

Minutes

Gorman Arts Centre Resident Advisory Group

Meeting #R-G-20-01

Date: 17/09/2020

Venue: Main Hall, Gorman Arts Centre

Start time: 12:05 pm

End Time: 1:07 pm

Meeting Chair: Hugh Withycombe

Residents attending:

Amelie Langevin (QL2 Dance)

Cherylynn Holmes

Luke Marosszeky (Sage & Mint)

Andrew Sikorski

Franki Sparke

Nancy Sever

Alison Plevy
(Australian Dance Party)

Genevieve Swifte

Robin Davidson (Rebus)

Ben Drysdale (Rebus)

Kimmo Vennonen

Ruth Osborne (QL2 Dance)

Bryn Evans

Kirsten Biven

Stuart McMillen

Cathy Mauk

Lauren Honcope
(Ausdance ACT)

Arts Capital board/staff attending;

Mark van Veen, Chair

Joseph Falsone, CEO

Adelin Chin, Business Manager

Kristi Monfries, Marketing Manager

Lara Kissin, Governance Officer

Apologies:

Phoebe Porter

Nicci Haynes

James Judge

Agenda Item

Item 1 Welcome and Terms of Reference

Mark Van Veen (MVV) welcomed residents to the first meeting of the Gorman Arts Centre Resident Advisory Group on behalf of the board and introduced Hugh Withycombe as meeting chair. MVV outlined the board's interest in receiving feedback and suggestions from the group, and looked forward to the active involvement of residents in chairing and attending meetings.

Hugh Withycombe (HW) gave an overview of his role in chairing the meeting, and drew attention to the advisory group's Terms of Reference (Attachment A in the meeting papers). HW introduced the agenda and indicated how the meeting would be run, emphasising that the group is intended to be a forum for respectful discussion. HW reminded the meeting that information contained in meeting papers and discussed at these meetings may be confidential in nature, including information shared from time to time by fellow residents.

HW confirmed that, for this meeting, no additional agenda items had been submitted by residents, but encouraged the group to consider issues they may wish to raise for future meeting agendas.

Item 2 Conflict of Interest

HW asked if anyone wished to declare a conflict of interest in relation to any agenda item.

Bryn Evans noted a conflict relating to agenda item 4 – COVID-19 Hardship Policy – since the discussion would bear on the amount of sub-licence fees payable by residents. It was noted that all residents are in a similar position.

It was also noted that the advisory group is not a decision-making or executive body, and the agenda item was included for consultation on draft policy in line with the Terms of Reference, with the board ultimately to make a decision.

The group was reminded that from time to time agenda items may give rise to conflicts of interest that it would be helpful to disclose to fellow residents for the benefit of open discussion and understanding.

Item 3 Financial Status and Activities of Arts Capital

JF spoke to the audit report, CEO update and charts included in the meeting papers (Attachments B1, B2, and B3). JF explained that annual financial audit reports will be presented each year to the advisory group and noted that, while the Terms of Reference provided for this to be done in the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting (AGM), no such meeting was held this year as GHAC Inc. no longer exists and Arts Capital would not hold an AGM until after its first year of operation.

JF noted that in 2019, GHAC Inc. had met its budget target with a modest \$19K surplus, and highlighted that the audit report showed the income and expense pattern typical pre-COVID, with 19% of total income received via key arts organisation funding. JF noted that what had been a form of resilience – the growth in diverse sources of earned income – would prove a vulnerability during the COVID crisis in 2020.

JF noted that Arts Capital had secured the crisis support it had been advocating for in 2020, and shared the news that a full 9 months of rent relief for all residents had been confirmed now that the ACT Government had agreed to a further 3-month extension (with commercial sub-licensees to provide evidence of decline in turnover). The mix of Federal and ACT Government

support through JobKeeper, ATO Cashflow boost, and the COVID emergency relief fund meant that the financial position for 2020 was sound. By mid-2021, however, new funding would need to be negotiated with the ACT Government if earned revenue did not return to closer to pre-COVID levels.

