

Eastern Shore (upper) Regional Meeting – July 23, 2008

Date: July 23, 2008
Location: Academy Art Museum
106 South Street, Easton
Forum: Regional Meeting
Facilitator: Morrie Warshawski, Theresa Colvin, Chris Stewart, Janel Cohen, Angie Lohr, Pamela Dunne
Scribe: Elizabeth A. Bentley-Smith
Councilor: David Harp

Major Themes

People value Maryland for its: devotion to history and heritage, geographic diversity, welcoming attitude, art opportunities.

Major concerns/needs include:

- more arts in education
- more regional and local coordination/cooperation
- reaching rural communities
- transportation
- lack of corporate support
- funding
- a performing arts center
- rehearsal spaces

Five years from now the community wants to see:

- more physical spaces for the arts (perhaps a major arts center)
- better transportation
- more communication between the counties and between arts organizations
- a centralized calendar and a listserv
- more arts in the schools
- greater ethnic and cultural diversity

People want from MSAC:

- more meetings like these
- increase representation of their region on the Council and panels
- multiyear support grants

Sample Quotes

“...here there are arts everywhere and it is not hard to get to; everyone works together, the whole town works together as an arts community; people are excited about events.”

“I love the State of Maryland because our history and heritage is great, but I’m concerned that it is disappearing....”

“We came here because it is so unique and beautiful, and people are passionate in the area to keep everything and ensure that it doesn’t vanish.”

“I would like to see arts available for children and seniors who don’t have a lot funding to do these activities...like lessons, etc...[and to solve] transportation issues for getting people out of the rural areas.”

“Concerned because there is a movement to attract tourists to Eaton as an arts community, yet three commercial art galleries have closed, so the town needs a critical mass to be taken as a good arts community...making sure that Eaton stays a healthy environment within the arts....”

“The average student in Maryland gets 45 minutes a week of arts...and even then that is not often used to its fullness....”

“[Let me put on my] tourism/collaboration hat: it is important to have a framework to allow for collaboration between orgs and other communities....”

“A problem you run in no mater what, is limited resources when we are competing for the same audience...need to work together and coordinate calendar and resources so can work together and get good audiences at everything.”

RAW TRANSCRIPT

Introduction by David Harp, MSAC Councilor

- Welcome to Delegate Dick Sossi, Andrea Vernot, Gerry Early (Talbot County Arts), Maria Dowdall (CCAC)
- Thanks to everyone for attending...please be sure to sign-in, take some handouts from back table
- Introduce Morrie Warshawski, consultant for the MSAC planning process

Morrie Warshawski

- Reading autobiography by Franz Kline

- If I paint what you know, I bore you, if I paint what I know, I bore me, so I paint what I don't know
- MSAC in the same place...we want to hear from you about what is important to you for us to take back and incorporate in our strategic plan
- Introduction of MSAC staff
- Discussion of meetings thus far: two regional meetings, 4-5 forums, internet survey...all to gather information for the strategic plan
- Directions: There is a set of questions that are being asked at every meeting, which will be discussed.

❖ **1ST QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST ABOUT MARYLAND?**

- Started out in San Francisco which is very arts oriented, but here there are arts everywhere and it is not hard to get to; everyone works together, the whole town works together as an arts community; people are excited about events
- I like living in Maryland because of the certain quality of life that is beyond compare; it is about the people; visitors are always complementing the people here who are kind and always wanting people to have a good time; I just think it is the best
- I like the diversity of landscape of ocean, rivers, mountains, flatlands; general liberalness in the state, not Talbot county though; ease to get to DC, a lot of variety
- I love the State of Maryland because of history and heritage is great, but concerned that it is disappearing in that the different communities are being burdened with Starbucks...
- In Philadelphia the arts community is closed, but in Maryland the community is so welcoming and want you to be involved, very unique in area
- All comes down to idea of diversity, unique qualities in the area because there is still heritage, the opportunity to act as stewards of the heritage and maintaining it in the area
- We came here because it is so unique and beautiful, and people are passionate in the area to keep everything and ensure that it doesn't vanish, there are heritage commissions to maintain
- Maryland leads from the top as a state as a whole, Maryland is in the top 5 per capita for funding for the arts, that example from the state level helps ensure continued funding from all orgs
- Nice to enjoy the diversity of the area

❖ **2ND QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE MAJOR ARTS ISSUES FACING YOU, INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS, ARTS ORGS, THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, ETC.? ARE THERE PLANS TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES?**

- Would like to see arts available for children and seniors who don't have a lot funding to do these activities...like lessons, etc...transportation issues for getting people out of the rural areas...get people from shelters here, but only half could come because of transportation

