

CREATIVITY NETWORK FORUMS

Advocating for a Cultural Master Plan for the Creative Community of Long Beach

Phase I: Solicit Input from the Community

The Creativity Network of Long Beach and LongBeachCulture.org sponsored two community forums to engage in a meaningful dialogue toward building a cultural master plan for the creative community of Long Beach. The August 2nd meeting at Koos Art Center solicited a lengthy list of issues. On September 6, the second forum was held at Second City Council Art Gallery and Performance Space. All the attendees were invited to prioritize the issues important to the Arts Community. The top three issues identified and discussed were:

AFFORDABLE LIVE/WORK SPACE FOR ARTISTS

1. Educate population to value of retaining artists
2. The City Council at an August meeting requested the City Manager to prepare a report on the feasibility of mixed use or inclusionary housing at three City/RDA-owned sites; City Hall East, the Art Exchange, and the MTA site. Attendees were encouraged to continue to lobby Council and Planning Commission that affordable housing needs to be included in these developments; especially the so-called Arts Exchange project also known as the Broadway block. Could make it more specific to include affordable housing for artists and possibly business people as well. For the East Village to succeed there must be a critical mass of artists in the district.
3. Artists are the Marines of cool. Look for a potential areas that is depressed enough to accept artists to start a new affordable arts district and couldn't find any.
4. Seek Patrons: Developers to create these spaces e.g. The Brewery in Los Angeles

5. Change zoning so Artists could buy building as a co-op and set up live/work space. Need a more organic approach. May be better to go for conditional use permit building by building rather than going for full zoning change initially. Let it grow naturally so that zoning change is logical result.
6. Allow Greater flexibility. City could get out of the way so that these things could happen organically
7. Financial incentives: City could give 5% loans to purchase building and forgive loan if you stay for 30 years, but repay with interest if you move sooner.
8. Facilitate co-op: Federal funding for cooperative housing exists. Artists must form the cooperative and they own an equivalent share of the property.
9. Basements converted to artisans shops – requires zoning changes. Lafayette basement holds great possibilities, about 30,000 square feet.
10. Form a committee to work on this issue, get assistance from the City to identify properties that can be used for this purpose. Karen volunteers to do work on this.

ARTS EDUCATION/ART FOR AT RISK YOUTH

1. Long Beach Unified School District needs an Arts Blueprint: Draw the correlation between Arts & Education. Arts should be equal to Math and Science. Initiate a campaign to communicate with the District that Arts education is important, that it is not a matter of funding, but intention. Ask people we know to join in the communication.
2. Prioritize funding for Arts Education. Arts in No Child Left Behind. WRAP is not a substitute for Arts programs. Broaden the arts to include performance, music, visual arts etc. Connect the dots. Increase awareness. Long Beach is not involved in the ***Arts for All***

Blue Print. Lobby the school board to participate to apply for this program. Prop #49. LBUSD should fund arts programs with this funding – not a priority with the LBUSD at this time.

3. Mobilize parents to become advocates for the Arts in the Schools. Write letters. Organize While there are PTAs that will pay for arts in schools, not all schools have that capability.
4. Create strategic alliances between LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB to foster cooperative Arts Education programs and strategies.
5. Arts Education Community Service e.g. Artists that receive parking tickets could work off their debt by teaching art classes.
6. Work with County probation for at-risk youth

POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

1. All of the arts organizations and individual artists should get together to identify their roles and functions to work together on coordinated political strategies. Get out into larger community to educate regarding the importance of the arts and to mobilize political support. Each person here should talk to another organization about what we're talking about tonight – arts group or otherwise, Elks, church group, neighborhood group – go speak to a larger community to get feedback and buy into these ideas. Artists are voters. Talk to your Council member.
2. Twenty artists show up at Council meeting each week in support of the Arts. Be visual. First determine exactly what we want, then show up every week to drive home the message.
3. Mayor Foster pledged to put a liaison to the Arts in his office.
4. What is the role of the Arts Council? Filter of money? Arts Education? To do arts programs, public art, arts education, oversee the city's allocation process, steward the arts, an arts leadership role. Arts Council could coordinate all of this energy and provide leadership

5. Centralize the arts: City needs to form a Cultural Affairs Department that encompasses all arts and culture under one umbrella.

NOW WHAT?

1. Community involvement – Attendees were encouraged to make appointments with four organizations in the next month to talk about the importance of the arts. If everyone makes that same commitment, it would have a big impact.
2. Develop one-page talking points on each of the three issues identified as priorities at the Forum so that people can take to speak to their organizations.
3. Networking and dialogue with artists, small and large arts organizations
4. Reach out to the Media as an advocacy mechanism
5. Continue the dialog with the Arts Council for Long Beach, the City Council and Community Leaders
6. Organize workshops around the three major priorities that would include representatives of the City, the Arts Community and experts in various fields of Live/Work Space for Artists, Arts Education and Advocacy and Government.
7. Advocate for an updating of the Long Beach Master Cultural Plan

APPENDIX

The August 2nd meeting at Koos Art Center solicited a lengthy list of issues:

