

## 5/18- Office Hours with the Commissioner @ Staten Island, Richmond Library ; 6-8 pm

**Attendees-** Staten Island Residents, local artists, arts administrators

### Neighborhood Character-

- Lots of gentrification taking place since the 90s- Harlem, Brooklyn - Queens is the last frontier
- Newly emerging anxiety in South Bronx and Staten Island for rising real estate prices
- Big ferris wheel and stadium signs of worry in SI

### Citywide Coordination-

- New York One community bulletin boards
- Finding small spaces in city owned buildings; underutilized spaces that could be used for performances
- Another option to consider is looking into partnerships with faith-based organizations. This is an interesting opportunity to explore (Ecumenical Liaisons/Floyd Flake from Queens, Dr. Tony Baker)
- Another precedent to follow up on is the folks from the Jerusalem show at the Met Museum.
- I've been very excited to see this process unfold, people have really engaged thoughtfully and honestly. What are you (DCLA) doing to connect with the philanthropic community?
- Presenting about NYCHA at a conference at Mariner's Harbour, if you have cultural activities in these spaces, the whole community thrives.
- Cultural Consortium - where does this live and can each borough do this internally?
- Local Arts Councils each have their own calendars and artists registries. What are some tools that can be developed that all the councils can use / share? Who should develop? How can these be resourced?
- Within the borough, we have a culture; there are also subcultures and different groups communicate in different ways. Nontraditional ways of thinking get us more access with different groups. We are a small community, but still that doesn't mean that we know what's going on. If you didn't read the paper this week, you may not know.
- Does DCLA have any relationship with the Library Systems? Libraries on Staten Island are not easy to access as a resident, working with NYPL has been difficult. Need an accessible and streamlined way to use this. How to enter the system?
- Some libraries are more community oriented than others, it's really based on building relationships with the Managers.
- No matter what the tool - it's all about attitude. The government needs to feel a greater responsibility to respond to people and take on the onus of finding out what's going on, where things are happening, or could happen, and share that out.
- [HelpMeGetItDone@culture.nyc.gov](mailto:HelpMeGetItDone@culture.nyc.gov) OR 311 for the arts. Folks trained in how city government works can communicate with the public.
- State and City Agencies are separate, but maybe we should be experts in their grant cycles also.

### Equity & Information Access-

- 46% of SI residents have 1 long commutes each way, and have no time / energy to participate in cultural activities
- Think beyond Grantmakers in the Arts, connect directly to the communities, infuse beyond the standard pillars.
- How does one come up with the mechanisms to bring together folks from across discipline and geography to fund arts and culture with a look toward culture in all fields.
- Collective Impacts (2011) to solve any of the complex problems in a community, we need complex representation. The fragility of the cultural infrastructure in low-income communities is weak and often need capacity building before they are ready to engage as compared to social service providers.
- SI Ballet at the Williamson Theater, offering complementary tickets to share what all of our different works (Paul Tharp)
- IDNYC is a great method of communicating with folks and getting the word out about resources, partnership with cultural institutions and libraries to spread the word.
- Lack of awareness around cultural activities. Have you considered a centralized website to help folks find content that has been narrow downed or curated. NYC & Company, for example. (Doesn't need to be that complex - craigslist for arts and culture)
- Too much information is no information. How do we narrow that down? Does it solve the problem of know what's in your own neighborhood?

- ArtCritical - by street
- Dearth of cultural spaces in south shore, so there isn't anywhere to have cultural activities.
- Colleges! Wagner, CUNY CSI, all have ongoing community, cultural activities - spread the word, and enhance what we know about the existing pockets.
- Opacity issues, how to get into these underutilized spaces?
- Would you consider developing a cultural center in each borough?
- NYTimes Metro section talks about arts and culture in the City, even NJ, but NOT Staten Island.
- FAQ not only on the agency website, but share out on social media.
- Accessibility and ACCESS: real or perceived, doesn't matter! SI Museum put "open" flags outside their building and the shift was impactful.
- Snug Harbor has a fence that makes it feel inaccessible to many low-income Staten Islanders.

#### Affordability-

- Curious about the AREA initiative - Done in-house? Hiring consultants to do this? (Discussion of Spaceworks model); How does an organization get the ability to develop, manage, operate a space? Be a local partner? (Discussion of ArtSpace El Barrio PS 109)
- NJPAC. LMCC resource for the arts I've tapped into, but I'm eager to learn about something local. Acting - is always based in Manhattan. Need performance spaces in Staten Island, not large - something local, connected to transportation. Develop pockets of space to serve as cultural hubs or districts. SI has the stories and actors and artists, but we lack the spaces to foster, develop, incubate, and thrive.
- Despite the large cultural institutions growing, the smaller arts organizations are really feeling pressure of affordability. Gentrification is here, the North Shore is rapidly becoming unaffordable and arts orgs are really struggling.
- Ocean Breeze - sports facility, easy to access, affordable space
- SI Arts try to develop tools that are easily accessible - registry of all accessible spaces on SI. What about reaching out to the folks who we DON'T have on our list?
- Ballet rehearses at SeaView, former laboratory. Other groups can freely rehearse and stage play/readings, but we cannot sublease. Flexible space, can be setup a theater. Lease from the Hospital.

#### Health of the Cultural Sector-

- SI Arts is seeing a restoration of excitement from artists
- Funding and contribution to the arts from the City for individual artists? The local Arts Councils are the place for this, not DCLA.
- (Discuss BRIC model - multi arts center): is there stuff here that can be used better?
- Staten Island Cable / Free Access Channel - but we need something centralized, can Snug Harbor be this? Now that SI is opening up, maybe there are more opportunities.
- Referencing best practices when working with artists - how to start to formalize this document? About paying artists? About fairness re: organization size? (W.A.G.E.) Exploring some of the barriers to quality employment/jobs.
- If you flip around affordability, you need to talk about the health of the sector, because you can't afford to live here if you're not being paid well

#### **Staten Island Arts Cultural Ambassadors-**

- SI Arts did tabling and ambassadorship
- Most frequent comments on SI were education and affordable, multi-use, midsize/smaller arts spaces
- Island Voice; focused on youth, specific voice to capture in our workshops (CANVAS space/programs); conversations led to seeing more culture in their schools, experiencing in many ways but not in the classroom, where else can we go to experience culture
- Island Voice (cont'd) many play sports and looking for opportunities to bring together different people and cultures through arts and sports (FIFA matches, games); using culture and heritage as a way to celebrate each other and incorporate this more thoroughly throughout sports gatherings (food, music, dance, celebration, traditions)
- Why isn't there a Broadway show that speaks to every culture?
- Future Culture; local cultural planning with SI Arts and Design trust, we touched on all the issue areas in except citywide coordination.

- FC: Citywide coordination not discussed explicitly, but I think this is because it is foundational to everything actually functioning.
- FC: Also touched on Arts ed leading to increased access.