

City of Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Committee
Meeting Minutes
Sept. 6, 2022

The Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Committee met on September 6, 2022, via Zoom.

Members Present: Ramon Sola, John Warren, Linette Lander, Leslie Sapp, Dale Ingram, and Dayrelis Rios

Members Absent: Jose Luis Diaz and Taylor Johnson

Staff Present: Arts and Humanities Coordinator Brendan Smith

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 pm.

Takoma Park Library Renovation

Library Director Jessica Jones provided an update about the library renovation, including the removal of a mosaic that will be reinstalled later on the new library building. Library staff will be applying for a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council to cover some of the costs.

Some trees will need to be cut down during the library construction, including willow oak and Norwegian spruce. Library staff plan to hire a company to make furniture using some of the lumber.

Welcome New Members

Three new members were welcomed to the committee, including Linette Lander, Taylor Johnson, and Jose Luis Diaz

Approval of Minutes from May 24, 2022 Meeting

The minutes from the May 24 meeting were unanimously approved.

Poet Laureate Update

The committee unanimously approved Taylor Johnson to serve as the new Takoma Park Poet Laureate. He has served as the poet-in-residence at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

The Poet Laureate serves as the emcee at poetry readings, organizes independent poetry projects, and reads poetry at City Council meetings and other events. Johnson has expressed interest in reaching out to the community and younger audiences.

Brendan Smith will write a resolution to submit to the City Council to approve Johnson's appointment, and the October city newsletter will feature an interview with him.

Takoma Park Arts Poetry Readings

More than 100 applications were received from poets across the D.C. area, and 8 poetry readings featuring 4 poets each have been scheduled over the next year. Some readings feature general themes while others have more specific themes, including Poetry without Borders, Healing Power of Poetry, and Poetry of Struggle and Solidarity.

A \$50 honorarium gift card will be provided to poets and artists in future exhibitions to recognize their contributions.

The library demolition will impact parking for the poetry readings so Smith is checking with Piney Branch Elementary School about using their parking lot during the readings.

Performance and Film Screening Calls

A call for film screenings will be released this week. Filmmakers will receive a \$100 honorarium for a full-length film or \$50 for a short included in a shorts night. A subcommittee will review the submissions and present their recommendations to the full committee

John Warren, Linette Lander, Leslie Sapp, and Dale Ingram expressed interest in serving on the film screening subcommittee if needed or a future performance submissions subcommittee.

Housing and Community Development Director David Eubanks attended the meeting and introduced himself.

Cancellation of 2022 Holiday Art Sale and Potential Art Exhibition Delays

Smith said the Holiday Art sale must be canceled this year due to disruptions caused by the library demolition and closure of the main parking lot. Smith contacted former vendors to let them know about the cancellation.

Renovations in the atrium also may delay some scheduled art exhibitions next year. The suspended installation also will need to be put in storage until the construction is completed.

Free Little Art Gallery Update

The Operation ARTS Foundation has submitted some rough sketches of the Free Little Art Gallery, which will be installed outside the apartment buildings at 7667 Maple Avenue. An opening party will be held to celebrate the installation.

Little Library Volunteers Needed

Smith said committee members are needed to help stock five little libraries that were painted and installed in underserved areas in a former project organized by the Arts and Humanities Division.

Children's books and ESL books are the most popular, but adult books are needed as well. The little libraries also need to be inspected for any damage.

Warren offered to help stock the little library at the ALDI shopping center. Ingram said he could help with the little library on Anne Street. More volunteers are needed for both little libraries and for another little library near the intersection of Flower Avenue and Piney Branch Avenue.

Pop-Up Events Electric Bike

The pop-up events bike is scheduled for delivery this week. It will be used in future arts, planning, and library events.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 pm.