ADVOCACY AND POLICY

1. Invite all arts agencies, artists, businesses to participate in the development of the arts district. Is Long Beach sophisticated enough to support an arts district? The EVAD should become a cultural anchor for the City. EV needs to end the divisiveness and exclusion. Free weekend parking in the Arts District
2. Arts Exchange that promotes these three things: (a) Businesses, Artists, Art related events (b) Supports art related grants/activities for artists and services galleries (c) Community publicity information exchange: TV, radio, print media, internet-networking
3. Make artist spaces available: Studios, apartments and exhibition spaces for artists by providing affordable “cheap” live/work spaces (meanwhile, not demolishing existing ones) Change zoning in warehouse areas to allow artists to live there. The industrial areas are the next frontier, but it will probably go through its cycle just like the East Village. The Brewery, gallery spaces, live/work spaces, huge art community – can we do something like that here? Subsidized studio workspace, e.g. Angel’s Gate, The Brewery. Need to find a balance between affordable housing and housing for people who can afford to purchase that art.
4. Arts Training and Education: Engagement of LBUSD: K-12 and full course offerings in visual and performing arts at all high schools
5. Invest in artists and institutions-demand this of the City Council. A true advocate for the arts community at the City Council level, to keep plans on track and arts focused. Long Beach should have political support for the arts, and there should be a cultural affairs department in the city. Political leadership for the arts. Communities

need to organize themselves and make their issues known. GET SQUEAKY! Become the squeaky wheel for arts

6. Promotion of the arts in the city: Creative industries should be an economic development driver for the city. Tax incentives for Creative Industries. Support/promote galleries. Pasadena and Santa Monica markets to its own community that they are arts communities that don't rely on government support. Long Beach needs to feel good about its own arts community and claim it for ourselves, and then project it to everyone outside of LB.
7. How do we reach out to the greater population that arts and culture is important to their lives? Taking art to the schools, to the kids, celebrate the people who are already doing something to support the arts in Long Beach. Need to find a better way to communicate with the broader community about arts events and ways that people can participate in arts events. Don't rely only on e-mail or English only publications. Arts training and education. Without arts programs in our schools, we are not creating artists, art lovers, art appreciators. Take art out of the gallery, take it to people who are not interested or drawn to fine art. Make art accessible to everyone.
8. Long Beach is a basically "poor" community that doesn't have a lot of money for art. Therefore the outreach to "sell" art should be beyond Long Beach, LA, the US. We should set up an internet site that everyone can access to find art, furniture, costume design. Project the Long Beach arts community beyond our borders a la Pasadena, Santa Monica – they are better known as arts communities than Long Beach.
9. Access – Arts Council and city only use one stable set of artists, rather than being more open to include other artists
10. Revise Entertainment permitting
11. Public art can establish a sense of place here as an artist community. Should be seen as soon as you get off the freeway.

PROGRAMS

1. Provide opportunities for youth-particularly low income youth-to experience art
2. Centralize and coordinate art information for the city
3. Mentoring programs for artists as entrepreneurs: Artists need to learn the business side of art – are not as aware of the resources available to teach artists how to survive on their art
4. Create an active dynamic network of galleries to support/promote galleries
5. Create an incubator for the arts: Need a low-cost incubator “feeder” facility to bring in students, provide accounting and marketing support,
6. Difficult to find artists – like an artist clearinghouse/registry. The Arts Council used to keep a registry but it’s been passed on and now defunct. LA County has an artist’s registry of over 300 artists (slides, bio, etc.) Barnsdall Art Gallery

FUNDING

1. Define City of Long Beach Arts Budget: Establish priorities
2. Can a no-name artist get funding?
3. Look at how we value artists in our community. Artists worth has a wide range - \$15/hr. to 150/hr.
4. \$43 million in resources is available throughout the state. Need to unify and go after the city’s fair share of funding. Long Beach School District has not made an effort to go after those funds or to participate in the program to get the funding that has been available for the past four years. LA County Blue Print for the Arts from the LA County Arts Commission.

THE LONG BEACH CREATIVITY SURVEY

Earlier this year, we conducted a survey of priority issues facing the creative community in Long Beach. We add the responses here as an addendum in order to stimulate further dialogue.

1. What would you list as the top priority issues facing the Creative Community in Greater Long Beach?
 - Lack of funding; continuity within the artist community; willingness to embrace new ideas.
 - Building the arts to increase tourism.
 - Inclusiveness in the Arts: Expanding the role of individual artists as well as embracing the diversity of Long Beach culturally, ethnically, sexual orientation, gender, etc
 - Lack of a Cultural Master Plan
 - Reviewing the role of the Arts Council for Long Beach: Should it serve as an umbrella for distributing Arts funding or as an Arts Leader and Advocate for the role the city plays in the arts?
 - Strategic Marketing- Cross promotion of Arts events and marketing synergy; Media and communications & using the Citywide Arts Calendar to avoid conflicts in fundraising events; Opportunities for Arts Groups and individuals to co-sponsor events.
 - Arts Education- The role of the Arts Council, CSULB and LBCC in Arts Development and Education & Arts in the Schools; LBUSD as the largest recipient of Arts Education. How can they help to communicate benefits to students and encourage support for the Arts and Culture? Youth Leadership Development and Arts-Mentorship programs.
 - Knowing whether the City wants to support public art and having a professional administer the program.

- Over-development. Losing the individual businesses and galleries and turning into a corporate environment. This is what happened in Santa Monica. Little by little, the small businesses closed and were replaced by Starbucks, Armani, and Coffee Bean. The individual businesses we have in our community enhance the feeling of a creative environment and are a much more supportive group towards local artists.
 - Expanding venues for visual arts exhibitions.
 - Learning from the successes, and failures, of other arts communities. A willingness to abandon the status quo in favor of a more successful model
2. What are the three most critical issues specifically facing you as an individual, artist or Creative organization?
- Funding
 - Opportunities for public forums to share work
 - Conflicted direction and objectives from the artistic community.
 - Promotion of my art in the community
 - An art educated audience to view it. More opportunities to educate everyone in the arts through workshops, museum tours and art events.
 - Municipal cooperation
 - Cooperation with other artists and orgs
 - Educating the municipal leaders, org leaders, and individual artists about what is possible, and that there is a clear path toward creating an atmosphere of success in the city