

SCFD BOARD OF DIRECTORS STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

RETREAT MINUTES / MARCH 19, 2008

BACKGROUND

The Board of Directors of the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) met on March 19th for a strategic visioning and positioning planning retreat. The retreat was designed to provide a forum for big long-range and visionary thinking while giving the board an opportunity to address some immediate priorities. The desired outcomes included:

- Gain a better understanding of the strategic forces impacting SCFD
- Reach consensus on next steps for SCFD positioning and K-12 education
- Create a strategic road map to guide our actions

The retreat was facilitated by Karla Raines of Corona Research. Prior to the retreat day, board members received a packet that contained charts on growth in number of organizations funded, history of sales tax collection, board statutory powers and duties and an excerpt from the January 2001 study *SCFD: Projected Growth, Organizations and Revenue 1989-2020* by Clark Strickland, Center for Arts and Public Policy, Graduate school of Public Affairs, University of Colorado at Denver. Each board member also received individually assigned readings related to the topic of the potential future challenges for cultural organizations and the SCFD. SCFD will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2008-09, thus the board wanted to focus on the potential challenges of the next 10-20 years and how to prepare for them.

RETREAT ATTENDEES

Board members - James Harrington (Chair), Holly Osgood (Vice Chair), Stevan Strain (Treasurer), Dan Hopkins (Secretary), Mark Addison, Joe Arcese, Marcia Johnson, Kathleen Stapleton, and Jake Zambrano.

Staff - Peg Long (Executive Director)

Guests - Kim Smith (Douglas County), Jane Potts (Denver County), Donna Smith (SCFD), and Sheila Meiger (SCFD)

RETREAT MINUTES

The day opened with a presentation by Floyd Cirruli of Ciruli Associates on the history and current context of the SCFD. After a lively question and answer period with Floyd the group engaged in an opening exercise.

OUR LEGACY (OPENING EXERCISE)

The facilitator asked the board members to divide into small groups and answer the following question, "Five years from today, what would our constituents say was the most important legacy of this board?" Small groups were asked to agree on one legacy and then share it with the large group. Their responses are listed below.

Most important legacy of this board

- Build institutional memory
 - Formal process to educate future boards, staffs
- Board is respected/climate of cooperation/board is truly engaged
- Negotiate process for Tiers 1, 2, and 3 prior to next reauthorization
- Proactive in helping encourage constituent organizations to prosper
- Instrumental in engaging public in SCFD
- Lay groundwork for how we communicate with people in 2013
- 2013 – board took steps necessary to continue into the future – engage power brokers, make changes to meet needs of new people, new cultures. Be in tune

STRATEGIC FORCES AND TRENDS DISCUSSION

Board members engaged in a lively discussion of four macro-level forces that will continue to shape the SCFD, arts/culture/science organizations and the communities they serve. The board discussed four forces - social, technological, economic, and political. They engaged in a 15 minute, high-level discussion of each force. They were asked to identify major forces/trends and consider any past blind spots (things we missed) and possible future surprises (either positive or negative).

SOCIAL FORCES TO CONSIDER

- Increasing ethnic diversity. Different wants and needs
- Transit-oriented hubs
- Aging population will have special needs
- We congregate in malls (commercial places)
- Emergence of special niches. People like to be with other people like them. Possible backlash to diversity
- Urbanization of suburban areas. Ex. = Belmar

- Working more, more secluded, don't need to leave my home
 - Get people interacting – attending live performances
- Mature (older) groups tend to seek out culture. Many of our communities are younger
- Emergence of a creative class. MFA's (Master Fine Arts) rather than MBA's (Master Business Administration). Develop both sides of brain
- Greatest contrast – how young children are raised – some have hyper-structure and others with no structure
- Values systems have been changing. Ex. = want things to be equal, have access. Media influences values especially for younger people
- Blind spot – don't forget science
- Family structure is changing. Non-traditional families are growing

ECONOMIC FORCES TO CONSIDER

- Federal budget crisis and tax structure. Current tax structure allows for charitable contributions and federal funding of arts; future budget may be devoted solely to mandates and debt service on deficit
- Growth of foundations - may replace NEA, are impacted by credit crunch (liquidity)
- If NEA goes away then CCA loses funding. There isn't a statewide art advocacy presence without it
- Local communities aren't supporting arts, focusing on education basics
- Credit crunch – banks may not function like they did. Capital projects will be more expensive
- Overall tax burden. Personal tax bills are increasing
 - Sales, property, utilities, others
- Economic benefit of culture. Holds property value
- Nomadic nature of smaller arts groups due to increasing costs, move to cheaper areas
- Theme = Privatization of government services
- Local governments must balance development, open space and other needs
- Snowball effect could be significant and quick – if funding declines
- Transportation costs and admission prices = “total” cost. People are choosing lower cost alternatives
- Some politicians may take a “no tax” platform to get elected

