

DESIGN PLATFORM MEETING Report
June 15, 2010 3pm-4:30pm
Sarasota County Arts Council
Minutes

Meeting commenced at 3:05 PM

-Dr. Larry Thompson (co-chair)

-Jim Shirley (co-chair)

-Commissioner Suzanne Atwell

-Ian Black (invited guest)

-Jeanne Corcoran

-Rick Fawley

-Rich Swier

-Jean Trammell

- Dr. Cindy Bean (staff)

- Tina Shumway (staff)

The meeting opened with welcoming remarks from Larry Thompson, Jim Shirley and Jeanne Corcoran followed by attendee self introductions.

Cindy Bean recapped previous meetings and core strategies agreed at the previous meeting were restated and presented as the organizing themes for this meeting. The goal of the meeting was stated as defining and committing to actionable ideas and tangible activities that further the goal of creating economic growth in the arts, entertainment and creative sector in Sarasota, in keeping with the strategic plan launched in 2009 that sparked formation of the group.

The discussion followed, beginning with the first agreed upon strategy of this group:

Build an industry based on expertise and the application of creativity and design thinking

Dr. Larry Thompson gave an overview of the Design Center idea. He reported on the 'pilot test' of this idea. It was a two day meeting held to teach creativity to business leaders. This pilot, held at the Long Boat Key Arts Center, allowed business leaders to experience the concepts of creativity and was a concrete example of how the Design Center can work. Some money was received from Gulf Coast Community Foundation for the pilot held in May and there may be more grant money to hire a staff person to work with Larry Thompson to begin the process of creating a Design Center. Some of the activities that were included in the pilot held in May were:

- Discussions of business and creativity and managing a creative business.
- Sculptures
- Story boards
- Brain waves study of how your brain works in creative flow.

The results were very positive. GCCF is very interested in this concept. It is hoped that additional money is forth-coming, additional grant money has been sought by Ringling. It was noted that Kelly Kirschner attended the session, and he is discussing concept branding our community as "Creative Coast". Rich Swier also attended the workshop and felt that putting leaders into the creative processes in a shared situation to address problems and find solutions was worthwhile. The goal is to assist people in getting into that creative mindset and addressing business issues, community issues, finding resolution to problems, increasing innovation, and gaining productivity in the long run. The notion that it is an organic process that is fostered by such of the meeting/workshop was noted. More time (several days) would improve the results, both Larry and Rich mentioned. Both were optimistic about a Design Center based on the concepts from the pilot that could focus

on teaching people to learn how to get to the creative zone of the brain. Jim Shirley was also positive about this concept. Many felt this approach would attract businesses to this training.

Larry is working to continue this effort. Rich has agreed to help Larry with the effort. The next step is probably to hire someone to make it happen, hopefully, with grant funding to get started. Long term it would be more than a Ringling entity. The potential reach is huge. The opportunity to solicit a corporate champion or partner (e.g., DREAMWORKS) was noted.

ACTION ITEMS: Agreed we are going forward and Larry is champion and will call on group with any needs he has.

Another idea was raised within the discussion of the first strategy, the notion of Trans Media.

Jeanne shared that she saw a key business opportunity in adopting the approach of Trans Media. She defined it as the concept that all of your media and related items would be conceived and designed from the original entertainment or product creation phase, so that you avoid add-ons that are badly budgeted or poorly conceived. For example, if you are going to create a video game, then at the same time design the book, movie, theme park, and action figures all from the get-go rather than have things spin off in an ill-conceived or unplanned way. The idea is to think of everything, all media and across media, pre-planned for all eventualities. The notion of teaching this is also an opportunity. Teach entire business plan and put in place. Larry mentioned that perhaps some of this is already taking place at Ringling but not using this terminology (mentioned motion design). Jeanne and Larry committed to further explore.

ACTION ITEM: to commit with Larry's people to get a paper together.

