



**DRAFT**

## **Minutes**

COCA DEI Subcommittee

Thursday, January 4, 2024

3:00 p.m.

via Zoom

Attendance: Haiqiong Deng, Brinda Pamulapati, Hadley Peterson, Dan Taylor,

Absent: Dometrie Clark (ex), E. Marie Sissle

Staff: Kathleen Spehar, Summer Callahan

### I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Brinda thanked the subcommittee for allowing her to serve as chair.

### II. AGENDA

#### A. Minutes from October 10, 2022 and March 6, 2023

Brinda stated that the DEI subcommittee is meeting to approve the minutes from the October 2022 and March 2023 meetings, to review the current DEI plan (Creating Spaces) and plan for FY24.

Hadley motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Haiqiong seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### III. Review current DEI Plan

#### A. Plan for FY23

Kathleen presented the “Creating Spaces” marketing material from February 2022 and COCA’s DEI plan from 2023. Kathleen stated that the goal of this subcommittee meeting is to determine whether these plans should carry forward into 2024. Hadley asked about the difference between “in process” and “ongoing” in the 2023 DEI plan; Kathleen explained that:

- “Done” means the task had a clear end that was reached.
- “In process” means research has been done but no actions have been taken.
- “Ongoing” means the task either had a clear end that has been reached and the task continues to be needed or the task has no clear end.

*Access:* Kathleen stated that items in this section have already been achieved, including: reviewing the database, energizing the database for DEI branches, adding categories based on self-identification (gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.). Kathleen stated that rather than add an additional database for DEI-purposes, the artist database and venue database were expanded. Kathleen stated that one of the action items, ensuring that the databases can be



translated into other languages, is still in process.

*Visibility:* Kathleen stated that many of these tasks have both been done but are also ongoing initiatives.

*Grantmaking:* Kathleen stated that all COCA grant guidelines have been updated to improve equity for underserved and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) organizations. Kathleen added that COCA is working on creating a grant program for individual artists, possibly using Tourist Development Tax (TDT) funds to support it.

*Services:* Kathleen stated that this section deals with arts and culture as an economic system, including the ways arts and culture has been impacted by the pandemic, and that action items in this section are still under development. Kathleen stated that the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 results will provide data to have local conversations with the Chamber of Commerce, CareerSource, etc.

*Committee:* Kathleen stated that this is the largest the DEI committee has ever been, that Brinda is serving as chair and that the committee has a mix of old and new members.

*Venues:* Kathleen stated that COCA is creating a database of nonprofit organizations, and that staff needs to determine whether this should be separate from COCA's other databases or if preexisting databases can be adapted to meet this need. Dan stated that "data is king," but suggested adapting a preexisting database over creating a new one. Hadley asked if the databases being referred to are the same as the directories on COCA's website; Kathleen affirmed that they are. Hadley stated that adapting existing databases would be best to avoid duplication. Hadley stated that there are blurred lines between "artists," "organizations" and "businesses." Hadley stated that she felt additional filters or tags would meet the DEI need. Dan stated that COCA staff has worked hard on the website and wants to avoid "creep away." Kathleen affirmed that these are good points and confirmed that every time a new tool is introduced to the website, the community needs training on how to use the tools. She confirmed that COCA staff has been focused on simplifying the tools as much as possible to ensure the community can use them. Kathleen stated the technology COCA is using for the website/databases is close to eight years, and while the technology has been continually updated and revised, the technology is not new.

Dan stated that it is very encouraging to see all of COCA's DEI initiatives written down and that COCA is "walking the walk." Kathleen thanked Dan and stated that operationalizing DEI is a primary COCA goal.

Kathleen stated that if the subcommittee agrees, COCA can continue to use this plan for 2024. Kathleen stated that the "Services" area and integrating DEI branches into existing databases would be the priorities. Kathleen stated that COCA staff are willing, able and understand the community's needs, which will inform how the plan is implemented.

Brinda suggested that the word "ongoing" be replaced with "revising" or "updating." Hadley said she preferred the term "updating." Kathleen stated that this change can be made.



Haiqiong motioned to continue using the 2023 DEI plan for 2024 and for the COCA staff to continue providing updates on DEI initiatives. Hadley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## B. Creating Spaces

Kathleen stated that Creating Spaces is the other initiative created by last year's DEI committee. Kathleen stated that if the DEI subcommittee would like to carry that forward, COCA staff can hold a Creating Spaces event by September 30 at a different location. Brinda stated that she thinks this event should be carried forward. Hadley confirmed that last year's Creating Spaces event included an AEP6 speaker; Kathleen responded that Dr. Genna Styles-Lyas (AEP6 Director, Community Engagement & Equity, Americans for the Arts) visited Tallahassee for Arts Advocacy Week and spoke at this event. Kathleen stated that the AEP6 plan includes three components: nonprofits (already completed), for-profit arts and culture industries and DEI. Kathleen stated that Dr. Styles-Lyas may return when the DEI portion of AEP6 is launched. Kathleen stated that this event could feature a different speaker or focus, such as a BIPOC performing art space or a presentation by COCA to BIPOC groups. Kathleen asked the DEI subcommittee to consider possible topics and their own DEI connections.

Kathleen also suggested that Creating Spaces could be attached to existing artistic events, such as a theatre performance or a gallery opening. Kathleen stated that the previous Creating Spaces presentation was industry-focused but could be adapted to address the public. Hadley stated that these could drive membership and that multiple (3-4) small Creating Spaces events could be held over the course of the year. Hadley suggested these could be "intentional spaces for gathering" and that this might communicate to the public that Creating Spaces is an ongoing initiative. Haiqiong agreed with Hadley and Kathleen about creating "natural access" and "organic events." Haiqiong stated that COCA might start with 1-2 events and see what kind of time commitment was necessary. Haiqiong stated that different events might have different topics or themes or might integrate with other COCA events.

Brinda pointed out that art gallery openings typically have a flow of small groups throughout the night, which make presentations or large-group conversation complicated. Kathleen agreed and shared that she has a meeting with Jennifer Wright of Opening Nights at Florida State University (FSU) about potentially holding a Creating Spaces conversation at a spring concert. Kathleen stated that Venvi Gallery could also serve as a possible partner. Kathleen stated that February is Black History Month and therefore a Creating Spaces event would be appropriate. Kathleen stated that March has Spring Break, but that April has some Bicentennial events that could also include a Creating Spaces component. Hadley suggested B Sharps Jazz Café in Frenchtown as a possible location because they hold one show a month in a "nice and intimate" space. Haiqiong stated that she is currently working on a multicultural art project that could be attached to Creating Spaces but won't know more until funding is confirmed later in the year (October at the earliest). Kathleen shared the idea of having Creating Spaces in 2025, too, for COCA's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Brinda asked if Asian Coalition / the Experience Asia Festival are other possible partners; Kathleen said that Aurora Hansen is very supportive and that is a strong possibility.



#### IV. Action Items

Kathleen stated that she would identify possible locations for Creating Spaces. The DEI subcommittee agreed to meet Monday, February 12 at 4:00 p.m.

Kathleen stated that Brinda will update the Board about the DEI subcommittee at the January 18 meeting.

#### V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Summer Callahan*

*COCA's mission is to serve and support the community by promoting and advocating for arts and culture in Florida's capital region.*