

**Northwest Michigan Arts & Culture Network  
Regional Arts Summit 5/23/17 Review**

**I. Background: Focus Group Feedback, March-April 2017**

Nine sessions; Addressed 5 common areas plus dynamics, opportunities, challenges, communities

- i. **Connecting:** Opportunities to know, connect, collaborate & network with each other
  1. **Notable Common Threads:**
    - a. Need to connect/engage with own communities, other sectors
    - b. Small organizations/communities, need to connect for bigger impact
    - c. Seeking trust, relationship building
    - d. Clusters of current networks, collaborations, cross disciplinary partners
  2. **Opportunities:**
    - a. Central “resource” for data, contacts, etc.
    - b. Proactive engagement/reach out to business, chambers, DDAs, tourism
- ii. **Learning:** Professional development/educational opportunities for organizations, disciplines and individuals. Sharing information for continued learning and access to resources.
  1. **Notable Common Threads:**
    - a. Seeking best practices
    - b. Don’t always know what we don’t know ... or where to go to know
    - c. Hands on skills to use quickly
      - i. Social media/tech, podcasting
  2. **Opportunities:**
    - a. Identify all training opps (ICA, NSky, NMC/NMCC) along with gaps
    - b. Webinars, Online Learning/Sharing
    - c. Summit with breakouts, hands on
    - d. Tailored Regional workshops
- iii. **Promoting:** Ability to cross promote and collaborate on PR/marketing/communications for greater reach and efficacy.
  1. **Notable Common Threads:**
    - a. Struggle with seasonal economy, especially in small communities
    - b. How do we “tell our story” – locally & regionally
    - c. Need to DO something – need tangible and quick outcome
      - i. Little Traverse video example
    - d. Regional branding with Local, “Cluster” & Disciplinary individualization
    - e. Seek efficiencies of scale in promotional expenditures
    - f. Lack time and resources to cover it all
    - g. Seek to connect better with tourism and communities for joint promotion
  2. **Opportunities**
    - a. Tourism relationships
    - b. Create own PR video (Pure Michigan-like), *note Little Traverse effort*
    - c. Mapping (i.e. Taste the Local Difference, Parks/Trails)
    - d. ‘During Your Stay’ packaging, partnering with wine/food sector
    - e. 131 corridor
    - f. Backbone services/advocacy
    - g. Social media – multi administrators,

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- iv. **Strengthening/Increasing Access to Funding:** Developing strategies for greater business support, community partnerships, cultural economic development and funding opportunities.
  - 1. **Notable threads:**
    - a. Everyone needs money
    - b. Greater awareness/engagement with business community benefits  
*(Some communities have better DDA/Business Alliance relationships)*
    - c. Arts needs to seek out cultural economic relationships – be proactive
    - d. Need data
    - e. Need to demonstrate value beyond creative sector for buy-in
  - 2. **Opportunities:**
    - a. Measuring cultural assets
    - b. Business partners/proactive reach out – ie AFTA’s pARTnership practices
    - c. Public-private placemaking partnerships
    - d. Local govt collaborations to leverage granting opportunities (ie Parks)
  
- v. **Advocating:** Opportunities to advocate for funding/support for arts, culture and arts education via local, state and Federal governments and related entities.
  - 1. **Notable Threads:**
    - a. Continually needed, especially with current administration
    - b. Collaborate for a louder, coordinated voice; need tools to tell story
  - 2. **Opportunities:**
    - a. Constant communication (take a lesson from current resistance efforts)
    - b. Legislative/business breakfasts/event/communication
    - c. Sharing stats and stories
    - d. Measuring economic impact – need strategies/process

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**Telling Our Story: Cultural Tourism and Engaging Our Communities**

- Trevor Tkatch, TC Tourism
- Brian Lawson, Crystal Mountain
- Susan Wenzlick, Writer and Consultant
- Joe Voss, Creative Many

Overview of TC region and promotion; telling important stories to create experiences; how to personalize your stories and create partnerships by using the Portland Art Museum model for engagement (creators, consumers, collaborators); Creative Many and what it does for creative industries: empowerment for creative industries (resources for creative professionals); commissioning work of artists (showcase the power of the creative industries).

