

Creative Conversation Notes

June 15, 2006

1:15-2:30 p.m.

Sloat Room, The Atrium, Eugene

Meeting with cultural planning consultants from Wolf, Keens & Co.: Mark Goldring and Claudia Bach

Ben Brinkley outlined history of Creative Conversations, beginning in October 2005. Mary Unruh mentioned events calendar is going on line soon: heartoflanecounty.org. An art map will also be part of the site.

Overview by consultants

Define elements of community cultural planning:

- Community: City of Eugene; art and artists central, also perspectives of e.g. families, downtown development advocates, etc.
- Culture: fine arts + humanities + ethnic/religious + folk traditions + built environment
- Planning: people cast their dreams on the table; develop a vision everyone can find themselves in. More of a road map than a blueprint. You know where you are and where you want to go; there are a variety of ways to go there.

2 interconnected streams of planning: community-based < > research components

They are aware of the duality of city government vs. city/community.

Implementation of the plan will be by a range of players, not just the city.

The consultants will post situation papers on a city-based web site. A quick way to get there is via a link on the Lane Arts Council web site:

<http://www.lanearts.org/advocacy/conversations/>

Or go to

http://www.eugeneor.gov/portal/server.pt?space=CommunityPage&cached=true&parentname=CommunityPage&parentid=9&in_hi_userid=2&control=SetCommunity&CommunityID=680&PageID=1677

Tina Rinaldi is chair of the Mayor's Committee for the Cultural Planning process. You can reach Tina at trinaldi@uoregon.edu

Questions, comments, responses

- At the end of the year, what will be accomplished? Why bother?

Planning takes a while to implement. Examples from other projects: new city hire, new revenue stream for the arts, removing impediments/lessening government regulations.

Define a vision for development of arts and cultural assets that resonates for as many people as possible. Nothing can come forward in the plan that comes from outside. Different from an assessment. See Wolf, Keens & Co. web site for examples: www.wolfkeens.com

- Recommendations for involving audiences in this process, e.g. grassroots nonprofit that is a conduit for information to 500 families. Mayor's Committee needs to do outreach. If a person isn't patched in, how does he/she know about this? Someone from committee could go to senior centers, day care centers.

Consultant develops list of venues and support materials to send people out from the committee. In Findlay, Ohio, Wolf Keens did focus groups with factory workers. This is up to the Mayor's Committee; he will make the suggestion and add it to the hopper. Important to be very specific.

- Organization could receive a directive from the committee to be a conduit to organization's art patrons.

Give people the tools, e.g. 6 questions to ask people.

- A person who directs a successful grassroots organization has an ear to the ground.

We need to figure out the best way to deputize folks. Maybe develop a brief survey. They will think about it.

- Consultants are counting on Lane Arts Council. Communication is difficult. Do members of the Mayor's Committee understand that it's their responsibility to conduct outreach?

Yes, but it has not been defined. We need to think very carefully about the ways we engage the Mayor's Committee.

- How address individual artists' needs? How address needs of artists and community's needs?

Individual artists are part of the process. They participate (e.g. live/work spaces, professional development opportunities may be outcomes). Artists are one of the constituencies brought to the table.

- There needs to be a filtering mechanism with someone taking responsibility for how information is delivered. The University of Oregon is another conduit: arts management students, Cultural Policy Institute. Lane Community College is another factor.
- How can people be assured they'll be heard—and that organizations that appear to be very important to the community, but aren't the community, will not ramrod things.

- How do we know that it won't be just a few people with money implementing things?

Some things take money, others take people. The plan may unify what it is that people push on. The plan doesn't mean that x or y will happen. It says what it will take to make some things happen, but it's not a legally binding contract.

- Who is responsible?

Example of Birmingham, Alabama, where an established, city-oriented, whites-only arts council couldn't do it. Plan recommended a seven-county cultural organization, and decision-makers backed this.

- The city is funding this, but I'm concerned about the region/neighboring communities. Will relationships with other communities come in?

Yes, re audiences. No, re study as budgeted, and policy implementation.

- What do you think of Richard Florida?

Good research, quite a showman.

- Culture comes down to individuals who make breakthroughs in science, philosophy, art. That person is disenfranchised. Suggests take a look at people who are disenfranchised; how use these individuals instead of continuing to disenfranchise them. E.g. Pollock, living outside linear time. People who don't want to participate in hierarchy. How can people who want to exist outside the box—how can their gifts be received.

- Suspect you will find that Eugene is quite dramatic—an amazing group of people who are beyond creative.

Fred Crafts introduced himself. He is a local member of the consultant team. He can be reached at fredcrafts@yahoo.com or 343-4251.