

## MINUTES OF THE WOODSTOCK OPERA HOUSE

### ADVISORY COMMISSION

Tuesday, August 18, 2020

The meeting of the Advisory Commission of the City of Woodstock was called to order at 4:39 pm by Keith Johnson on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 by Zoom Meeting. A roll call was taken.

- I. **Call to Order Those present on the Zoom call were:** Keith Johnson, Lynne Kreisman, Anthony Houston, John Puzzo, Judith Svalander, Opera House Director Daniel Campbell, and Roger Zawacki. Paul Rausch joined the meeting at 4:55 p.m. due to technical difficulties.

**Absent:** Michael Levitan

### II. Approval of Minutes

John Puzzo motioned to approve the minutes, Judith Svalander seconded. A roll-call was taken with all ayes.

The Tuesday, February 18, 2020 meeting minutes were approved.

### III. COMMUNICATIONS

#### A. Committee Chair Report – Keith Johnson

Off Square Music has cancelled all Open Mic events at Stage Left Café (SLC) through the end of September with the board taking future events at SLC into consideration based on the progress of COVID-19. Off Square has instead been hosting Sunday night concerts at the Park in the Square for the months of August and September. Attendance continues to grow ranging from 70 to 100 people at each performance.

#### B. Member Reports

1. **Lynne Kreisman – Woodstock Fine Arts Association** Creative Living programs for March & April were cancelled. The new season of Creative Living for 2020-2021 has been suspended pending the further development of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
2. **John Puzzo – Friends of the Opera House** has voted to cover up to \$12,000 in funding for the purchase of video equipment at the Opera House for recording events and live streaming of programs. Friends are taking a new direction by launching a Sponsorship Program as a way to fundraise for the Opera House. This will dramatically change the way they raise money on an annual basis.
3. **Judith Svalander – Judith Svalander Dance Theatre (JSDT)** expressed strong support for the Friends of the Opera House Video donation. The Summer Dance Workshop was fantastic with a six-week course culminating in three performances at the Opera House in early August. Each show was limited to 50 audience members with social distancing applied to audience seating and facemasks worn by both the audience and the dancers. JSDT is currently working on creating a one-hour abridged version of the Nutcracker for presentation in December.
4. **Roger Zawacki – Theatre 121** has been dormant since March after completing only two weeks of performances of Matilda the Musical. The Board met last week and determined that they would not pursue regular productions through the end of 2020. Current plans are for a three-show season starting the last week of February 2021 with a two-character show of “The Last Five Years” followed in April by a three-character show “The Complete Works of Shakespeare Abridged” and back to a full musical production of “Urinetown” in June. There is also potential for a virtual program in late 2020 for presentation online.

2020 Advisory Meeting dates: Jan. 21, Feb. 18, Mar. 17, May 19, Aug. 18, Sept. 15, Oct. 20 and Nov.17

5. **Anthony Houston – Member at Large** Potts and Pans has assumed producing the annual Jazz Festival which will take place at the Park in the Square this Saturday (August 22, 2020) and will include four musical acts in the morning in conjunction with the Farmers Market and one evening act at 7:00 PM.
  6. **Paul Rausch – Member at Large** expressed his appreciation for the presentation of the Annual City Band concerts in July and early August. Paul inquired about the Lighting of the Square and plans for that event. Director Campbell said that City staff had met on Monday to discuss options to present to City Council, with the possibility of a mixed virtual/live structure. Paul offered his services to assist with vocal music for the event.
- C. **Managing Director Report - Daniel Campbell** requested that his report be combined with the COVID-19 Update listed under New Business on the agenda.

#### IV. **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. **Cancelled Meetings** – Members were asked about any questions or concerns regarding the cancellation of meetings for March and May due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. There were no comments made.

#### V. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. COVID-19 Updates – Director Campbell
  - a. The Opera House closed to the public on March 16<sup>th</sup> and employees were sent home by order of the Governor on March 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - b. Part-time and Limited Part-time staff were furloughed beginning May 1<sup>st</sup> which was in conjunction with the City's new budget year. Full-time and select part-time staff were kept on to perform work remotely or with very limited access to the facility.
  - c. Non-furloughed employees returned to the Opera House the first week of June under Illinois' phase three response to the pandemic and the marketing assistant was brought back in the third week of July. All other employees will likely remain furloughed for an extended period of time until the Opera House can resume normal production schedules.
  - d. All events for Mid-March through July were cancelled with refunds issued. Several additional Opera House produced programs were rescheduled to 2021.
  - e. Opera House was partially reopened in August for scheduled events only, including the Dance Workshop by the Judith Svalander Dance Theatre. Currently all other programs through early December have been cancelled or rescheduled.
  - f. Opera House staff engaged in several projects inside the building during shutdown including repainting of the ground floor lobby, the build out of a new closet from area reclaimed from the old stage service shaft (done with the generous assistance of John Puzzo), removal and reinstallation of the café display cabinets from the Café to the Opera House lobby, and reconstruction of the Sound/Lighting control area in the theatre.
  - g. Discussed future plans for use of the café as primarily a performance venue space and the remodeling of the Community Room to be an updated rental space for parties, receptions and meetings as well as continuing use as an arts display area.
  - h. Shared the successful results of the delayed City Band concerts in July/early August with limited staff and a great deal of planning and support by the City Band members.
  - i. Plans for the purchase of new video equipment for live-streaming and recording of events was shared. \$6,000 worth of equipment has already been purchased including cameras, mounts, and a video switcher. Additional funds will be spent for a computer and software to process video as well as an additional portable camcorder and all of the accessories and cabling required to install the equipment. Friends of the Opera House have pledged up to \$12,000 to help fund the project.

B. Meeting Schedule

- a. Discussion was had regarding maintaining the planned schedule of meetings for the remainder of 2020.
- b. It was decided that the commission would meet as planned for September, October and November and that an offer would be extended to the Mayor to attend the meeting in October.
- c. Director Campbell encouraged members to reach out to the Chair to add to future agendas any items that they deemed were important to the Commission.

The next meeting: September 15, 2020

Motion to adjourn. Paul Rausch motioned and John Puzzo seconded. A roll-call was taken with all ayes.

Meeting adjourned 5:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Daniel Campbell - Director