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Danielle Brecker
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

March 14th, 2023

Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Attendees:

Thalia Karesia Batan, Chair
Kat Bloomfield
Kenneth Greenberg
Ryan Smith
Danielle Brecker
Akello Thomas

Absentees:

Anatole Ashraf
Gianna Cerbone
Stephen Cooper
William Garrett
Benjamin Guttman
Badrun Khan
Karla Perez

Public Members:

Eric Narburgh
Edjo Wheeler

Guests:

Andre, Cucala Dance Company
Naomi Middleton, AXS Lab
Lucy Sexton, NY4CA
Maddie Shepardson, AXS Lab
Penny Lee
Paul Parkhill
Jamie Kennelley, Queens Public Library

Community Board 2:

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager

Karesia Batan, Chair welcomed everyone to the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee meeting.

Karesia Batan started the meeting with welcoming Executive Director Lucy Sexton whose group does a lot of advocacy work with funding for the arts.

Lucy Sexton, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Culture & Arts introduced herself.
(letter to NY State Legislators is attached #1)

“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”

- Lucy Sexton runs New Yorkers for Culture & Arts (NY4CA) which is a citywide coalition which includes individual artists, small & large organizations across the five boroughs
- This organization does a lot of things but right now they are focused on the NYS budget for the arts.
- Last year the state budget included \$100 million dollars which included the NYS Council of the Arts.
- This year \$40 million dollars was included in the budget for the arts, nothing for capital funding. Basically 80% less than what was given last year.
- NY4CA has been working with state legislators in the assembly and the senate.
- These legislators asked for \$140 million for the arts and an additional \$50 million for capital funding.
- Lucy Sexton shared a letter which supports this asking amount of dollars.
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OEU7dUaBtPFP-al2a93Qscnw1_NxXPYpzJFb3vcwmw4/edit?usp=sharing
- Lucy Sexton is also working with an upstate arts organization.
- NYSCA surveyed 1300 arts organizations, 50% of them were still at revenue levels below 2019; 60% reported that they had not restaffed since 2019 levels.
- Arts Rally in Albany on TUES MAR 21st! <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-ihgUWHUMSZ2qdBiEEX8ThqX0i7y6qzb3MLqm6yeyDA/edit?usp=sharing>
- Lucy Sexton shared with the Arts & Cultural Committee the reasons for the lesser funding this year as compared to last year.

Karesia Batan introduced Naomi Middleton and Maddie Shepardson of AXS Lab. AXS Lab is dedicated to building tools and telling the stories of accessibility and inclusion through film, media and technology. (*presentation is attached #2*)

- AXS Lab is a non-profit, 501(c) 3
- Their mission is to serve people living with disabilities through media and technology
- In 2005, filmmaker Jason DaSilva was diagnosed with primary progressive multiple sclerosis. In 2008, motivated by his new circumstances and consequent lifestyle changes, he founded the non-profit organization AXS Lab.
- The website is www.axslab.org
- They have a national focus, a New York focus and broader worldwide focus.
- Their current programs are Media and Creation, AXS Map and AXS Film Fund.
- They have created award winning films.
- AXS Map is a free service that allows thousands of users a month to map and research the accessibility of establishments and public places.
- AXS Film Fund strives to support independent documentary filmmakers and nonfiction new media creators of color living with disabilities in their work to tell stories make films and create content.
- The portal opens for the 2023 AXS Film Fund on June 1st, 2023 and close July 31st, 2023. Notifications are in January 2024.
- AXS Lab is hosting six Mapathon Events around NYC. The Mapathons are to increase accessibility and accessibility knowledge throughout the city.

Visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/549367170997> to find out about events.

- A phone is the only thing needed to attend a mapathon event. Everyone breaks out into sections and areas are rated for accessibility.
- Anyone can hold a mapathon event.
- AXS Lab's funding comes mainly through foundations, grants and NYSCA.

Karesia Batan spoke next about the community arts space at the Eagle Electric building located at 23-10 Queens Plaza South. She introduced Penny Lee and Paul Parkhill. Edjo Wheeler of Culture Lab was also in the discussion as Culture Lab being a potential community liaison to help make the space accessible to the many non-profit groups in the district.

