Newton Cultural Council

Meeting Minutes

February 25, 2021

Attendees:

Rebika Shaw Bendayan, Rakashi Chand, Patrick Costello, Jane Feigenson, Kathy Hassinger, Grey Held, Lakshmi Kadambi, Jen Kaplan, Amelia LeClair, Emily O’Neil, Chris Pitts, Robin Stein, Kathleen Wright, Paula Gannon, Danielle Morriarty, Guests Mayor Ruthanne Fuller.

The Meeting began at 8:50A

Adjudication Discussion:

* Chris Pitts opened the meeting with an update on the adjudication process.
* Denial letters went out to 19 people.
* A system has been put in place for those who received a denial letter. If there are any issues or questions both the presenter and another council member will reach out to discuss the issue.
* The goal of the council is to help each applicant in any way. The more communication the better in helping them to learn how to fill out the application properly.
* Going forward the council will include information letting applicants know that we are available to assist and answer questions.
* Patrick and the adjudication committee will put together the procedure for this entire process.
* Grey suggested that we let the applicants know that there were many other applicants and funds were being stretched. This would help grantee’s understand their funding amount.

City Update:

* The Mayor welcomed the council and expressed her appreciation for all that has been done over this challenging year.
* Things are looking more hopeful now as the spring approaches and more vaccines are happening.
* The arts and culture sectors have been hit hard. The resiliency in coping with the changing environment should be applauded.
* The Mayor discussed one of her core principles to stay connected to those who face the greatest need. Artists are among this group.
* The Mayor also announced that the city will match the MCC and allot $21,600 for next years funding. “Let’s value our artists, no-one should work for free”.
* A special show of appreciation went to Paula Gannon and Danielle Moriarty for maneuvering through this challenging year.

Adjudication Discussion:

* Kathy H brought up the issue of recusing when dollar amounts are discussed. It can be awkward when the applicant on the council is present.
* Lakshmi suggested that when the council adjudicates next year that we may want to put the core Newton programs with history in one group ( such as Newton Open Studios) and new applicants in a separate group.
* Emily started a discussion on putting a cap on funds. This may change yearly. Rebika felt this could be used as a guideline.
* The council discussed working on the formula a bit more but Jenn suggested that there are many factors and that it is difficult to paint with a broad brush. These applicants are all different.
* Rebika suggested that we be clear on what our priorities are from the beginning when adjudicating.
* Grey suggested we look at the whole group of applicants and see the different genre as a whole. Paula suggested we review the past and see the different genres funded. The marketing committee will review this with the help of Kathleen (who has a long list of grantees)
* It was suggested that the Reception Committee now become the Event Committee and incorporate an event that helps to educate applicants. A suggested date of September or early October to hold an informational session was discussed.

Survey:

* Chris will update with the help of the council and send it out by tomorrow, February 26th.
* The council discussed expanding its mailing list to include; Temples, Churches, schools and colleges, Library. The Marketing Committee will work on this.
* The survey must be out by March 1st.
* Once the annual report is done and the distribution of the survey is out then the funded letters can be sent. The sooner the better.

The meeting ended at 10:20A

The next council meeting will be held on March 18, 2021 @ 9:00A.