

**Richmond Arts & Culture Commission  
PART I: NPA GRANT PRESENTATIONS**

Special Meeting Minutes  
450 Civic Center Plaza  
Richmond  
Richmond Conference Room

**Thursday, September 27, 2018**

In attendance: Jenny Balisle, Rosalie Fay Barnes, Melissa Kirk, Silvia Ledezma, Nava Mizrahi, Steven Robinson, Ben Steinberg\*, Antonio Tamayo, and Florene Wiley \*Arrived after Roll Call

Absent: None

Staff: Michele Seville, Arts & Culture Manager  
Katy Curl, Director, Library & Cultural Services

Guests: Ciera-Jevae Gordon, Janis Hashe, Cherie Hill, Tracey Mitchell, Cristian Munoz, Jamin Pursell, Tamara Shiloh, Ximena Souza Margarita Mitas, and Stephen Heninger

I. Welcome/Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Balisle called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

II. Approve Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Ledezma, second by Commissioner Mizrahi, and carried unanimously to approve the agenda, as submitted.

III. Neighborhood Public Art Mini-Grant Overview

Michelle Seville described the format for the presentations, reported there would be a 10-minute presentation and a 5-minute Q&A for each presenter, and outlined the scoring process.

Chair Balisle opened the presentations at this time.

IV. Presentation: Rasheed Shabazz – *Richmond Muslims/Peace & Purpose*

Mr. Shabazz was not present at this time.

V. Presentation: Janis Hashe – *Two Gentlemen of Philadelphia*

Janis Hashe presented the project *Two Gentlemen of Philadelphia*, a parody of Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona* using music from Hall and Oates (two gentlemen from Philadelphia) to introduce Shakespeare to the community. Working ideally through the East Bay Center for Performing Arts and the Ryse Youth Center, and through open auditions, she proposed the creation of a live show by the community, in the community, and from the community to offer potentially the very first access to a fun version of Shakespeare for Richmond children. Since there was a dog in Shakespeare's play, she proposed a community contest to find Shakespeare's dog *Crab*. She would also provide a free workshop of her self-created class, *Shakespeare for the Elizabethan Impaired*, with Talk Backs. She sought a free rehearsal space or a free venue that could greatly reduce the budget, estimated between \$5,000 and \$7,950.

In response to questions, Ms. Hashe described how the proposal would be marketed, stated the cast could involve 20 people, and depending on the venue there could be an audience of 700; clarified those involved in the production would receive stipends, explained how the music could be used without having to pay for rights, and reported that Bridge had offered the use of its film studio as a venue.

VI. Presentation: Tamara Shiloh – *Book Basket for Boys in Barber Shops*

Tamara Shiloh presented her project *Book Basket for Boys in Barber Shops*, a proposal similar to programs in New York and Los Angeles to improve the literacy rates for African-American boys who read at a much lower level than other age groups for a variety of reasons. Barber shops represented a major cultural center for many African-American males and was an ideal target for the program. She had already reached out to a number of barber shops interested in the program. As the co-owner of the Multicultural Children's Bookstore at the Shops at Hilltop, she knew the books that were popular with boys and had created a catalog of books to provide. She proposed the creation of a child-friendly space in barbershops, and through access to culturally relevant and gender responsive children's books improve low literacy scores among African-American boys and improve critical thinking. She would select 15 barbers in Richmond and surrounding areas, provide 150 to 200 books to distribute to male customers (some of whom might want and be allowed to keep the books), and encourage barbers to talk about the books, have the boys write book reports, there would be a prize system, a community event would recognize the results of that process and a book would be created of the book reports.

In response to questions, Ms. Shiloh stated there would be no cost for the venue because she had already secured venues, identified the barber shops willing to participate, and clarified the cost of the program at \$12 per book for 200 books per barbershop. As a member of Kiwanis and Rotary, she would pursue grants

and donations to sustain the program.

VII. Presentation: Ciera-Jevae Gordon – *Lead with Love 2*

Through song and poetry, Ciera-Jevae Gordon, RYSE Youth Center’s Media, Arts, & Culture Program Manager and Geo highlighted the *Lead with Love 2* Showcase, which had started in August, allowing community members a dialogue about love and listen to music, poetry, and more recently issues related to housing given that some members were facing homelessness. She described the performances, presentations, and activities associated with the showcase that would address issues affecting young people and help young people heal.

In response to questions, Ms. Gordon explained that RYSE was growing. A new building would break ground in December, and through community input would be designed to help address some of the needs of the community’s youth, including homelessness.

