

**City of Takoma Park
Arts and Humanities Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2023**

The Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Committee met via Zoom at 7 pm on Jan. 24, 2023.

Members Present: Ramon Sola, Jose Luis Diaz, John Warren, Taylor Johnson, Linette Lander, and Leslie Sapp

Members Absent: Dayrelis Rios

Staff Present: Arts and Humanities Coordinator Brendan Smith

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes from Nov. 15, 2022 Meeting

The minutes were unanimously approved.

Soul Opened Up Art Exhibition Opening Reception

Brendan Smith said there was a great turn out for the opening reception with some City Councilmembers attending. A Facebook ad with photos of the artwork and the four Black female artists received more than 650 likes and was shared 50 times. The exhibition will be on display until March 15 before the next exhibition is installed.

Promotion for Upcoming Takoma Park Arts Events

The *Poetry of Struggle and Solidarity* reading will be held on Jan. 26 at 7:30 pm with three local poets. A Ukrainian poet who lives in Kiev also will be read his poetry about the war in Ukraine in a video. Takoma Park Poet Laureate Taylor Johnson will serve as emcee.

The *Cirque du Cambodia* film screening will be held on Feb. 10 at 7:30 PM. Leslie Sapp will introduce the film, and film director Joel Gershon will hold a Q&A with the audience.

The *Healing Power of Poetry* reading will be held on Feb. 16 at 7:30 pm.

Performance Subcommittee Recommendations

More than 50 groups applied for the recent *Takoma Park Arts* call for performances, which illustrates the reputation of the City's arts programs. A subcommittee selected 11 performances to recommend to the full committee as well as some alternates. Future performances will include stand-up comedy, theater, dance performances, and a live score for a silent film.

Linette Lander asked if lighting could be lowered to improve the ambiance in the auditorium. Smith said there were some technical issues with the lighting but they should be resolved.

Sapp made a motion to approve the list of selected performances, with Lander seconding the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Hiring of Arts Intern

The posting for the vacant arts intern should be posted soon. City Manager Jamal Fox had issued a hiring freeze which was lifted by the City Council. It may take up to two months to hire a new intern, and the hiring process is organized by the Human Resources Department. The intern duties include promotions of arts events, graphic design projects, and other assigned duties.

Future Public Art Projects

Smith has secured more than \$12,000 in grant funding from the Maryland State Arts Council during FY 23, in addition to grants during the two prior fiscal years. Jose Luis Diaz suggested reviewing the last annual report for public art ideas, as well as resource mapping to gauge what projects have been done in nearby communities. Smith suggested more interactive installations that engage the community. John Warren suggested forming a new subcommittee to recommend public art projects. Johnson, Sapp, and Diaz volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

Annual Report and Budget Recommendations

Smith is working on the Committee's FY 23 annual report. He recommended a presentation of the annual report and budget recommendations at a future City Council meeting. The prior annual public art budget has totaled \$20,000 or \$25,000.

A motion was made by Lander and seconded by Warren to recommend that the City Council approve a \$25,000 public art budget for FY 24. The motion was unanimously approved. Diaz recommended that a summary of previous public art projects be included. Budget discussions will begin in April and a time will be scheduled for the presentation at a future Council meeting.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 PM.