

Cultural District Workshop Notes
November 19, 2019
33 community members attended

Judy Bergeron: Welcome to the Smithville Public Library, the Cultural District Department of the City of Smithville. Thanks to everyone for attending and thanks to our facilitators for getting us started on this journey

April Daniels: Here's what we've done and where we come from: Embracing arts and culture in Smithville
See PowerPoint Presentation at this link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R7WTMDkA1pw6h_4X6i82l2o4UWQG33fC/view?usp=sharing

- Arts sector contributed over \$7 Billion nationally; 4.2% of the entire GDP of USA; before 2014, growth at 3% but since 2015, it is 5% growth each year
- Arts affects quality of life in many respects, and it's a great tool for economic development
- The Smithville Cultural District started as a way to bring low-cost, high-impact projects to the community
- Many projects had begun before we had the designation—this is why we went for the designation—so much had happened under local patronage and volunteers getting it done; we are also a Film Friendly city and we have put programming in place to go after a Music City Designation next year
- The Mary Nichols Art Center: City-owned, LPAA is a tenant and any member can use the space for arts purposes open for all members to use
- Art is a huge draw – a big reason why people come here as tourists and also inspires people to move here to live and bring their business here
- For the last six years, we've been working hard to get arts projects and programs in place

Lynn Osgood: Executive Director at Civic Arts, a nonprofit that helps communities do creative placemaking
See PowerPoint Presentation at this link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jAEiNmNBYCFRCo0c_KKQsYv5sBnrmFN0/view?usp=sharing

- Broad overview of national projects and description of what it means to be doing "Placemaking" projects
- Smithville is a model for work that's happening nationally
- Can be an economic driver, but the real power of the arts is its power to illuminate stories and bring people together to represent to the larger world who we are to keep the story going
- This is part of larger field called Creative Placemaking/Creative Place-Keeping/Arts Based Community Development – partnering with other community organizations to make it all happen
- Recognize the story of the Place: The community comes first and the economy comes later
- People pull from stories that are in the community and build from there
- NEA want to invest in these communities, like Smithville, because the arts help the community become an agent for change – to illuminate, to energize, to imagine, and to connect – Smithville is in good company and is part of a unique group of communities that the NEA has supported
- In Smithville, as in other places, the Arts activities all started because people wanted to express who we are and how we come together
- Authentic-ness of Smithville is truly a fantastic asset

Ann S. Graham: Executive Director at Texans for the Arts, a lobbying organization that works to protect and grow Texas public funding for the arts.

See PowerPoint Presentation at this link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kgozJsv1MvqFvx1qQXt4MisY2wyp8Ui/view?usp=sharing>

- Success in the 86th Texas Legislative Session: \$10 million for Cultural Districts; additional \$250,000 for arts and military, defended the Hotel Occupancy Tax Legislation
- Need to connect with legislators and invite them to projects
- Always look for ways to work in partnership with other organizations
- Funding resources – lots of different resources but it will depend on the type of project
 - Multigenerational Projects
 - Community Engagement Projects
 - Water and Trail work – Parkland projects
 - Public Sculptures and Sculpture Parks
 - Art After Dark
 - Murals
 - Rural Arts— the WI project even brought up artistic competition between farmers
- Two primary sources for public funding in Texas: Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) and Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT)
- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is the main federal arts program
- Texas Commission on the Arts Funding Opportunities—all are 1:1 matching
 - Contact TCA directly with questions: <https://www.arts.texas.gov>
 - Cultural District Program (up to \$250,000)
 - Arts Create—operational support for organizations over \$50,000 annual budget
 - Arts Respond Performance Support—hiring someone off the TCA Touring Roster
 - Touring Roster—performers apply to be on the roster
 - Arts Respond Project (5 areas)—proposals that are project specific, minimum is \$1,000—these don't require tourism component like the Cultural District grants do.
 - Education
 - Health/Human Services (including military)
 - Economic Development
 - Public Safety and Criminal Justice
 - Natural Resources and Agricultural
 - Young Masters—High School Students (\$10,000 for their academic experience)
- Mid America Arts Alliance

- Artists 360: Professional Development Opportunities
- Artistic Innovations (1:1 Match)
- National Endowment for the Arts
 - Grants for individuals and organizations
- Future funding for Smithville?
 - Art in public places – CIP Capital Improvement Program Bond Program – any time a bond is passed, a percent of it must go towards public art – artist is engaged in the process of building infrastructure
 - Municipal Hotel Occupancy Tax
 - Type B Corporations

Open Conversation, Ideas, and Questions

- Arts in Education question – totally different funding model – the real difference is all at ISD level and the local school board. As we all understand, children need access to the arts in school for a wide variety of reasons that make them more creative, expressive, fully functional human beings
- Support ongoing projects and local artists
- December 14: Sasa Lit Salon: <https://www.facebook.com/events/515993865921303/>
- Musical Instruments in the Parks (check out the instruments at MLK, Riverbend, and Railroad Park now, courtesy of a grant from LCRA)
- City Park at the end of Main Street for river access
- Better signage needed
- MLK Park – Stefani’s mosaic – Jill and Stefani will get together to start this project
- Bruch Hahn would like to display art in vacant storefronts – April said that business owners are very much interested in this and the Chamber will help support/sponsor the project in the Central Business District – she will coordinate a date for everyone interested in making this happen, but please contact April if you want to discuss it
 - This should be a juried process with an arts curator so that are is high quality
- “Art will Save Us” – Cherry Cola Dog – show where each artist brings only ONE of their works of art, becomes very inclusionary and provides a whole different patron experience
- “Doors” project – put all different kinds of doors, some of which open, on a wall on a business in town
- Richard Latham wants to pay for the paint if we can get the volunteers together to touch up the mural on the Elementary School – Jill needs to confirm that the SISD is not going to tear down that building before we get everything started
- This Saturday, go to the Rec Center for Bernadette Noll’s Clothing Swap – she was able to crowd fund the event so that all sewists are paid for their work
- “All the City’s a Stage” mural project

Next meeting will be like a “dating” program – bring your ideas, we’ll bring nonprofits and business owners, and we’ll try to match art projects with people who have the right space for them and are willing to work to fund them. Watch for dates in December.

After the meeting, Lynn and Ann commented that this is a “structural moment” for Smithville to figure out how all these smaller projects fit into the bigger picture of Smithville as a special place, and we need a way to figure out where some of the ideas can come together to make a larger whole.

Before you go to the December meeting, fill in this information and submit to Jill/April:

- Name of Artist(s)
- Name of Project
- Potential or actual partners (could be an organization or other people who you need to make it work)
- Brief Description of the project: Where will it go (indoors/outdoors, specific space in mind)? Do you have a timeframe in mind? What kind of artistic expression (visual, musical, performing, etc)? What do you need to make it happen? What else will people need to know about the project to fully visualize your intentions?
- Budget (preliminary is fine, but try to be realistic about costs)
- Sponsorship opportunities