
CORALVILLE ARTS COMMISSION



2021 Annual Meeting

September 28, 2021



Coralville Arts Commission

Susan Sondrol Jones, *Chair*

Bob Goodfellow, *Vice-Chair*

Ann Burton

Carrie Houchins-Witt

John Weber

Wes Habley, *City Circle Theatre Company*

Sara O'Donnell, *Young Footliters Youth Theatre*

Assisting the Commission

Hai Huynh, *Coralville City Council*

Sherri Proud, *Director — Parks & Recreation*

Evan Hilsabeck, *Managing Director — CCPA*

Nancy Mayfield, *Recording Secretary*

Making Theatre During COVID

During a tough season, our resident theatre companies produced seven virtual performances and two live shows!

City Circle Theatre Company & Young Footliters Youth Theatre

Songs for A New World

A Christmas Cabaret

Art

Acting Out While Staying In

The 25th Annual Putnam County

Spelling Bee

What We May Be

Storytelling: A Pandemic Play

The Show Must Go Online

Seussical Jr

27 weeks of virtual classes!

Returning to the Stage

The CCPA is committed to creating a safe, welcoming space for all audience members. During the past year, we've made significant investments in our air filtration systems and updated restroom facilities. We've also completed repairs to the stage floor, accomplished the first complete repainting of the backstage space, and opened a new costume shop space. We return to making live theatre bigger and better than ever!





New Stories, New Adventures, New Programs

The challenges of COVID gave us an opportunity to connect with our community in new ways. From streaming productions to outdoor performances, we explored stories in ways we'd never imagined before.

Last season the CCPA premiered six original plays and musicals, including two written especially for Zoom by Matt Falduto. These children's plays connected student actors from across the Midwest with audiences across the world!

City Circle Theatre Company welcomed local playwrights Chris Okiishi, Janet Shlapkohl and Paul Story, and Brian Tanner in an evening of virtual comedy that recog-

nized the one room we've all spent too much time in this season — the living room!

The launch of *Footliters Traveling Playhouse* in the summer of 2020 brought new children's theatre programming to our community and small towns across Eastern Iowa. Young Footliters partnered with team members from the former Camp Creamery program to develop an original musical theatre workshop that gives kids of all ages a chance to take the stage. In its first season, more than 210 campers participated in this year's show, *The Secret of the Sphinx*.

Beautiful Coralville — The Role of Public Art

The Coralville Arts Commission is tasked with promoting and guiding the development of public art opportunities for the City of Coralville. We have used the last year to learn more about municipal support for public art, and best practices that can be developed in our community.

During the past year, we've held conversations with funders, artists, and Arts Commissions such as the Keep Iowa Beautiful organization, the Iowa City Downtown District, and the Iowa Arts Council.

We'll continue working to encourage, develop, fund, and celebrate opportunities for public art in Coralville.



Into the Next Year!

As a new season begins, we will be building on the work of the past year, and of our partner organizations, to serve Coralville.

Public Art and a Beautiful Coralville

We will engage artists, funders, and city government to promote public art opportunities in our city, believing that beautiful communities are vital to our well-being.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

We believe the arts are for everyone. Joined by the staff and partner programs of the CCPA, we will promote programs that reflect our community, welcome new artists, and make our theatre accessible to all residents of Coralville.

Fundraising and Development

A vibrant community needs strong arts organizations. We will work to grow the financial resources that make our theatre and arts programs possible.

Celebrate our Theatre

As the Coralville Center for the Performing Arts launches its tenth season of stories, music, and community gathering, we will celebrate the work of the theatre and its volunteers in our community.



Coralville Arts Commission 2021 Annual Meeting

Message from the Chair

Susan Sondrol Jones

September 28, 2021

Hello and welcome to the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Coralville Arts Commission and the Coralville Center for Performing Arts!

I am Susan Sondrol Jones, the current Chair of the Coralville Arts Commission.

Actually – this is a DOUBLE Annual Meeting – since the Fall, 2020, Annual Meeting did not happen!
And what a couple of years these past two have been!

Starting just 8 weeks after the 2019 Annual Meeting, the November 5, 2019, gathering of the Arts Commission found itself continuing in its customary manner, in its customary location The Conference Room of the Coralville Public Library.

Each meeting of the Arts Commission begins with Reports of recent activities from the -

*City Council Representative – Hai Huynh is the current representative

*the Director of Parks & Recreation, Sherri Proud

*Evan Hilsabeck, Managing Director of Coralville Center for Performing Arts, followed by

*Wes Habley of City Circle Theatre Company, and

*Sarah O'Donnell of the Young Footliters

The five appointed Commissioners Anne Burton, Bob Goodfellow, Carrie Houchins-Witt, John Weber, and myself, then proceed to work through the Agenda, wonderfully supported by staff member, Nancy Mayfield. **Will you all please stand.**

On the table at that November meeting was the importance of highlighting Coralville's public art, and how best to promote public awareness. I'm sure that you all have seen and enjoyed the sculpture in Iowa River Landing. The discussion focused on Identifying potential new locations to enhance with various types of art, the cataloging of current public art in the city, and the question as to whether performing arts groups are considered to be public art?

