



Donovan Richards
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Morry Galonoy
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

March 8th, 2022

Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Attendees:

Thalia Karesia Batan, Chair
Anatol Ashraf
Kat Bloomfield
Kenneth Greenberg
Karla Perez

Absentees:

Gianna Cerbone
Stephen Cooper
William Garrett
Benjamin Guttman
Badrun Khan

Guests:

Geoge Heslin, Executive Director, New York Irish Center
Tricia McGuigan, Director, McManus Irish Dance
Alexa Gonzalez, Hive Public Space
Maggie Gavin, Woodside Arts Collective
Michele Rosen, Queens Council for the Arts
Joe LoBello, Queens Council for the Arts

Community Board 2:

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager

AGENDA

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

Karesia Batan introduced George Heslin, Executive Director of the New York Irish Center.

- George Heslin took over operations at the New York Irish Center in October 2020.
- During the previous Director's time, the New York Irish Center was able to buy the building and pay off its mortgage.
- The New York Irish Center is a 16 year old organization.
- It is a cultural service organization.
- Community, culture and care are the three pillars to the New York Irish Center.
- Community – 43 organizations use the facility.

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

- The organizations can use the facility at a low cost and for some no cost.
- Care – There is a full-time social director. The facility is open 6 days a week. Programs for seniors. Mondays – they have movies. Tuesday - they provide tax advice through AARP, Wednesdays – serve a free full lunch to anyone in the community, also have community games on Wednesday afternoons, Thursday-events, Friday – they have a fitness class, Saturday mornings – free computer, phone and Ipad learning classes.
- Cultural – 16 new cultural programs, concerts in Jazz, opera concerts, Irish comics, Book launch and evening events.
- For Thursday, March 17 there will be performers from 3pm to 9pm. 40 performers.
- 4 full-time staff, 25 volunteers, 18 board members and the New York Irish Center is a not-for-profit organization.
- www.NewYorkIrishCenter.org is their website and there is a newsletter on there to join. A very detailed calendar that list all these classes.
- During the pandemic the New York Irish Center never closed. Along with 4 other Irish centers they raised \$100,000 for those in need in the community. They have raised a total of \$540,000 to members of the community who needed it.
- They also helped and partnered with construction companies regarding PPE supplies for the hospitals.
- Toy Drive at Christmas time donating to shelters and Woodside On the Move.
- The biggest challenge they have had is safety. They do follow all city guidelines.
- Even though we are coming out of this and mandates are being lifted, we all have to be mindful of the senior community.

Karesia Batan introduced Tricia McGuigan of the McManus Irish Dance.

- Tricia McGuigan is the founder and director of McManus Irish Dance.
- This season is a big comeback time for them as most of their events have been cancelled or greatly modified for these last two years.
- They will be performing on Fifth Avenue for the St. Patrick's Day Parade and then go back to their home base of The New York Irish Center for this 40 Shades of Green Event.
- They will be performing on the Today show St. Patrick's Day morning.
- Tricia McGuigan started the dance school in Sunnyside in 2013.
- Originally the program was started for Children ages 5 and older.
- Soon it was realized that the younger children had an interest so Giggi Tots were created.
- McManus Irish Dance works with organizations, such as Sunnyside Shines, the New York Public Library, Woodside On The Move, Queensboro Dance Festival, Hunters Pt Parks Conservancy.
- They look forward to collaborating with other ethnic dance organizations in the future.
- @Irishdancenyc is their social media contact.
- Their website is www.McManusIrishdance.com

- McManus Irish Dance works primarily with the ages up to 18.
- Adults interested in Irish dance are referred to New York Studio Dance.

Update on Open Culture:

- Open Culture was released last year during re-openings in lieu of studios being closed and revenue not being made.
- Designate different street across the city, blocks would be closed down and artist could put on live performances.
- A chance to reconnect with the community and to bring in some revenue.
- This is expected to expire the end of the month.
- Template to write a letter to Council Member O Say in chat, if you would like to see open culture extended.

Queens Rising Initiative

- Queens Rising Initiative is a borough Wide initiative that is starting.
- It is basically a big marketing platform for all different disciplines of events that are happening in June.
- Uplift the smaller independent groups that are not a part of a larger institution.
- Their website is: <https://www.queensrising.nyc/>

Karesia Batan shared some links for grants/ funding / fellowship opportunities:

- https://creative-capital.org/about-the-creative-capital-award/?mc_cid=58158d520f&mc_eid=bd83d0c7ba
- https://www.dropbox.com/s/klijbvqwou205tb4/2023%20Jerome%20Hill%20Artist%20Fellowship-Grant%20Overview.pdf?dl=0&utm_source=Jerome+Foundation+Program+Interest&utm_campaign=ec57a5aca5-FVDP_Launch_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_85577d4a11-ec57a5aca5-520204925
- <https://www.creativesrebuildny.org/apply/>
- <https://act.newmode.net/action/new-yorkers-culture-and-arts/invest-culture-invest-equitable-recovery-ny-state>
- <https://www.theblackgeniusfoundation.org/>

Karesia Batan mentioned a brand new dance studio that opened up in Long Island City. They are called Movers Bodega. They mainly have street and hip hop classes and they also rent out space. It is owned by people from Queens. They presently don't have a website. Their Instagram is <https://www.instagram.com/moversbodega/?hl=en> Their e-mail is info@moversbodega.com

Karesia Batan opened up the meeting to those that attended.

- Alexa Gonzalez – Architect and Urban Designer who has a studio in LIC called Hive Public Space. They recently produced a piece called The Ribbon located in 1 Court Sq. and at Rafferty Sq. in connection with the Love Notes Project.
- Visit <https://www.hivepublicspace.com/ribbon> for more information
- After one year the project will be removed to another location.
- Maggie Gavin – One of the Co-Founders of Woodside Arts Collective. They are working on their 2022 season. Performance of Peter Rabbit and vendors will be there as well. Visit their website for further details.
- Michelle Rosen – Works at Queens Council for the Arts as Grant Programming Manager. And also works on audio producing.
- Recess Gallery in Brooklyn has an Open Call: <http://www.recessart.org/apply/>
- Link to QCA's panelist nomination form: <https://qca.submittable.com/submit/212752/2022-queens-arts-fund-panelist-nomination-form>
- Joe LoBello, Queens Council for the Arts - They are having group sessions, meeting with elected officials as they think of reimaging QCA.
- QCA helps art school students with their portfolios and the application process for college. Program will start mid March.
- Around \$4 million dollars was received for these students to help with funding for college
- Listening Tours for 4 or 5 sessions across Queens

Little Library Boxes

- The Little Library Box next to Culture Lab is so busy. The committee was thinking of putting another one near it.
- Three Little Library Boxes are ready to go. Looking for a location.
- Those free newspaper boxes are perfect to convert into a Little Library Box.

Chair Batan mentioned for the committee and the guests attending to let others know about the Arts & Cultural Committee monthly meetings.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,
Kim Waber