POLITICAL FORCES TO CONSIDER

- Arts does a good job advocating for itself
- Amendment 41 has impacted our ability to showcase ourselves
- 25% of legislators turn over every two years. Steep learning curve

- Some legislators aligned with county commissioners, others didn't. Will they follow a party line or listen to constituents? Which constituents?
- Trend – rise of independent voters. Tend to float back and forth. Influenced by media. Leading us to more progressive era. Are frugal and skeptical of state government. Tend to be newer to Colorado
- SCFD transcends partisan party politics
- Economy and communications determine politics. People want to know what they are getting
 - Point of value, results driven
- Viral communication. Ex. = Barack Obama, Democratic party contender, used viral communication to attract thousands to his speech at DU
- Tension between localization (counties in Tier 3 process) and concept of a district
- Tension among and between the tiers

TECHNOLOGICAL FORCES TO CONSIDER

- The web – all are involved with it. See performances. Virtual art and science
- Transition to cell phones from land lines and email
- I-Pods and ear buds put us in our own worlds. Isolation. MySpace. Big implications for institutions
- Younger generation gets all information online. Different than people over 55
- Decline of print media, local media (satellite – based)
- Artists and organizations producing art in new manners. Ex. = light installation, digital art
- Technology to recreate sound is excellent. Impacts artists unions
- “Do-it-yourself” arts using technology
- Blindspots
 - Not moving to on-line application sooner
 - Weren't aware that it would evolve so rapidly
- Future surprises
 - Can't imagine what it will be like
- Paradox – people are using new media, yet hold onto what we know
- Different groups – do it all on-line/ others still want to see things live

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTIONS WE COULD TAKE / THINGS TO CONSIDER

Throughout the day's discussions the board identified a variety of action steps that could be taken to address the four macro-level forces. Those ideas are listed below.

- People can participate in art, culture and science through technology (virtual). Impacts Tier 2 groups and how we count attendance

- Marketing and branding task force – use P.S.A.’s to broadcast our message
- How can we communicate to fragmented audiences using new media? Stay mindful of this. (please note, this is not a short-term, specific priority)
- How will artists and unions be impacted by virtual performance capabilities? County cultural issue as audience boundaries expand
- Marketing and branding task force – blast email updates from SCFD. Tap into membership lists for organizations
- How do we define art, culture and science?
- Use scenario planning to assess impact of major forces. Ex. = economic downturns and impact on sales tax
 - Could use to analyze Tier 2 and 3 changes and budgeting what if’s
- Marketing and branding task force – Help local arts organizations “sell” themselves to policy makers, reach out to them. SCFD needs to reach out too.
- Marketing and branding task force – Make SCFD a touch stone for incumbent politicians
- Invest in technology – websites, e-blasts, etc. 2008 – look at 2009 budget and how we need to invest
- Be proactive in addressing tensions between tiers (see strategic B.P.)
- Long-term board members to share institutional knowledge with new members

POSITIONING AND BRANDING SCFD

After a lunch-time a future-focused presentation by Erin Trapp, Director of the Denver Office of Cultural Affairs, the board switched gears for the afternoon. They began with a conversation about branding, positioning and marketing of SCFD. The facilitator asked the group to begin by clarifying the issue at hand, namely “increase community awareness of SCFD.”

- Need to increase awareness so we don’t hear - SCFD – what’s that?
- Communicate what SCFD is and does, how it benefits the community

The board agreed that we need to increase awareness of the district. They engaged in a brainstorming session to identify possible strategies to increase awareness.