VIII. Presentation: Tracey Mitchell – *Money Speak*

Tracey Mitchell, a poet, writer and artist, distributed a recent article in the Richmond Post that would be featured in the theater play that he was presenting based on his first book. The 30-minute play that he characterized as an anthropological case study of rival territories would analyze what was going on in the community with a facilitated panel discussion after the play to consider strategies to stop the violence and crime in a restorative justice piece. He would solicit actors from the north, central, and south of Richmond, targeting youth and their families impacted by violence, with plays in each area, and incorporate the neighborhood councils to bring all aspects of Richmond together. The actors would later be community ambassadors to recruit and impact people in a sustainable movement of peace and community intervention.

In response to questions, Mr. Mitchell explained that the \$1,000 request for video production would be of the play. He was encouraged by a member of the RACC to also shoot a video documentation of everything at each location to create a video record of the entire proposal. His hope for the performance of the play in four locations would involve 200-300 people at each show.

IX. Presentation: Cherie Hill – *Richmond Dance and Performance Arts Partnership*

Cherie Hill presented the *Richmond Dance and Performance Arts Partnership*, which would gather Richmond artists working in dance and performance art to collectively network, share resources, and create a Day of Dance classes and performances free and open to the public. As the Artistic Director of her own dance studio and Director of Community and Culture at the Luna Dance Institute in Berkeley, she had a passion for art, dance, and equity.

Having been accepted by the National Guild for Community Arts Education Leadership Institute, Ms. Hill explained that she had undergone intensive leadership training and had received a coach for the year. Out of that training was her desire to advocate for, teach, and perform dance for the City of Richmond, and out of that had come the vision for the *Richmond Dance and Performance Arts Partnership* to bring to children and adults the healing aspects, the unified aspects, and more that dance produced. The project would unite dance artists and educators from Richmond's community to shape the City's arts and culture. The Day of Dance would be at the Milk Bar in the Iron Triangle area, and the project would introduce a new model for Richmond dance and performance artists to work collectively, engage the community in dance, impact the community through development in relationships, contribute a voice in arts and color, and share diversity in arts through a Day of Dance performance and classes.

In response to questions, Ms. Hill identified five people that had committed to the project although she anticipated more to reach her goal of 15; the capacity at the Milk Bar was 60; and in partnership with Bridge Storage Space she had access to those facilities.

X. Presentation: Jamin Pursell – *Hands of Change*

Jamin Pursell, the Art Director of Richmond Rainbow Pride, proposed an art piece program called *Hands of Change*, highlighted the background of Richmond Rainbow Pride, and proposed the creation of twelve 4x4 large rainbow hand-prints with inspirational quotes from LGBT members of its history focusing on people of color because their voices were more often silenced. The process would engage with the community to get suggestions for Twitter length quotes that would be empowering, motivational, inspirational, and allow the community to determine which individual quotes would be included in the project. There would be three individual events. Part of the community engagement would be through two interns, to be hired with the grant money, and have them help execute the plan. The final event would be at the annual Richmond Rainbow Pride event at the park to raise awareness. When the art pieces were finished, they would be placed throughout the city in a sort of found-art engagement to encourage people to explore the city and know that LGBT people were present all over the city.

In response to comments, Mr. Pursell explained that he would be the project leader and lead artist, do the primary organization of the events and the details related to the events, the two interns would help with some community engagement and help execute the art, transport it, and incorporate the entirety of the community at the events. He described the cost estimates and described the materials to be used for the proposal, with the pieces to be installed in March prior to Pride Month in June.

XI. Presentation: Ximena Souza – *Debunking Stereotypes*

Ximena Souza presented the project *Debunking Stereotypes*, explained that Cristian Munoz was also present, and played a video to explain that the project was created for Richmond given the need for more public art working social justice into the art along with the historical need to discuss issues of all types of discrimination. Visits to schools and community centers had been proposed to engage a conversation about stereotypes, particularly since the community was already under several damaging stereotypes. She proposed a dialogue about a counter narrative to those stereotypes to create a new story. The mural would create a continuous learning process to address stereotypes and change the perception to tell a story different from what the stereotype was suggesting.

In response to questions, Ms. Souza suggested that 23<sup>rd</sup> Street would be a good place to install the mural, and explained how this process would be different from that of a prior mural installation.

Chair Balisle thanked all the applicants.

XII. Commissioners Turn in Score Sheets

Commissioners turned in their score sheets.

XIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 P.M. to the next meeting October 4, 2018.