JF noted that direct action by residents had been instrumental in securing a timely response from the ACT Government, with 56 letters from A+G residents, staff and regular hirers sent to the Arts Minister and Chief Minister within days of our request for assistance.

JF spoke about the ACT Government's 2019-2020 budget allocation for comprehensive centenary renovation designs for both centres, informing the group that Philip Leeson Architects have now been engaged by the ACT Government to commence work on the plans.

Stuart McMillen asked if progress towards centenary renovations is on schedule. JF responded that the timeline is for the planning work – which is to include detailed costing and staging information – to be finished by mid-2021, with actual work then subject to a separate ACT Government budget decision. This meant that the earliest renovation work would be likely to begin would be in 2022. The centenaries are in 2025 and 2027 for Gorman and Ainslie respectively.

Lauren Honcope asked if there is a consultation process for users of the Centres who are not tenants?

JF responded that stakeholder engagement would include residents, including at the next resident advisory group meeting, as well as the main regular users and program partners of the arts centre. It was not envisaged that a general public consultation process would be undertaken.

An update was also provided on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan, which is now in final draft stage pending board approval.

Item 4 COVID -19 Hardship Policy

It was noted that, in light of breaking news about the ACT Government rent relief extension, the pressing need to finalise a Hardship Policy to cover October to December has lessened. The Arts Capital board would, however, still be developing a policy and seeking feedback and input from residents.

HW referred to attachments C1 and C2 to the meeting papers, which include a discussion paper outlining elements of a proposed policy. A discussion was held, with the group agreeing that the preferred avenue for sharing feedback and comments would be to send them in writing in the week following the meeting.

During discussion, it was clarified that there already exists scope for the board to extend hardship consideration to individuals under the existing Tenancy Policy, but that the unique impacts of the COVID crisis, a new mandatory code of conduct for commercial leases, and changes to the Territory's regulations around leasing, warranted a specific policy.

JF informed the group that Arts Capital is currently awaiting confirmation from the ACT Government that its head licences will be extended beyond 31 December 2020, most likely for one year. As all sub-licences end on 30 December 2020, the head licence extension would be required to extend sub-licences into 2021 and sub-licensees should expect correspondence in the coming months.

JF noted that the hardship policy discussion paper foresaw relief being provided beyond the minimum requirement to support JobKeeper-eligible sub-licensees, and asked residents to

consider what information Arts Capital should reasonably collect from them as evidence of need.

HW asked residents to please send any additional feedback on the Hardship Policy to JF via email by the end of the following week.

Item 5 Recruitment of new Arts Capital Company Directors

MVV spoke to Attachment D of the meeting papers, reminding the group that four board vacancies had been created during the transition to Arts Capital and the board was now seeking to inform and involve residents in the expression of interest (EOI) process. It was stressed that diverse applicants are sought in line with the criteria contained in the constitution. The group was informed that an EOI call-out will be advertised on 28 September 2020, through the marketing channels listed in Attachment D.

Anais Maro suggested use of the ACT Diversity website, and Lauren Honcope noted that in Ausdance ACT's experience, this allowed postings but was not an active match-making process.

Residents were encouraged to be aware of the EOI timeline and to encourage suitable candidates known to them or their networks to apply.

Item 6 Other Agenda items

Alison Plevey asked to clarify if and how residents can raise other agenda items for these meetings.

JF noted that yes, the Terms of Reference definitely allow and encourage residents to propose agenda items and give a timeline for sending agenda suggestions to the chair. This information will continue to be included in meeting invitations.

Genevieve Swifte suggested that it would be desirable to be able to raise issues directly at the meeting; JF noted that the Terms requested items in advance – this was to assist to plan the agenda and papers ahead of time, and as a courtesy to inform all residents, even those not attending, of what would be on the agenda.

Item 7 Next meeting

HW and MVV thanked the group and noted that the next meeting would be held at 12pm on 19 November.