The public art issue continued to occupy portions of ensuing December, 2019, & January, 2020, meetings, interspersed with C'ville Center for Performing Arts, City Circle, and Young Footliters preparations and performances, as well as planning and significant preparation for fundraising for these 3 major components of the Arts Commission's purview.

Then As to be expected during an Iowa winter Cold, snow and ice forced the rescheduling of three weekends of January, 2020, activities – leading to a pileup of multiple-event days toward the end of that month.

As time moved forward & the world recalled that winter would indeed move into spring, the efforts to get C'ville's current public art identified, photographed, and posted on its website continued. To educate the Arts Commission as to how public arts programs in other cities are designed, created, funded, and realized, in March, 2020, Thomas Agran of Iowa City's Public Arts Initiatives was invited to share insights regarding how that city's programs came about. At that meeting, it was also confirmed that the Xstream Arena would include murals and historical displays showcasing C'ville, long ago and more recently. If you haven't yet walked through the Arena, give yourself a treat and explore what a marvelous facility is now a part of our city!!!!

BUT – since the Commission's meeting schedule incorporates planned breaks for the months of April and October – the resumption of its meetings in May of 2020 was slammed by the Covid-19 outbreak! Public events and forward motion at the CCPA and throughout the city/state/world were severely impacted.

So, beginning with the May 5, 2020, regular meeting, the Arts Commission began meeting on Zoom, with the adjournment of each session stating hope for an in-person meeting "next month." The Arts Commission has yet to meet physically face to face 15 Zoom meetings later!

Even with the CCPA theater in lockdown mode at that time, business as usual – such as refunds, cancellations, etc. – continued. The silver lining in all this – if you can call it that – was having the opportunity for long-postponed maintenance projects to be done, and to undertake crucial administrative tasks addressing the future. For the Arts Commission, these meetings were filled with information that ordinarily may have lingered in the background, overshadowed by details usually contained in the subjects discussed in commission meetings. The ongoing study of fundraising plans and strategies were postponed ... though of course, budget work and future planning continued – carried forward by optimistic energy.

All of these barriers to normalcy seemed to nurture the creative imaginations of all involved at the CCPA – hopes of returning to "regular programming" even while usual activities remained on hold. Overall, though, Covid-19 continued to run the show – month after month – plans made – then pushed forward or cancelled altogether.

The lead notes on some of the Arts Commission's Minutes read:

*July 7, 2020 – Due to Covid-19, CCPA closed on March 16, 2020, through September 1, 2020; all CCPA staff furloughed except Evan – other Full-time scheduled to return August 23;

*September 15, 2020 – Full-time and half-time returned; part-time not until Spring. City Circle & Young Footlitters virtual all season;

*November 3, 2020 – Fundraising, Box Office & Facility usage stagnant.

But even so, the mood seemed to brighten slightly at the beginning of December, continuing on into January and February, 2021: believe it or not, the end-of-year fundraising appeal was a success, attracting 30% new donors; City Circle streaming shows were terrific and well-received. Young

Footliters delivered a new play written especially to be performed on Zoom, and also enjoyed a virtual “reunion” party! AND, the CoralvilleArts.com website was totally revamped!

In early March, 2021, an organization called “Keep Iowa Beautiful” (an affiliate of the national “Keep America Beautiful” organization) approached the City of C’ville about a grant program for murals. The cost of a typical mural project was said to be between \$5,000 - \$10,000. At that time, Keep Iowa Beautiful told the City that it could commit \$1,000 to this project up front; the city offered \$1,700 plus donation of in kind materials; the remainder of the cost would have to be fundraised. C’ville Arts Commission agreed to serve as the review committee for this project. The City gave a soft deadline of September 15 for the mural’s completion – in time for the League of Cities’ gathering in Coralville.

Beginning in May, 2021, Coralville Arts Commission began a series of special meetings, which were led by Kevin Techau, Executive Director of Keep Iowa Beautiful. At our first special meeting, Kevin presented a PowerPoint to assist the group in identifying objectives, the scope of the project, developing a vision and goals. Potential sites on Iowa River Landing were suggested. Over a couple of weeks, the Arts Commission researched C’ville’s history, poring over books, historic documents and photos. Kevin offered many video examples of existing murals to view for style, size, detail, medium, etc. The Arts Commission proposed that the theme for the project would be “Coralville – the Hub of Hospitality.”

However, three hurdles presented issues with the specific project and time frame: 1) choosing a site; 2) selecting an artist; and 3) the MAJOR funding issue.

As of July, 21, mural project plans were placed on hold and the original deadline was abandoned until additional funding sources have been identified and funding acquired.

The Coralville Arts Commission’s enthusiasm continues for this project. There is now a signed contract with a fundraising consulting organization and planning for an overall campaign has begun. The “Keep Iowa Beautiful” project will happen. BUT will take the time that it takes for considering the location, identifying an artist, and identifying a new deadline.

In the meantime, the Arts Commission is still hoping that the next time it meets will be face to face.....