

VIVA Meeting Minutes 5-16-23

In attendance were Marla Smith, Chris Beck, Pamela Wickard, Lynn McClain, and we welcome new member, Michael Darr. Joining by zoom were Annette Messitt, Mark Pease, Lindsay Hart, and Sy Novak.

The treasurer's report will be issued at a later time due to a storm that took out Chris's computer.

Sy made a report on the May tour. She has already received some feedback of low, average, and better than average attendance and big, mid range to low sales. Most people responded positively. Some were enthusiastically happy with sales and commissions garnered during the tour. The consensus or concern is that studios with only one artist may have had a harder time getting people to come to their studios than larger groups did. The idea was floated that there could be more consolidation in the future, in some way, shape or form. As for the Holiday '22 Tour, for the May tour the ferries were running on a 1 boat schedule in the morning and then later in the afternoon. The Tacoma boat was OK this time. The weather was unseasonably warm-up to the 80's for both weekends. For the Holiday tour, the weather was horrible with snow and ice for both weekends.

Marla estimates that the income for island artists from the studios, (excluding galleries) for this tour to be \$125,000. She divided studios into "low, medium, high" incomes, (\$2,000, \$3,000, \$6,000). There are studios whose incomes are above \$6,000. The amount that artists' studios and 4 galleries paid for their participation in the tour was \$11,725. For artist studios, it was \$8,755, (plus some \$20 memberships for non-members until the tour). That is a big return on the investment in her conclusion. Also, Sy states that the Vashon Tour's fees of \$235 per studio/artist are the lowest in the area and will check to see if the figures are available

One consideration of change for the future is the time that each studio is open. Should it be noon to six? Should it be 10 to 4? (It is now 10-5 for the Spring Tour). The first one or two hours can be really slow, (or no patrons), and the last hour really slow as well. Also, a consideration would be to have one long weekend, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, rather than two 2-day weekends. The one-weekend-tour has been floated before, and the decision has been that income would suffer. We want to hear from the membership as a whole as to their experiences and what they would prefer in the future, (survey of tour leads?)

The topic of pop-ups and groups that tag onto the tour, but do not financially support the tour came up once again. We could approach these groups with a "carrot", a letter of recognition of their work and interests and we could ask them to consider being a part of the greater artistic community, by supporting the VIVA tour with a donation. We also want to write a letter of thanks in the newsletter highlighting several members hard work.

Pamela brought up her concerns about exiting the ferry with hundreds of people and having no apparent signage welcoming people to the VIVA studio artist tour. (there is a sandwich board sign at the split in the road at the end of the dock as well as in the intersection uptown and our notice on the highway reader board). Her idea was to have a sign that directs people to some central point where there could be a volunteer concierge to guide them to a possible collection of work that would interest them, thereby engaging people that may have come to the island without knowledge of the studio tour. Ideas of where that concierge stand would be are, the Farmers market, Thriftway or Ober Park.

Next was the question of getting our information out to the largest number of people. The brochures are available all over the island, and Lindsay suggested that we invest in some Lucite brochure holders to put up to make brochures more visible in stores and shops. The idea of sandwich boards at each Ferry exit was brought up. Also the concern that some people are far enough off the main road that they need more than one sign to help guide people to their destination. Is this the responsibility of each artist, should we suggest it, or should VIVA take that on? This led to a question of where else we might need to advertise and who else we might need to engage. Should we connect with some farmstands and leave brochures there while also guiding people to those farm stands and/or venues?

The voice of Vashon, Vashon's radio program monitored by Kate Dowling, is a good way to get information out to Islanders and beyond. She would be willing to interview artists and talk about tour on her radio program. Mark brought up PSE, CenturyLink, Comcast - all who stream info to their customers. They might be willing to work with the community to get this information out.

At this point the consensus is, we need more bodies and more money. We need donations and volunteers. We want to discuss at the annual all-member meeting the idea of raising money for advertising. The discussion of sponsorship, which is still under review by a board committee, is imperative. The idea was floated for sponsorships to be of various levels, and even include those who are not part of the tour, but might be benefiting from tour (shops and restaurants) and would be willing to make a small sponsorship donation for recognition. The sponsorship committee will be revisiting sponsorship documents, and will be ready to begin the process of asking for sponsorships by October of this year.

A group of board members (Chris, Annette, Lynn, Pamela, led by Marla) will meet very soon to discuss the All Member meeting in June. Marla has been voicing her concerns about the importance of each of us being able to pass the torch of our responsibilities to informed members when the time comes. New board members are essential and several people talked about the importance of tapping the artistic community for volunteers. We are a service organization, and we need to bring new members on board. Lindsay's headline idea is "share your ideas, share the fun, share the load".

A card was available for signatures for departing board member and long time VIVA member Kristen Reitz-Green, who is moving on to a new island home and adventure. She will be MEMBER FOR LIFE, (Sy's suggestion post-meeting). Marla let her know and it made her happy.

Respectfully submitted by Lynn McClain