The discussion continued with the second agreed upon strategy of this group:

Start and expand business in key sectors

The first idea discussed was that USF Sarasota-Manatee and the EDC have been working on getting a business **incubator** started. Rich Swier said he is involved in all the incubator activity that is underway in Sarasota and Manatee counties and gave an update on what he knows about it. He said there are four incubator efforts happening right now spanning from Northport to Manatee county of which he is aware. The first, Arthur Guilford and Kathy Baylis want to institute an incubator anchored by the USF Sarasota-Manatee campus. (Note: the original RFP for the work on this effort called for it to be an incubator for design businesses but Rich says to his knowledge this focus has not been decided as definite). Another effort is underway in Newtown, with a focus on more job training. A third incubator effort is underway in partnership with State College of Florida (SCF) around Northport purported to have an 'Eco' focus. A fourth effort, also with SCF, is organizing in Bradenton in Manatee County which purports to have a focus blue collar service industry. Rich Swier is involved with each

There was a question as to whether someone from this group should be involved with the USF effort and encourage the design/creative focus there. Anyone want to get involved?? At this time the firm Integra Click- was mentioned, and the company's CEO, John Lemp was suggested as a possible committee member who might be interested in the incubator, or other of the groups' actionable ideas such as the sound stage. Ian Black will follow up this possibility. Larry also mentioned Wanda Chaves might be someone who could represent this group by involvement in the USF incubator organizing group; he will look into that option.

ACTION ITEMS: Ian Black will get in touch with him John Lemp and set up a meeting with John, Larry, Jeanne and anyone else that should be present.

Wanda Chaves – Larry to connect with to pursue.

A second idea, the EDC efforts in **Economic Gardening**, which is aligned with the notion of expanding businesses, was explored. The group agreed it might be helpful to understand what is available in terms of the Economic Gardening program that Joan McGill is leading at the EDC. Jeanne will follow up with an invite to Joan to present at the Design Platform next meeting.

Tied to this was a discussion of the lists of design and creative businesses that the EDC and the Arts Council had brought to the meeting as follow up to the request last meeting for an inventory of creative/design businesses in Sarasota. The group now knows something about the resources they have in terms of 'inventory' but not sure how to best use this information. Jim Shirley presented his own lists, some of these are arts businesses and others are businesses that have supported the arts. He also mentioned the option of working with Chamber of Commerce as well. Jeanne provided NACS codes lists and explained where the EDC gets these (from Sarasota County).

ACTION ITEM: Platform leadership team would like to ask Joan McGill to speak at next meeting regarding Economic Gardening and explain it more fully to the group.

In terms of creating and expanding businesses, the third idea that was discussed is the notion of building a **Sound Stage**; this generated strong support. Some members expressed the view that this is a critical factor to move forward in the film industry and creative sector in Sarasota. A lively discussion resulted in the decision to form a sub-group that would pursue options for building a sound stage.

ACTION ITEMS:
Jeanne will get a sub committee meeting.

The third (combined marketing and development) strategy is to **Develop a targeted campaign to increase awareness of the region's design-related sectors & Create new market opportunities for creative segments.**

Discussion under this strategy topic centered on creating a "Sarasota Way" and using New Media Chattanooga Tennessee mentioned many times by Commissioner Atwell on everything that was learned from that trip and how we could utilize it here. She asked if there is a catalyst to help create branding for Sarasota (a "Sarasota Way" like the Chattanooga "Way"). In Chattanooga it is the water, river front. What is it in Sarasota? What do we have here? She thinks the water front and our cultural assets. Due to time constraints no commitments were made by members. Also members of this group said this is an organic process that is happening. They were challenged to consider how to foster this – there are ways to enable or constrain 'organic efforts' and this is something that this group wants to foster and also guide or shape the process of 'branding' or creating a unified message or Unique Selling Point (USP).

ACTION ITEM: no action item for this.
Question as to where funding can come from and how the organic process moves forward. How to use new media?

Cross-pollination with other platforms

The group was to discuss cross pollination with George Serrano but he had a family illness unexpectedly and was not able to attend, postponed until next meeting.

As closing comments were made, written commitments to further the activities of this group were solicited.

Four written commitments were offered:

Ian Black, D-2, Will facilitate a meeting with Integra Click, Dr. Thompson and Jeanne Corcoran.

Larry Thompson, D-2, Lead the Creativity Institute effort, Look into funding to hire someone and have that person work with the platform members to develop plan.
Will also contact Wanda Chaves regarding the Incubator.

Rich Swier, D-2, Will be working on the Creative “Institute” with Dr. Thompson.

Jim Shirley, D-3, He is working on 2 key projects to help market Sarasota as an arts/culture/design community.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:30 pm