

VISUAL, PERFORMING ARTS & FILM COMMITTEE FOCUS GROUP

Call to Order

The special meeting of the **Visual, Performing Arts & Film Committee Focus Group** was called to order on Thursday, **October 15, 2009** at 11:04 AM. Members present: Ellen Newbold, Chair; Rolf Blizzard, RIC Chair; Saint Basnight; Betsy Brown; Joe Bryan; and Glenn Eure. Community members present: Ann Bell, Roanoke Island Women's Club Art Coordinator; Patty Callum, Manteo Post Office; Lyn Castellani, Chowan Arts Council President; Elizabeth Davenport, parent and RIFP attendee; Lib Fearing, arts community participant; Nancy Harvey, product development designer; Ray Matthews, freelance photographer; Amy Montgomery, Dare Education Foundation and Outer Banks Marathon; Melanie Smith, Seaside Art Gallery; Gordon Spence, Kill Devil Hills resident; Stephanie Spence, Aycock Brown Welcome Center; Dorothy Toolan, Dare County Public Relations Coordinator; Jonathan Wark, Dare County Library Director; and Barry White, Nags Head resident. Staff members present: Kim Sawyer, Acting Executive Director; Andrea Hanganu, Administrative Assistant; David Miller, Light and Sound Technician; Johnny Walker, Program Manager; and Tanya Young, Communications Manager. Absent: Bill Kealy and Robert Long.

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Ellen Newbold welcomed all in attendance and introduced committee members, RIC members, and RIFP staff. Community members then introduced themselves.

Why Are We Here?

Intro New Way of Funding RIFP Performance Series

Chair Newbold provided background on why the group was present, reporting on RIFP performances and changes which began summer 2009. She noted that the General Assembly in its last session transferred funding for programming to the RIC. Chair Newbold read out loud from the legislation addressing how the funding may be used and who may participate.

Questions/Answers

RIFP Performances Community Members Would Like to See

Chair Newbold requested input regarding types of performances that locals and tourists would support. Discussion and responses included the following:

- Dance; blues/jazz; diversity such as with acrobats and African groups; movies (Callum).
- Live theater; programs like The Lost Colony's *Joseph and the Dream Coat*; drama shows (White).
- Unite arts and schools focusing on younger school children; programs with diversity; workshops earlier in the day in conjunction with performances (Castellani).
- Combine old ideas with new ones; incorporate idea of TV dance shows; include tap, jazz, historical, or ethnic; get younger people involved; provide new twist like the *Zombie Ball* (Harvey).
- More plays; more Shakespeare with a contemporary bent; theater under the stars; include community theater and high schools (S. Spence).
- Make 4th Sunday at 4 programs more visible (Callum).
- How programs are advertised.
- Present daily restaurant special e-blasts at other times; utilize new *Outer Banks This Week* (Harvey).
- Include new creative ways to advertise (short previews) other than brochures and TV ads (Davenport).
- Make presence known to different boards and entities (Castellani).
- Have student groups perform pre-shows in the lobby (Montgomery).
- Make announcements through community centers (Fearing).
- Make announcements through the Manteo Post Office community calendar (Callum).

Saint Basnight requested to know what performances community members would like staff to bring to RIFP. Discussion and responses included the following:

- Local bands (Castellani).
- *Seussical* which was produced at NC State University (Davenport).
- Get the word out; work so rental companies know of RIFP events; ask performers to help with promotion; utilize social networks; include shows with magic, diversity, and new concepts to spark kids' imaginations (Harvey).
- Past successful programs: NCSA children's shows like *Charlie Brown* (Newbold); dance, percussion, afternoon puppet Mozart shows, instrument petting zoo, short afternoon opera; drama; numbers increase when programs are youth oriented (Walker).
- December 2009 programming (Walker).

- Involve all universities; do workshops; involve schools/community more to draw people (Wark).
- Have package deal to include workshops, meet and greet the cast/crew, local restaurants/business owner involvement, back stage/behind the scenes/wardrobe tours, etc. (Harvey).
- Committee requests to know how to get people off the beach in the summer (Bryan). Need to get more people to RIFP at night (Basnight).

*Balancing
Performances
Inside & Outside*

Chair Newbold requested ideas on how to balance performances in the outside Pavilion and inside in the Film Theatre. RIFP Acting Executive Director Kim Sawyer updated the group on prior steps taken in establishing programming with the funding along with what the committee is considering.