**Questions:**

- What is the top advice you can give/tools?
  - CVB: post and event on the website; curate your own things to take advantage of visitors
  - Outreach, let them know what you are up to--reach out to marketing partners and interact
  - Make sure your story is something that people can connect? Where are people connecting? How do you benefit each other?
  - Reach out to us
- Showed statistics for marketing tourism--focus is often on food and bev, how does the arts community get access to some of those dollars? Do we start with the TCCVB to get a video/commercial to show art and artists? What are the steps to take?
  - What is the level of engagement? TCCVB is the "marketing firm" for the region. Followed the state's lead on what is of interest to tourists? Been working off the same marketing strategy for 20 years--working with a firm to identify where to go next (conclusion in September). Always a place in PR and our calendars--in the future could go broader. Timing of the network as a cohesive voice--could be a good opportunity to be able to voice input.
- Artists as ambassadors outside of the region--what are the tools they need to promote and talk about the area
- How to make your township or village a creative place--creative placemaking
  - Miplace.org
  - Work with artists to help tell your story
  - Crowdfunding source for MEDC
- For government: Be more open to the arts community--be creative and welcoming
- Point out to folks about the funding we receive from state and federal funding--keep at the top people minds
  - Creative Many has resources for advocacy and budget process at state and federal level

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- Creative Many can help you identify legislative caucus members
- How can we show the arts/cultural impact of the 10 county region (Mary Gillett)--working closely with Creative Many on the legislative advocacy piece, in many ways begins at the local levels
- Make this a destination that has really great art and art activities that happens to have great food and wine

**The Power of Our Networks**

- Sarah Bearup-Neal, fiber/quilt artist and Center Gallery, Glen Arbor
- Seth Bernard, performing artist
- Shanny Brooke, artist, Higher Art Gallery and TC Arts Network
- Glenn Wolff
- Richard Kooyman, artist/curate exhibitions--N Manistee/Kaleva (Melanie Park, wife/artist): 35 years (awards of NEA, MCACA and governors arts awards--in the field)

Artists can be our regional “ambassadors;” supporting one another is key (going to sales, receptions, opening, etc); pay attention to all opportunities--we often filter out opportunities that we think don’t relate to us. That may be ok, but just recommend those opportunities to connect to others. Organizers need to “get out there” to see more art and artists in an effort to support our broader community. TC Arts Network is looking to expand--wraps of artist work on the BATA bus (June 1 info on TC Arts Network website). “Tapestry” to create a living as an artist, illustrator, creative process, musician--working as a collaborator. Mistakes have been made, but learning and coming full circle. Blurred lines and fostered many collaborations across the region and has built sense of place. Telling that story is very important and use that as a way to weave. Labeling artists as an “creative”--I am not a creative industry stakeholder; overused and misused. I don’t make them as products that are commodities. Worry that “we” as artist are becoming invisible. How many times the word artist does not appear in NEA, MCACA, etc. Cultural tourism, creative economy, etc--concerned about how this impacts our artistic life. Economic development model runs against the grain of the artistic life. Artists change perceptions, change perceptions, etc. 3 things for artists: time, space and support (direct financial support and friendship). “Let them do their thing.” How can our efforts today connect and foster growth. We need places to do the work and support to do them.

**Questions:**

- Is the money a measure for making it, or is making art important?
  - Important to understand what art is about--they don’t do it to make money, but at the same time we need to sell work to make money
- We live in an undefined world? Thoughts?
  - Seth received grandfather’s jacket, received art, hired to create art--we have to define our own “making it”; practice needs to be preserved--where your heart is when you create

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- We struggle with people wanting to see our work, but wanting to have space to make work; art is not a commodity--there isn't this ready-made market for art
- Anyone who comes to mind for role models
  - Rufus Snoddy: prolific and productive as an artist--creates new ideas and he does this with his work all the time; willing to share and able to maintain a level of "goodness"
  - Susanna Wilson and David Viskochil (Tamarak Gallery): educating people why it's important; creativity takes many forms
- Classroom settings--creative projects: We are talking a lot about creating things and selling them. A creative place is much deeper, it is also cultivating creativity in the schools/educational learning opportunities for all ages
  - Artists need champions; same in the schools--create a mural about sense of place. Glenn's role was as facilitator and made sure to keep his hand out of it.
- Storytelling is our way of connecting--we HAVE to create
  - Storytelling bring people to the arts--how people connect to other people; the reason we produce is to connect to other people
- Fear of supply vs. demand; fear of creative economy--we can use passion and purchase, love and marriage--artists throughout history have had to have champions. You can't be a part of the business part of it.
  - We need to have a common terms: whose community? What does engagement mean? How does filling hotel beds connect to artists? Is there one definitive place to go? TCart.org: what is the first thing we can do collectively? Where can locals, visitors go to learn about the arts community. "We need more people to join." NWMIarts has an active facebook page.
- We want some criticism and critique--cultivate and have local publications. There needs to be ways for people to plug in. We need public writing about the arts. "The arts remind us of who we are."
  - West Shore Community College--we have been talking about calendar
- Performing arts presenter (Katie Tzraska): what is the value of art? Why does that cost that amount? How do we work with artists to have a better conversation with patrons. As an advocate for the arts--how do we better explain? Issue and opportunity at the same time.