- Penny Lee spoke about the initial meeting with Edjo Wheeler of Culture Lab to see and learn about the space.
- Penny Lee had a follow-up discussion with Lisa Deller, Chair of the Land Use and Housing committee.
 - More discussions needed to take place with other community groups in the building and vicinity.
 - Space management – rules, booking of space, and a lead manager of it.
 - A discussion is needed to determine the usage of this public space.
 - Possibly a joint Arts & Cultural Affairs and Land Use and Housing Committee meeting.
- Paul Parkhill who created Space Works, affordable space for artists, spoke about this location.
 - He is presently working on the Eagle Electric Museum for this project.
 - Space Works, an organization created years ago (and has since closed), had affordable space in public and private buildings in LIC and Brooklyn for artists.
 - The Eagle Electric space will not charge a fee for artist space.
 - Criteria will be needed in order to manage the space at the Eagle Electric building.
 - Creating a booking system for the space is basically a software issue.
 - There was a discussion on who would staff or not staff the entry of artists to the space.
 - Depending on how the space will be used will determine the access issue.
 - Edjo Wheeler of Culture Lab spoke about the endless possibilities this space can have. It is still in early discussions.
 - Kat Bloomfield mentioned if the space would be a hybrid space for businesses to use as well.
 - This would fall under the guidelines of the space and its uses.
 - Kenny Greenberg mentioned to poll and survey the arts organizations and artists and what their needs are.
 - The Eagle Electric Building is currently vacant.
 - Penny Lee explained it is currently in ULURP to allow the loft space to be used and an enlargement to be built into it. There would be a total of 26 stories.

- The 4-story building would be for office space and the ground floor for retail and there is a large loft space.

Karesia Batan went around the zoom from attendees for announcements.

- Andre, Cucala Dance Company gave an update.
 - Next dance social is Friday, March 17th, 2023
 - Free movie date in April,
 - Attendance has been better at the studio.
 - Dance class in April for children during spring break.
 - Registration in May for a July bootcamp class for children.
- Jamie Kenelley, Queens Public Library – Woodside
 - March 18th, 2023 – Debt collection program at 3pm
 - April 14th, 2023 – Balloon program for children at 3pm
 - Teen craft every Friday
 - Children’s program celebrating St. Patrick’s Day at noon
 - Summer reading is starting
 - Any performers interested in performing at Woodside Library, please contact Jamie Kenelley at jamie.kennelley@queenslibrary.org
- Edjo Wheeler, Culture Lab mentioned three art exhibits that are happening right now. Kenny Greenberg is having a large Neon exhibit in one gallery. For more information visit: <https://www.culturelab.org/calendar>

Karesia Batan shared a link for a part-time hip hop archivist needed.

<https://www.aaartsalliance.org/opportunities/part-time-hip-hop-archivist>

Karesia Batan shared some updates:

- Karesia Batan attended the Queens Tourism Council meeting. Frank Ottomanelli was there who gave an update that they are currently working with the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts as well as the art students from LaGuardia High School to create a mural around the planters that outline their space at The Landing on the waterfront at Hunter’s Pt. South Park.
- Karesia Batan mentioned to Frank Ottomanelli to attend the Arts & Cultural Committee meeting for next month.
- Kareisa Batan attended a meeting for festival producers and learned about a change in artist’s visas. Visa cost are rising from \$460 to \$1500. This is a Homeland Security process and it is self-funded.
 - Kareisa shared a link in regards to the Visa issue and an organization providing pro bono legal assistance (*attachment #3*)
<https://www.tamizdat.org/tamizdatavail/>
- If groups or individual artists are interested in obtaining a DOE vendor number in order to get a contract to teach or perform in the schools, please reach out to Karesia Batan regarding a form. A school also has to be willing to sign onto this form with you. Once you have a DOE vendor number you can work with any school. Kat Bloomfield gave a short discussion on ways teaching artists can increase funding with several grants.

- Edjo wheeler mentioned maybe having a presentation about obtaining a DOE vendor number.
- Karesia Batan spoke with the committee about dividing the Arts & Culture Groups email list to fill in the blanks and add groups and subtract those that are no longer operating.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kim Waber