- Echo funding in need from large corporations for the smaller counties, they stop at the Bay, not available for any others but Prince George's, Montgomery, and Baltimore Counties...at our theater, we're trying to ensure continued funding so am working to get name out there further than Maryland borders...need to get name out there so can get funding from the larger corps and get better bang for the buck
- Follow-up on reaching rural communities, would like to collaborate for an art van through recreation office, old book mobile to take arts to communities
- Concerned because there is a movement to attract tourists to Eaton as an arts community, yet three commercial art galleries have closed, so the town needs a critical mass to be taken as a good arts community...making sure that Eaton stays a healthy environment within the arts
- If money is tight and through reaching children, then perhaps there can be more coordination with other orgs across regions and counties that may help achieve the organizational need and multiply the dollars through this cohesive working, leading to more synergy
- Concerned about in-school arts projects via issues with NCLB...need to act as organized groups as advocated for children arts in schools
- The average student in Maryland gets 45 minutes a week of arts...and even then that is not often used to its fullness...issues with students since they can't vote for themselves they need a voice...similar issues with seniors...just not enough art access
- Talbot County schools and representatives of African-American community represented to determine gaps in education....strong feeling that arts was a major factor in educating the children
- People seem to be hungry for education about art because people seem to be embarrassed about not knowing art and they just want to increase their level of comfort and understanding...need to decrease their intimidation of art...especially important with seniors...maybe have art appreciation classes and would lead to more support of the arts and galleries in general...this could be low-cost, but very productive
- Academy Art Museum just put on a children's art show and was blown away by it
- Creative arts therapy viewpoint: arts education is a necessary component for children to express themselves which is very important...good therapeutic benefits; tourism/collaboration hat: it is important to have a framework to allow for collaboration between orgs and other communities
- TAD group is an Eastern Shore wide group that meets to discuss and tackle these issues as a region; important because eastern shore as a topographical region is very different from the others...eat, drink, buy art tour
- Went through public school system here at Maryland, and then moved away and am now back, have noticed the huge growth since the 70s when moved away, so am very encouraged by that
- A problem you run in no matter what, is limited resources when we are competing for the same audience...need to work together and coordinate

calendar and resources so can work together and get good audiences at everything

- Need for a performing arts center in the area, some type of development in eastern shore communities for the community and the performers
- Need for rehearsal space for theatre groups...arts marketplace is all about arts appreciation, so need to determine how to get the word out and if the people here don't know about it then we need to figure out how to get the word out...need to pay attention to funding for the arts at the school level to ensure what happened in California doesn't happen in Maryland...the variety is amazing here
- Planning for arts in schools...there is an arts integration plan through MSAC to ensure arts integration in county schools
- MSAC is great at promoting the benefits arts/culture has on economic impact in the state; the waterfowl festival had an impact of \$6 million in one week-end; the impact on the economy of arts activities...so need to continue to count that to ensure our voice is heard at the corporate and government level

❖ **3RD QUESTION: IMAGINE YOUR COMMUNITY 5 YEARS FROM NOW, WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE?** [Each table provided 5 vision statements]

- Table 1
 - In Talbot County the need for physical space for an arts center
 - A place to go that is dedicated only for art
 - A&E bus...some form of transportation to get people to events no matter age or need → name of bus: Van Go???
 - All schools will be infused with art
 - Schools will be user-friendly for non-school events...i.e. can also be used for rehearsal space, meeting space, etc.
 - Arts orgs communicate more freely and together; know what each other do across region
 - Communicating among counties on the shore; more cooperation along the shore
 - A nationally known film festival
- Table 2
 - Second for regional cooperation...block booking of artists for leading to savings and prevent scheduling conflicts
 - Need more venues for the performing arts; either a new space or think out the box for existing space use
 - A&E districts in every county
 - May address the problem that commercial art galleries are having; might make it easier for the success of galleries
 - Centralized calendar that needs to be on-line
 - Allows for shorter lead-time and updates more frequently
 - Need to determine the go-to person

- Can be invaluable for both area natives and tourists
- Table 3
 - Want to join with Dave Harp's downtown arts development
 - Regional cooperation
 - Eastern Shore listserv
 - Need both artists and presenters listserv similar to MSAC listserv
 - Can work across the state within the different regions
 - Need to search out and diversify audience members and involvement within the arts
 - Build-in workshop with performances or exhibits that warrant the accessibility
 - Always look to expand at limited or no cost
 - ◆ Added value
 - Want a pro-arts governor
- Table 4
 - Need diversity
 - Cultural and ethnic diversity through students/children
 - Bring in street quality arts, don't just focus on white, middle-class
 - Children leaving schools
 - Get involved with curriculum development
 - Issue with field trips
 - Problem with tendency to produce for the market
 - Don't need that many skipjack paintings
 - Have a centralized community calendar for the arts
 - Stop being so self-congratulatory

❖ **4TH QUESTION: HOW CAN MSAC HELP? HOW HAVE THEY HELPED YOU AND WHAT CAN THEY DO IN THE FUTURE?**

- Helped us by providing us general operating support; need more representation on the councilors
- 3-year granting process when already proven orgs' worth
- Have these types of meetings more regularly
- Never seen any other arts council that is as encouraging, helpful, service-oriented, etc. than MSAC; enthusiasm and cooperation is outstanding
- Has there been any thought to go after the large corps for funding for the MSAC to distribute more equitably
- Thank MSAC as a grant recipient; nothing but positive support and response from MSAC staff
- Echo thanks for help through phone usage; support the Cultural Data Project even though it is not the most fun thing to do
- MSAC act as advocate for Arts in Education
 - Pam's response: we work with AEMS in furthering develop relationship for arts in education; they too make house calls

- Can MSAC representatives come to the regional meetings
 - Theresa Colvin: yes, along with our Councilors, we can come attend
- Widen the path for how the information was disseminated about today's event

❖ **ANY OTHER COMMENTS?**

- Announcement of events at Academy Art Museum
 - Botanical portraits exhibit; large-scale abstract drawings with strapping tape; Plein-air Festival
 - Need to look to our strengths and strong volunteerism within Talbot County and continue discussion along these lines
 - Communication among all groups within the region is key to our communities further development; work collaboratively
 - Nurture our diversity of the arts orgs in the area and go outside the box and look for further collaboration
- ❖ Thank you for coming and providing comments.