

## Imagine Maryland

**Date:** June 25, 2008  
**Location:** Maryland State Arts Council  
175 W. Ostend Street, Baltimore  
**Forum:** Arts & Entertainment Districts Forum  
**Facilitator:** Morrie Warshawski, Theresa Colvin, Elizabeth Affleck Carven  
**Scribe:** Elizabeth A. Bentley-Smith

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### Major Themes

- Funding is a major issue.
  - The arts definitely have a transformative effect on communities.
  - Partnerships are very important to the success of A&E districts.
  - Buildings and capital are a concern.
  - A&E districts have a positive economic impact on communities (e.g. they are a good investment).
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### Raw Transcript

Theresa Colvin, Executive Director, Maryland State Arts Council

- Welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided a synopsis of the purpose and goals regarding the strategic planning process. Discussed the various assessment tools and future meetings.

Morrie Warshawski, Planning Consultant, Maryland State Arts Council

- ❖ Introduced concepts regarding strategic planning.
  - Exercise story
    - Used a book by Dave Gordon, *Stumbling Toward Happiness*, to describe the process: Within the Amazon forest explorers discovered a tribe...when the explorer chooses to return he invites others to join...the head tribesman goes with...they walk through thick vegetation, canopies of trees that you can't see the sky through...then sees a plain and the horizon with a large water buffalo...the tribesman asks the name of insect and is told it is not an insect but a buffalo...the tribesman couldn't believe it was an animal because from his perspective he saw an insect...the moral is that it is hard to take people away from their own perspectives
    - Strategic planning requires you to look beyond perspective to determine how
  - A quick survey was taken and most of the audience has participated in a strategic planning process of some kind.
- ❖ Discuss the MSAC strategic planning process

- First, information will be gathered via forum meetings, key interviews, on-line surveys, etc.
  - This provides a basis for making good decisions as it is important to talk to many people about different topics
    - Theresa Colvin interjects that some of the forums include: Disabilities and the Arts, Arts in Education, emerging artists, individual arts, CAAM; Regional meetings will be hosted in Cumberland, Baltimore, the Ward Museum at the Eastern Shore; There will also be an on-line survey posted in August which can be forwarded via a link to others to garner more participation. Also, please promote the regional forums within your listservs.
- The Councilors and staff will then meet and discuss actions to include in the plan which is then vetted through all.
- The notes from all meetings will be available on the MSAC website.
- The theme is Imagine Maryland which is a great beginning in the visioning process.
- ❖ What is planning theory?
  - Three large issues must be clarified in an agency: core values, mission, vision
    - The exercise today will focus on vision.
      - It is the vision that we create that enlivens the planning; “bright lights” often come on with this activity
      - If you can get a group together on a single vision with strong agreement, then people are more likely to sacrifice to make things happen
        - ◆ Once this action occurs, then can market the plan to the community.
          - This is true for all organizations, including A&E
          - ◆ This task is difficult task for MSAC, because deal with two things: 1) vision for community and 2) own vision for itself
  - Today, we will do a community visioning process
    - What will the MSAC and A&E districts look like?
  - We will outline the vision exercise, break in two groups, then reconvene to go over issues discussed by group.
- ❖ Vision exercise
  - Think five years ahead, 2013...what does Maryland look like?
    - In the intervening five years, the arts districts have been able to move ahead within some reasonable form
    - If you really could and things basically went your way, then how would things look; think vividly and specifically, in color, taste things, etc.; provide examples of how your organization will look in 2013
      - Use the following questions as a guideline: What things have changed, how are things significantly different, how are the arts institutions – are there more, have they grown, are there new performing arts centers, what about small/mid size orgs – more or few, who do they serve,

increased vibrancy, what parts of community have grown and flourished – in what ways; think about individual artists; has your community become more friendly to individual artists; how are artists and orgs interacting; what kind of recognition are the artists receiving in your community, local, state, int'l; what about arts in schools; how do youth interact with the arts, do young people come to festivals, etc.; do you see the product of young people; what about AiE for adults; how are adults interacting and participating in the arts; what does the audience look like now at performances and galleries and museums; change in demographics; how has your community changed; what kinds of things would the average citizen say about the arts; are they donating to the arts; how is the government in your locale; what is their attitude toward the arts in your community; do they attend; what does the ledger look like for the arts – more or less money; government sources, private foundations, and corporate giving – what does that look like now; what about individual giving – more or few; what kind of media coverage do you receive; tv, internet, radio; only local coverage; what about state or int'l media; list top five things proud of in the arts in your community; what do most people come and visit in your community within the arts; in general, how does that look; breathe a sigh of relief for something that is gone; phrase or words that describes feelings toward what has occurred in your community; identify things in future that you hope will really happen

- The group was then divided in two with the following instructions: Take about ten minutes and go around group and for each person in order say one thing they saw specifically in the future; go around about 2-3 times resulting in a catalog of responses; discuss the clusters of similarities; and create a news program that lists the things you saw with a lead reporter and people you interviewed; in essence you are “Walking around Maryland.”

