sessions with state lawmakers
- Going forward, anyone can fill out an online form to find out who your lawmakers are, you can fill out and send, so far 3500 emails sent/ 78 phone calls
- New Bill: artists rights bill for public artists, so that artists do not have to waive their copyright; the bill makes it so the artist can argue for copyright / compensation for that, rather than automatically losing those rights

### **Tonya Miller Hall and Robin Murphy: Artscape Updates**

- On Friday, Feb. 14, they launched new “unapologetically bold” plan for 2025
- Announced national music acts and a new location downtown
- Context: 40 years ago Artscape was devised to help support Meyerhoff Symphony building, to turn the area into an arts district through a festival for art and culture on Mount Royal. At that time, Bolton Hill was different, MICA was different - things have changed. The festival has outgrown footprint, is disruptive to commerce, schools, and neighborhoods. Artscape in the past few years has been trying to do too many things, so maintaining size and magnitude was no longer viable
- In Artscape 2023, they created several “transformative” murals and a pocket park, to engage with residents in the neighborhood and to use the festival in a way that has lasting impact beyond one weekend
- Artscape 2025 will be a part of the Downtown Rise Initiative - Mayor Scott’s goal to transform downtown
  - It will include Scout Art Fair - 50 artists, curated by Derrick Adams in War Memorial Building
  - Rock Opera Performance
  - Activations / exhibits at The Peale, Ida B’s, Design Church, Black News Network, Flavor Lab to showcase culinary excellence, food hall with seating
  - A Downtown transformation - where farmer’s market is - 47 columns under the underpass, re-mural, restore, adding lighting that will stay there, improving the space ongoing, durable improvements that serve community longer term
  - Two outdoor stages - main stage, soul of the city
  - Activation in the old Hammerjacks space - kidscape, disco
  - Center Stage - film/ screening, conversation series

- Festival parking on other side of fallsway
- Instead of 3 days, it will be 2 days with extended hours 11 am - 10 pm
- Changing the date means BOPA is hosting two artscape festivals in 1 fiscal year

### **3. Upcoming**

Updates from the Committee Members:

- ACC Craft Show Feb 20-22 in Convention Center
- MD Arts Summit - Conference for the Arts in MD, this year PG Community College - performing art center - June 17-18 T/W - call for proposals in 10 days - they pay artists \$200 to attend for 2 days - Artist Bazaar - 40 booths
- Arts Every Day Looking for Jurors for HS Art Show
- BmoreArt Issue 19 Release Event May 15