

**THE GUILD OF ARTISTS & ARTISANS
2007 ANNUAL MEETING
ANN ARBOR WOMEN'S CITY CLUB
JULY 22, 2007 10 A.M.**

MEETING MINUTES

Chair Chris Maher called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m. He thanked Guild members for attending, and announced that a quorum was not yet present. He suggested that the meeting continue in an informal manner, and asked that staff alert him if attendance reached a quorum. He introduced members of the board, Executive Director Max Clayton, and other staff members present. He welcomed comments from members during the informal meeting and thanked staff for their hard work.

STATE OF THE GUILD

Chair Chris Maher introduced Executive Director Max Clayton and stated that the current good health of the Guild was directly attributable to her hard work and leadership.

Ms. Clayton thanked Mr. Maher and presented the annual report, beginning by expressing gratitude to the Board of Directors for their time, commitment and hard work on behalf of the Guild's efforts. Ms. Clayton gave special recognition to Walter Pinkus, the Guild treasurer, who was completing his board service. She also thanked the staff including Alan Bogl, Nicole McKay, Pamela Stoddard, Chaely Chartier and Meredith Hotchkiss for their hard work, singling out Alan Bogl for additional praise regarding his exceptional success in managing the Guild's art fair operations.

Ms. Clayton reported that the Guild is financially sound and provided an overview of the financial status. She announced that the 2006 audited report shows a surplus at year end. The surplus, however, is not due to additional revenue or from cutting back on any essential service such as marketing and advertising, but is due to changes in staffing.

After three years of excellent sponsorship support, in 2006 sponsorship income fell by 45 percent from the previous all time high set in 2005. Because of the uncertain Michigan economy, many potential sponsors eliminated Michigan events from their 2006 budgets. However, sponsorship support for 2007 is unexpectedly strong and is likely to eclipse the 2005 record. In 2007, all three Guild events (the Ann Arbor Summer Art Fair, the Crocker Park Fine Art Fair and the Levis Commons Fine Art Fair) will provide sponsorship revenue.

The Guild continues to attract considerable media sponsorship which allows the Guild to expand its promotion and advertising of all its fairs. At a minimum, media sponsorship adds 25 percent to the advertising buying power of the Guild.

She announced that other sources of revenue also contributed to the Guild's financial health. These revenue sources include merchandise sales, membership fees and booth and jury fees. Unfortunately, membership fees are continuing to decline. Booth fees, however, are doing well due to the success of the new shows. In fact, both Crocker Park and Levis Commons reached break even in their second years, one year earlier than projected.

Ms. Clayton also announced that, due to popular demand from Guild members, the Holiday Fair will be back in 2008, and that Alan Bogl is researching possible dates and locations for the fair.

Ms. Clayton then reported on challenges now and into the future that are facing the Guild. Membership numbers and revenue are down in 2006, this is the second consecutive year that membership totals declined. She expected the decline to continue in 2007. Falling membership will have the most profound impact on future Guild policies and procedures. She noted that the name change from "The Michigan Guild of Artists & Artisans" to "The Guild of Artists & Artisans" was helping draw new members from outside Michigan, as were the new and successful shows.

She cited technology as another challenge facing the Guild. She stated that the Guild needs to strive to become a Guild for the 21st century and find its place online, perhaps an online art fair which is available “24/7 365” to help the Guild develop a persona in the online world and be available to a wider audience. She stated that she and staff were taking steps to research the technology necessary to achieve this goal.

The marketing of events was identified as the third challenge. For many decades, major newspapers like the Detroit Free Press were absolutely necessary for advertising success; however, these publications are experiencing serious declines in their readerships and can no longer be depended upon to be the core advertising vehicle for our events. Fortunately, research shows that people still read community newspapers, so this option can continue to be included in our promotional efforts. The Guild also has increased its radio advertising and its promotional presence on the Web, but advertising and promotion continues to change and adapt to new technologies and will remain an ongoing challenge.

In addition, there is the challenge of communication between and among Guild members and staff. The cost to print and mail the newsletter, directory, applications and other assorted Guild materials is rapidly increasing. It is important the Guild investigate and evaluate the best way to communicate internally and externally.

The final challenge Ms. Clayton cited is finding new sources of funding. Of course, this is a universal problem in both the for-profit and non-profit worlds, but The Guild is committed to discover new ways to maintain and enhance our fiscal standing.

Executive Director Max Clayton then reported on progress made on the Guild’s 2005 directive regarding the possible changes to the days and dates of the Ann Arbor Summer Art Fair. She announced that there were differing opinions among the four Ann Arbor fairs, and that they had agreed to do a marketing research survey that would be complete in 2008 and which would help inform a decision about day and date changes. She announced that she is also collecting input from local businesses, churches and the Ann Arbor community, as well as from artists. She stated that any change would require the four fairs working together and trusting one another, which can be problematic.

Ms. Clayton completed her report by announcing that she feels both positive and encouraged about the years ahead, and welcomed questions from members.

Guild member Howard Leviton suggested that Guild members themselves serve as marketing tools to assist the marketing challenge facing the Guild. He said artists could promote the fairs at every opportunity, such as during their attendance at other fairs. He said he would like literature to share with his customers at other fairs.

Max Clayton suggested members send interested parties to the web site for more information, and to remember to tell people that the Ann Arbor Summer Art Fair always begins the third Wednesday of July.

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Chair Chris Maher announced that a quorum has been established.