**Amanda Jones Kik**

- Strategize what we want around arts and culture
- Goal together today: Great art together for this region--three points to consider before going into our session this afternoon
  - 1. Artists make art (Jaime Bennett ArtPlace--TED Talk, artists make work "far away")--disconnect because we don't know where arts come from
  - 2. Make sure we are inclusive--vision of art for everyone; by design
  - 3. All of our participation

**Break for Lunch**

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**III. Afternoon Session wrap-up, led by Bill Palladino, Food & Farming Network/Taste Local Difference**

- **Interest Tables, Goals and Next Steps**
  - What are:
    - 3 long term goals that we may have accomplished over the next 12 months
    - 1 short term, short win, goal – that can focus on and get done in 90 days
  
- **Outreach**
  - Short term:
    - Have a contact list and invite everyone on list to networking event; host at a recreational facility, hopefully a Grand Traverse County facility
  - Long term:
    - Develop a website and a plan for the website (with content and resource toolbox (for funding, etc.))
    - Develop a plan for leadership
  - **Lead: Mercedes Michalowski and Susan Wenzlick**
  
- **Promotion**
  - Short term:
    - “Like” at least 5 of the other organizations on Facebook
  - Long term:
    - Creating a website (Searchable)
    - Pay for it model (charge at least \$5) for the contact information (include musicians and writers)
    - Video showcasing what video (3-5 minute)
    - Tourism – Map of art assets/facilities (like Crooked Tree)
  - **Lead: Brandon George, Krista Cooper, Renee Hintz**

*Additional Promotion Ideas*

- Pay for it model (charge at least \$5) for the contact information (include musicians and writers)
- Network membership or ticket discounts at area restaurants or punch card or passport
- NW MI ad package for the region

- **Funding/Financial**
  - Short term:
    - Create a case for support for the network (Mary G lead)
  - Long term:
    - Wage type certification (promise to pay artists for their work) – include nonprofit, local businesses etc - shows that you support artists with your dollars – helping change the conversation with how support
    - Create a database of the creative sector
    - Create a funding consortium/angel fund – group to come together to collaborate for bigger community impact
  - **Lead: Amanda Kik, Mary G; support team is Erin A. Whiting**

*Additional Funding Notes*

Artists

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- 1-2% for the arts – funding set aside from gov't
- Raising awareness and engagement
- Gov't or organizations do fundraisers that go to artists
- Business partnerships
- Get a portion of the TC tourism tax
- Wage certification (northern MI version)
- Funder consortium (a la ArtPlace America)
- Fund for public Art
- Innovation Fund

Arts Organizations

- Funder consortium
- Raising awareness and engagement
- Business partnerships

Other ideas

- Spring and fall summit/gathering
- Database for artists, arts orgs
- Integrated communications
- Creating the case for support

• **Advocacy**

- Short & Long term:
  - Find out if local governments have passed art proclamations - reach out to local townships, villages, cities, and find out from city clerk if there has been an arts proclamation made – will draft letter thanking gov't for supporting the arts, or send a letter showing that this group has collectively come together in support of the arts and wants to make sure local govt does to....then get media to cover
- **Lead: Leslie Donaldson** will take lead in follow-up communications and write letter; **whole table** was willing to take lead and go to local governments to find out (names?)

• **Learning/Professional Development/Dev talks**

- Idea - everyone at the table and anyone interested in this topic – - sign up for professional development session or read book about professional development and then report back to the group – goal to become resource and repository to help all do our jobs better
- Short term:
  - Survey attendees – what specific professional development topics everyone is interested in, and also what their strengths, weaknesses and fortes are
- Long term:
  - 2 to 4 times a year have a few speakers talk about their successes (example - marketing, recruitment) and topics that would be of interest to organizations or artists trying to make it in northern Michigan....starting twice a year or eventually, quarterly; spread out geographically with venues hosting it around the region
- **Lead: Meagan Kelto** – will champion/work first on survey and skills bank
  - **Xavier Verna and Kristen Messner** will host first events
  - **Lori Peterson** will help build skills bank database

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- **Artists' Voices**
  - Short term:
    - identify the resources of individuals and organizations (example – space for performance, exhibition, or space; equipment); create as a google doc - everyone can just add to list
  - Long term:
    - set up a moderator through social media or webpage for the discussion to continue and work towards true collaboration
  - **Lead: Melissa Johnson** will create google doc; Long term – Shanny volunteered to help put some of those moderator ideas into action
  
- Bill P, closing comments
  - Be careful not to create more structure than you need -
  - Don't even call these committees; keep language tight for what want to achieve – make language exciting
  
- Mary G, close
  - Toolboxes and next steps – got task forces and to dos – by Friday June 2
  - Send email off registration list if prefer not to share email
  - Make sure we're as inclusive as possible