

Approved

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
PERFORMING ARTS STUDY COMMISSION
Village Hall, Ante Room
801 Burlington Ave.**

**May 22, 2004
8:00 a.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioner Urban, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Eichmann, Ms. Gottlieb, Ms. Murphy, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Humphreys, Ms. Schroeder, Mr. Wilkey, Ms. Weiher.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Hamernik, Mr. Jaros, Mr. Ball

STAFF: Janene Cerulli, Recording Secretary

OTHERS: Kelly Novotny, Downers Grove Park District

Mr. Urban called the meeting to order at 8:12 a.m.

I. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Urban asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2004 meeting.

Minutes were approved.

II. Discussion of Facilities Survey

Mr. Humphreys said he is unclear as to what the purpose of the facilities survey is.

Ms. Weiher also asked about the purpose of the survey. What will it be used for-- to find out what should be built?

Mr. Wilkey's understanding is that the purpose is to find out what facilities were already out there, addressing the question if the Village needs a fine arts facility. If needs are being met by facilities, then it would be a matter of matching up facilities with performers.

Mr. Urban concurred with that summary.

Mr. Humphreys asked if more technical questions were needed. Ms. Gottlieb said that if the purpose is to find out what spaces exist, those types of questions wouldn't be needed.

Mr. Johnson said he believed that where this survey is coming from is that we found out there was space available based on our other survey. Maybe what we need to do is have some more facts so that when someone comes to town, we can tell them who to talk to or where to go.

Ms. Gottlieb said that the only flaw in that is that you end up settling. There is no facility that is ideal, so you settle for something.

Mr. Humphreys asked that a question be added to the survey to ask the size of the stage.

Mr. Urban said many of the churches do not have stages. It was decided to ask the size of the performing space, if they have a stage, and if so, how large the stage is. One purpose of the survey would be to have an inventory of performing space.

Ms. Gottlieb asked if the surveys were only going to Downers Grove. Mr. Urban didn't think it had been determined yet. Ms. Gottlieb thought that the scope should be wider.

Mr. Jacobson asked how this helps us reach our goal. Mr. Urban stated that we know that there are a number of performing arts groups in the community, and it is growing. But is there enough inventory here or in surrounding communities to supply the need? Mr. Jacobson questioned if that was what we did in the other survey to the arts groups. Mr. Urban said that survey was to the user groups, not the theater owners. Mr. Jacobson said that if we're creating this facility for the user groups, then wouldn't we have to find out if the user groups would use this facility. Mr. Urban said that we're also trying to find out if there the need to build a facility if we have enough inventory.

Ms. Eichmann asked if we had given up on building. Mr. Urban said no.

Mr. Jacobson said he read the articles about other places trying to build a performing arts center and he is concerned we will build ours too late, while other groups will put together something nice. He doesn't want Downers Grove to be close to building a facility and be late because of doing surveys and getting off track as to whether we need it or not.

Mr. Johnson said that the 1999 DuPage County study concludes that if you're going to build something to be very careful because the need for performing art space in the County was questionable.

Ms. Weiher asked if there was talk with the Park District regarding Lincoln Center and what could be done. Ms. Murphy said she didn't think Mr. Jaros had brought this to the board yet.

Mr. Humphreys said we're trying to survey the community and match needs, but it seems some kind of skills are lacking, maybe a professional is needed to help us.

Mr. Jacobson said that we need to decide if we need a performing arts center and not worry about the technical aspects right now, as Scott Pfeiffer had suggested at previous meetings. We should start coming to a couple possibilities and from those models let engineers etc. fine tune it.

Mr. Humphreys said that we've already decided that a smaller community facility vs. a regional facility was what we wanted. Ms. Eichmann said that interest in the performing arts has to be built and it depends on what facilities there are and how the public receives them. The programs/facility has to appeal to all ages and is a factor in building an audience.

Ms. Weiher said that you have to build a base with shows that people are familiar with and supplement it with classes and community programs.

Ms. Weiher asked if we have a picture of what type of facility people want from the first survey.

Mr. Jacobson said he would like to put together a model and then get feedback from the community. Ms. Gottlieb asked if we've reached the point of determining that Downers Grove needs a facility and do we have the data to support that? Mr. Jacobson said he hopes that we do, it's a matter of deciding what the facility is.

Ms. Gottlieb asked how we come up with a plan. Ms. Weiher asked if we needed to get help from professionals. Mr. Urban asked if we're at the point where we know we need a performing arts center. Ms. Weiher said she didn't think the community would know if they needed it or not until they are presented with options. At this point performing arts is not on the minds of citizens, but if they are given an option they can choose if they want it.

Mr. Humphreys asked how to up with a plan. Mr. Wilkey asked how far the Village wants the commission to go with this. Are they looking for us to create a plan? Mr. Urban said he thought the group might be ready to go back to the Council with some recommendations.

It was decided that a list of recommendations for a facility should be created. Mr. Wilkey said that we haven't inventoried facilities, which was one of the commission's goals set forth by Council. The needs survey was completed, but it has not yet been determined what already exists.

Possible locations were discussed and listed as: Masons, Hart's Garage/Chuck's Meat Market, Tivoli, Fishel Park, Lincoln Center, Curtiss Block, Reporter Building

After much discussion, the group concluded their recommendation of the needs to be included in the performing arts center, defined as follows:

Theater: 350-500 fixed seat theatre, fully outfitted with lights, sound. Also, a black-box theater with 125 moveable seats, plus 3 small rooms with seating for 50 to be used for classes, rehearsals, meetings and small performances.

Amenities needed include a scene shop, dressing rooms, storage, administrative/maintenance office, box office, coat room, possible cable tv facilities, a catering kitchen, and lobby which also houses an art gallery. They also recommend a paid staff position to manage the day to day operations with additional personnel.

It was agreed that the facilities survey needed to be done. Mr. Urban said for the next meeting, he would like to prioritize the possible locations discussed.

III. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