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❖ Group 2 → June 25, 2013 – 60 Minutes

- Singing “Something happening here...”
  - Mitch in Yadayada, MD
  - Anne a local tourist
    - Eat, drink, and buy art from Yadayada, DE
  - Chris is Mayor
    - Right vs. wrong side of the tracks
    - Arts council setting up for big performance in the square...sculptors and painters and stained-glassmen are working in the square...completely happy about the arts entertainment district
    - Kara – resident of Yadayada – eat out and have fun – children have a lot to do in community

- Community art project by Brooke – expect 20k visitors to festival – Yadayada is #1 district in state of Maryland
  - Blair is developer – completely renovated vacant factory in downtown, built performing arts center, galleries for art – in another 5-years there will be even more renovation
  - Pete – managing partner for law firm, steel, fleasom, and howl – vision for the arts, local firm so am corporate partner with Yadayada, Maryland
  - Heather – local sculptor – moved 5 years ago, acclaimed artist, moved from nyc, edgy artist in town, an now teach and be a residence artist
- ❖ Group 1 → June 25, 2013 – 60 minutes
- Stephanie opening, reporter is Stewart
  - Steph – pres of us has issued a national award for most amazing arts district state and that is MD
    - Five most wonderful districts in the State
    - Tourism, renovations, economic viability, return on investment
  - Stewart – standing with Andy Vick – guiding force for Cumberland arts – investment in the arts ahs really paid off – county council meeting and evaluated the investment in the arts is one of the best as a county – multiplied county allocation 10-fold – will finally invest in the arts
  - Felicia – tell us a little bit about Highlandtown about it being a leading brand name in the arts – with assistance of local, state and fed funding, the districts are now fully affecting all members of the community – lots of interaction with all including children, seniors – facilitating
  - Dave in b-more – impact of arts on tourism industry – Penn station in b-more – Amtrak has stated that 50% increase in visitors with 50% of them coming simply for the arts – outdoor amphitheater, lots more green space, free weekly concert series on Friday nights – attribute all of this to state’s new tourism campaign
  - Sidney – Wheaton – how has Wheaton stepped up to the plate – 5 years ago it was a ghost town, little patronizing – now more fundraising and with arts can do more during the say, stimulated the economy – businesses are thriving – what about news residents – lots of revitalization, with new, young professionals and the older, established families
  - Mel in silver spring – arts and entertainment guy – how have new arts facilities made an impact – AFI and discovery presented first festival along with crafty bastards festival – these events gave realization that silver spring was big arts place and new developers came in and built a new arts space with the building of new living space – money came from county and state funding, with the state realizing the economic development side – but also those who are doing construction they can get incentives to include arts space without costing more – combination of incentives leads to win-win situation – civic center was completed with a large plaza in 2010 as planned on budget with gallery space creating opportunities for community groups to come in with help from county government – confirm or deny waterfront property in silver spring?

- Thanks to the U.S. for recognizing
  - Most amazing arts districts in the world – good night, and good luck
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Morrie:

- ❖ How did it feel to be in the vision space?
  - Thought outside the box and felt excellent
  - Comments: a lot of us already in the vision space and thinking 5-years down the road, but are always thinking about the future if want to see the district success continue
  - Found some universality with full discussion
- ❖ Can you give me some overlapping themes? Points of consensus?
  - 1-funding
  - 2-arts have transformative affect on communities; can see the communities changing in reports
  - 3-aesthetic approach to space
  - 4-partnerships
  - 5-education, education funders and the next generation of consumers
  - 6-capital, building
  - 7-artists working together in single space with cumulative effect
    - Parts greater than the whole
  - 8-economic impact- tourism/buildings
    - increase in residents
    - preservation of existing businesses
    - brighter more livable area
  - 9-need free space; get space created will cost, and need to find ways to make that happen
  - 10-increase in incentives re: construction
  - 11-stability in the institution
  - This vibrancy will help push forward issues and growth in community
    - Jump on the bandwagon by giving resources to the community

Theresa Colvin

- ❖ Thank you to all who participated and went through the process. The strategic planning process is lengthy and will take many months to complete. There are multiple opportunities to participate, such as regional forums and on-line surveys. MSAC will provide notes and follow-ups regarding NASAA and grants, and look forward to hosting again next year.

Elizabeth Carven

- ❖ Thanked everyone for coming and ended the meeting.