IDEAS/OPTIONS

- Communicate via Chambers of Commerce, importance to their community and web links
- Speakers bureau (resurrect)
- Marketing person on staff
- Economic development council too
- Communicate to employers so they can include on their intranets. Selling point – positive HR impact

- Tagline – need to redo
- Bear (logo) is identifiable, don't have a tagline, or tagline doesn't really mean anything. May need design guidelines (ex = font size)
- SCFD – facilities doesn't really fit. Can we use acronym differently
- Could we allow organizations to customize bear (beyond six versions now) and still control it? May need a professional to advise us
- Communicate with newly elected legislators (State)
- Drive traffic to the website
- Provide standard language to organizations so they can include in communications with elected officials? (This is made possible with support from SCFD). Local to local connection, including state representatives
- Who do we need to increase awareness among?
 - Public – it is a value for you
 - Business community/chambers – can invite to events
 - Elected officials
- Use Channel 8 in local communities to communicate 20th Anniversary
- Need to leverage arts group to get this done since our budget is so small
 - Leverage county public information officers
- Anniversary giveaways – pins are an idea
- Determine how best to reach various demographic groups of voters

The board agreed on the following next steps to address this issue.

NEXT STEPS

- Peg, Dan and Joe, with staff, intra-tier group to work on public awareness and best way to utilize the 20th anniversary opportunity
- Progress reports on a regular basis. Keep board engaged
- Implement plan in conjunction with 20th Anniversary

EXPAND ARTS IN K-12 EDUCATION

The board then engaged in a similar conversation about the topic of “expanding arts in K-12 education.” It was noted that there are lots of players involved in this issue and that SCFD should reach out to school districts and other stakeholders (such as private foundations) to determine what is needed and how it can play a role in this area.

A variety of ideas were shared during the discussion.

IDEAS/OPTIONS

- Request that Tier 2 and 3's go out into the community and make an impact
- SCFD vets organizations and presents these organizations to principals, districts. Tier 2 collaborative is working together. Created brochures and sent to principals
- Reach out to school boards and administrators
- Tier 1, 2 and 3 collaboration. SCFD sets aside funds for outreach to schools. Earmark for special purpose. We feel so strongly that we will support it. Link to brochure under development
- Host a panel discussion with district administrators to find out what they need. Bring peers together
- Work with other initiatives. Ex. = Janus is funding education. CCA and CDE are surveying districts about arts education. Will likely analyze this summer
- Embark on a specific, board - led initiative such as the brochure
 - Goal - More effective arts education. Develop the whole child. All have common interest, synchronize efforts
- Go to Denver Area Superintendents Council (DASC) meeting. Would need someone to advocate on our behalf. We have moral authority
- Team up with foundations, like Bonfils Stanton, The Denver Foundation, CCA. Go to them and see if we could work together and go to districts

The board agreed on the following next steps to address this issue.

NEXT STEPS

- Peg to talk to Boetcher, Daniels, Bonfils, CCA, others first. Build coalition. Leverage resources. Develop strategy for outreach to school districts
- Report back
- If funders determine that need is there amongst school districts then we need to plan for ongoing staffing of this initiative. Could be collaboratively funded
- Board is unanimous that we need to do more with arts education
- Need to share our thinking with Tiers 1, 2 and 3. Tier 1 have education directors that we should involve in this initiative

STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT

As the retreat was wrapping up, the board had a chance to speak about a strategic blueprint for SCFD. In essence, a strategic blueprint would serve as a road map for the future and position the district for continued success. It was suggested that SCFD needs to proactively address issues regarding reauthorization in 2018. That would include a thoughtful consideration of the impact of technology and new media on the tiers, funding and more. It was also suggested that the district needs to look at entire funding scheme for SCFD. The board was reminded that Tier 2's have new funding minimum in 2010

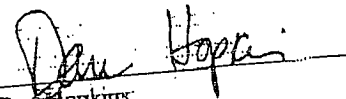
SCFD needs to start conversations now so we are ready for next funding cycle. It was suggested that the district consider the following actions as it begins to build its strategic blueprint.

- Survey SCFD organizations regarding demand for virtual performances (streaming) and how much they are offering.
- How do we define art, culture and science in the context of technology? When is technology a bridge to art vs. "just" a technology tool?
- Investigate options to pay for election costs. Build sinking (?) fund starting in 2010

The board spent the final few minutes of the retreat identifying the known events to consider when creating the blueprint. While the list is not exhaustive it does provide a sense of urgency to proactive, strategic work in 2008 and 2009.

KNOWN EVENTS 2008-2018

- 2008 – National Performing Arts Conference
- 2009 – 20th Anniversary of Distribution of Funds
- 2010 – New Tier 2 threshold kicks in for all
- 2011 – Term # 2 of Hickenlooper is over
- 2016 – Prepare and campaign for authorization
- 2018 – Sunset


Dan Hopkins
Secretary