

**DRAFT**

**Minutes**

COCA DEI Subcommittee  
Monday, February 12, 2024  
4:00 p.m.  
via Zoom

Attendance: Brinda Pamulapati, Dan Taylor, Haiqiong Deng, Hadley Peterson  
Absent: Donmetrie Clark, E. Marie Sissle  
Staff: Kathleen Spehar

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. AGENDA

A. Minutes from January 4, 2024

Dan motioned to approve the meeting minutes from January 4. Haiquiong seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. DEI Plan

1. Creating Spaces

Brinda stated that the purpose of the Creating Spaces initiative is to convene at BIPOC locations, advocate for them, promote them and use the location to hold a panel or event relating to DEI. Kathleen added that the Creating Spaces location is part of the overall initiative, with part of the discussion purpose amongst the community (emphasizing BIPOC organizations and BIPOC artists) including ways that COCA can assist these organizations and artists. Kathleen shared that at the previous meeting, they discussed Creating Spaces and possible collaborations that DEI sub-committee members could pursue. Kathleen stated that at the previous meeting, DEI sub-committee members discussed selecting pre-existing events with BIPOC artists that could be adapted to include a Creating Spaces discussion. Kathleen stated that when Creating Spaces was last active, E. Marie Sissle found locations, created partnerships and navigated the logistics, while COCA's staff role was largely marketing and promotion, space rental fees and refreshments.

Kathleen stated that COCA will be partnering with the FSU College of Music in a different but similar initiative. Kathleen stated that the College of Music will launch a Community Music degree in 2025 and is a year of "conversations with the community," starting with inviting Vijay Gupta, a BIPOC guest violinist and citizen activist to lunch and share with local music administrators. Kathleen shared that COCA reached out to local music leaders (including but not limited to BIPOC music leaders) with the invitation to attend these formal and informal discussions surrounding music education and administration.

Kathleen stated that B Sharps Jazz Café was identified by the sub-committee as a possible location for Creating Spaces, along with Anderson Brickler Gallery; SoMo Playhouse; the Terence Blanchard concert presented by Opening Nights at Rudy Diamond; Venvi Gallery and Experience Asia. In looking at event dates, Kathleen confirmed the staff is currently

committed to a number of events in April.

Kathleen also confirmed that, at this time, there have been no additional updates on further AEP6 rollout events.

Kathleen asked if the DEI sub-committee would like to move ahead with planning one Creating Spaces initiative for the spring; Brinda agreed. Kathleen asked Hadley about B Sharps Jazz Café; Hadley answered the B Sharps was likely booked for the next few months and would be a good location for early fall.

Kathleen stated that Anderson Brickler Gallery opened “Reflections and Reckonings: Brown vs. Board of Education at 70” event in February 2024 that will be held through May 18, 2024. Kathleen stated this is a possible contender.

Kathleen stated that the February event with the College of Music could be considered the first Creating Spaces and suggested the group look at events taking place in the second quarter of the year. Discussion ensued. Kathleen suggested that an event between July and September could be scheduled, perhaps with Experience Asia, then an event between October and December at B Sharp. Kathleen added that Haiqiong’s upcoming performances could be considered for a Creating Spaces events. Haiqiong stated that her album was released on January 26 through Innova and Apple Music. Kathleen asked Haiqiong if she was aware of other spaces used by Asian artists; Haiqiong stated that she is developing a collaborative multi-cultural arts project, but that this project might not be an adequate location for Creating Spaces. Kathleen asked for additional space suggestions, such as 621. Dan suggest LeMoyné Arts Foundation’s gazebo. Kathleen shared non-arts locations such as churches and a senior center, which has an auditorium, small stage, and seating. Kathleen also shared that non-BIPOC spaces include Able Artists Gallery and Cascades Park (which is programmed through the City of Tallahassee).

Haiqiong asked to clarify the purpose of the space. Kathleen answered that the location is for a “facilitated conversation” about DEI-related issues that can attach to an event. Kathleen added that the previous Creating Spaces event was held on a Monday because that was the day the space was available. Kathleen asked if the DEI sub-committee members have connections with the Brickler Gallery. Brinda stated that she spoke with the new manager about a possible event on Monday in April or May—likely the first or second Monday in May. Haiqiong stated that she may not be able to attend due to a tour in Portugal. As the discussion continued, Kathleen stated that the upcoming February discussion with the College of Music would be music-focused. She shared the first Creating Spaces event was in a theater and the following event would be in an arts gallery. Brinda suggested that Brickler Gallery was featuring four artists and asked if the Creating Spaces event could include an artist talk; Kathleen answered that the original intent of Creating Spaces was discussing ways that BIPOC artists can collaborate with the larger community and that there is room to curate the conversation in different ways. Kathleen added it would be best if artists could participate in a panel discussion alongside an educator and a business leader. Brinda stated that she had participated in similar panels.

From here, action steps include Brinda checking with the Brickler Gallery events and brainstorming some individuals who could participate; Hadley looking into events at B Sharps between July and December and contacting the staff there; and Haiqiong considering if her album release could include a Creating Spaces component. Kathleen stated that 621 Gallery

was also a COCA grantee and member. More discussion about possible panelists included Josh Johnson, along with Celeste and a few artists from Brickler Gallery. Kathleen added that staff can assist, and offered to create an email with talking points for the DEI sub-committee members about this initiative.

The DEI sub-committee decided to schedule the next sub-committee meeting for March 25 at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Hadley moved to adjourn the meeting. Haiquiong seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:46 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.***