Discussion and responses included the following:

- Universities have to perform on weekends or summers (Bryan).
- Consider event scheduling along with patterns followed during visitor stays; determine best days of the week/times for certain events and age markets (Harvey).
- How far up the beach audiences are drawn from and issue of competition (Matthews, Young, Walker).
- Establish certain nights for certain events regardless of the type of entertainment, such as Wednesday as *Family Night* (Toolan). Name like *First Friday*, *Tanger Tuesday*, or *Wow Wednesday* as a marketing tool; address issue of knowing what events are being held (Harvey).
- Inform rental companies, restaurants, and store clerks of RIFP events (Toolan).
- Assign RIFP ambassadors to spread the word in different towns (Harvey).
- Incorporate YouTube video links in e-blasts that many performers have (Miller).
- Utilize advertising placemats in restaurants (Walker).
- Brand certain nights (family night) at RIFP where the programming can be anything; families make their own traditions in the Outer Banks (Wark).
- Consider programming earlier in the day, including workshops; plan for the smaller venue this year to get a better snapshot of what is happening before moving on to the larger venue (Castellani).

*Potential of
Festival-type
Events*

Chair Newbold requested feedback regarding potential festival-type events encompassing several days with different daily events. Discussion included the following responses:

- This would work because people ask the Tourist Bureau where the festival is (S. Spence).
- Baltimore Harbor has successful weekend festivals. Sunday 4-8 PM would work at RIFP during the summer (White).
- Coordinate festivals with current school study topics (education/history); include a theme; invite restaurants for cook-offs (Harvey).

* RIC Chair Rolf Blizzard was excused from the meeting. *

- Gear festivals toward family themes (S. Spence).
- Wednesday would be viable RIFP family day for tourists; include morning programs and sunset picnics; spend the day on a theme; include placemats for coloring in restaurants, or use inexpensive wearable paper items to color such as visors or stickers (Davenport, Harvey).
- Pirates Cove used to have weekly Sunset Festivals with staff and kids in pirate garb, bands, adult drinks, and craftsmen/artisans (Callum).
- Chair Newbold noted some money will be used for advertising.
- Have changeable event signs like in Currituck (Castellani).
- Civil War event needs to be expanded and more energetic (Smith); Kim Sawyer provided updates regarding plans to improve the Civil War event.
- Have festivals built upon area history; include pirates (Smith).
- Incorporate humor in a thoughtful manner in Civil War and other events; use interactive theater (Harvey).
- Push night events when selling daytime tickets; parking is a problem for the large events, especially for visitors who are impaired (S. Spence).

*Performances
Community
Members Would*

Kim Sawyer asked what performances community members would not come see at RIFP. Discussion and responses included the following:

- Address parking issue; inform visitors to bring seating or provide chair rental for outdoor events; provide

Not Come See

food at festivals/large events; consider timing (early afternoon better than evening); begin night events earlier and include children's activities such as face painting before events (Castellani).

- What happened to the RIFP concession stand.
- Bring well-known performances like *Seussical* or *The Wiz* (Davenport).
- Have universities do Broadway productions for holidays, such as *Wicked* around Halloween (Harvey).
- Ensure program information gets out to the community (Callum).
- Importance of bringing in the local population; tourists tend to come to large evening shows (Walker).
- Difficult for community members to provide answers to inconsistent comments coming from committee members and staff regarding what is important; include Appalachian mountain music, a cappella singing, blues, and opera; move classical performances indoors (unknown).

Summary of Questions and Answers

Chair Newbold reviewed the previous questions asked of community members during the meeting, noting that answers had been received for all.

Thanks and Assurance Input Will Be Used to Determine Programming

Chair Newbold thanked the group for attending the meeting and noted that comments are recorded along with notes written. She stated that the committee will work from the feedback provided.

Final discussion comments included the following:

- Upon request by Barry White, Chair Newbold agreed to verify if UNC-TV would tape shows at RIFP or if RIFP could work in cooperation with them on special programming.
- Everything is back porch music and public relations (Castellani).
- Include online or TV voting to generate local publicity (S. Spence).
- Programs are wonderful but additional publicity is suggested (Fearing).

Kim Sawyer thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Adjourn

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:21 PM.

Minutes submitted by: Andrea Hanganu, Administrative Assistant

Upon a vote by the Visual, Performing Arts and Film Committee, approved by:

Angel Khoury, Secretary, Roanoke Island Commission