Chair Chris Maher called the official meeting to order at 11:06 a.m. He announced that the Credentials Committee informed him that there was a quorum of 30 members present. Without objection, the quorum was adopted.

Chair Chris Maher appointed Pat Austin as parliamentarian.

Without objection the Standing Rules were adopted.

Chair Chris Maher appointed John Fitzpatrick and Simon Tarasiewicz as tellers, and Joe Cyberski as timekeeper.

Chair Chris Maher announced that, because a quorum was not present at the 2006 annual meeting, there were no official minutes; a summary of the 2006 Annual Meeting was placed in the file.

Chair Chris Maher appointed Marie Frost as minutes transcriber, without objection.

Chair Chris Maher appointed himself, Billie Griner, Max Clayton and Pat Austin as the minutes review committee.

SPECIAL ORDER

Chair Chris Maher then announced the official results of the election. Returning member Rex Benson received 92 votes. Returning board member Lilli Blackburn received 93 votes. Returning member Lynne McNutt received 73 votes. New board member Debbi Cooper received 81 votes. There were also 3 votes for "other." Maher welcomed the new and returning board members. Without objection, the Chair moved that the ballots be destroyed.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Chris Maher announced that no formal motions had been submitted prior to the meeting.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chair Chris Maher began the good of the order by commenting that he gives out his schedule for all shows at every show he participates in, and that he likes the idea of a PDF for artist to hand out. He also mentioned that the stickers provided to Guild members this year were helpful for branding purposes. He encouraged artists to promote the fairs as much as possible.

Howard Leviton mentioned that he is willing to share information and available literature about the fair with others at the hotel where he stays.

Anne Monheit mentioned that the post cards Guild members send to their customers help promote the fair.

Chair Chris Maher agreed, but said that promoting the fair even before the post cards become available is also helpful.

Ruth Pinkus said she prints a map on the back of the Guild postcards, indicating where her booth is located.

Vince Pernicano said he prints his artist statement and schedule on the post card and hands them out.

John Fitzpatrick asked if it is possible to get the Summer Fair post cards earlier.

Chair Chris Maher suggested generic cards could be available earlier, since the design for the Summer Fair post cards often takes a long time to be finalized.

Executive Director Max Clayton asked for an informal response from those who would use a generic card. Many Guild members responded positively.

Sylvia Pixely mentioned that she enjoys that the post cards are blank on the back. She also suggested placing packets of information about all four fairs at the information booths located near state lines.

Gwen Bennett said that she doesn't have a computer, but that she thinks creating an list of all the Guild artists' customers for whom e-mail addresses are available would be a good idea, and all artists could send their schedules to that e-mail list.

Max Clayton noted that many artists don't want to share their customers' e-mail addresses. She said that if The Guild could compile an e-mail list another way, there is the possibility of starting a fairgoer e-newsletter.

Chair Chris Maher also noted that there are privacy issues and policies regarding sharing addresses.

Lynne McNutt said she likes the idea of a generic card for all fairs. She said the card could also include information about membership so that Guild members could give it to other artists as well as to customers.

Ruth Pinkus announced that the standards committee needs members.

Simon Tarasiewicz asked why the Guild uses a space lottery to determine booth placement during the Summer Art Fair. He said that other artists had expressed concern to him about their placement. He said if two artists are willing to trade spaces, why do they need to enter a lottery?

Chair Chris Maher noted that the lottery assures fairness. He said that some artists feel strongly about staying in the same place year after year, while others think it is better to move around and mix things up. He said because there are so many differing opinions and because it is impossible to make everyone happy, a lottery was determined to be the fairest solution. He welcomed ideas for alternate plans to deal with space that would ensure the same fairness.

Anne Monheit asked about an online forum for artists to discuss ideas and issues.

Chair Chris Maher said an online forum is a possibility, but it has been attempted before and it was discovered that there are several complications. He said moderators are needed, and that there are many liabilities that had been found to outweigh the benefits.

Karen Baum said that it was important to get out correct information about the waitlist because many artists she knows of were reluctant to join after hearing that the waitlist was very long. She also mentioned that the Guild should contact college art programs and get them involved.

Chair Chris Maher said that art teachers and students were invited to participate in Guild workshops and apply to exhibit under the special emerging artist program.

Annette Morrin announced that she has a PowerPoint presentation about the workshops and how to participate in an art fair. She said it is a good presentation for middle school through college-age students who are interested in art as a career.

Jim Reinhart reminded Guild members that the Guild board members are authorized to give out free one-year memberships. He said that if any Guild member finds an artist they think is deserving of a trial membership, they should refer that person to a board member.

Jane Wilhelm said that she likes the PowerPoint presentation that Annette Morrin mentioned. She suggested the Guild share it with students at CCS and Kendall.

Gwen Bennett said she saw information about the PowerPoint presentation in a Guild newsletter, sent away for the packet and shared it with schools and teachers in her area (Little Rock, Arkansas). She said she received a very positive response, and that it was a good tool to let students know about possible careers in art.

Max Clayton asked members if they used the new Guild stickers available this year. Members responded positively.

John Fitzpatrick suggested the Guild send stickers out with the first packet, along with a generic post card that includes a link to the Web site where customers can find more info.

Chair Chris Maher noted that customers sometimes have trouble locating artists due to the ongoing confusion over the multiple fairs.

Max Clayton mentioned that the Ann Arbor Convention and Visitors Bureau has a new interactive map on its Web site that helps visitors find artists in all four fairs. She said that all four fairs linked to the Free Press guide online.

