

Dear PTA Committee,

We had an intense and productive meeting with Dawn and Ryan of Firebelly, and Shannon of Pivotal Productions on Wednesday morning April 7, 2010. We reviewed the main part of Phase I which is the inventory of vacant storefronts, and discussed some of their findings. As you know, they went above and beyond our expectations in their research and documentation. We have over 70 possible sites!

As the RFQ stated, the second part of Phase I also requires the submittal of the full scope of work and budget for Phase II, which we are expecting momentarily—hopefully in time for our committee to make a motion regarding the funding at Tuesday's commission meeting.

*Motion: To approve funds from Line Item 3.08- Other: Public Arts not to exceed \$25,000, for the first portion of Phase II of the WPB Art in Vacant Storefronts project. This funding is to be used to pay the selected vendor (Firebelly/Pivotal Productions team) to do the following: establish the art selection jury and review session, determine the installation's overall theme (in one meeting with the Promote the Arts committee), create and RFP process for artists, and identify and pair the first round of WPB storefronts with specific art installations for display in June/July 2010.*

As you know, the project would not have gone ahead if they had not found a critical mass of available storefronts with willing owners. The second part of the first phase is also necessary to make sure that the project can be implemented within our budget and expectations.

We spent most of the meeting on Phase II of our project. We clarified the expectations that our committee had discussed previously for this phase (the actual implementation of the program) regarding issues such as artist compensation, curator or jury selection, and the overall process. Since the discussions were robust and fluid, here is a list in no particular order of some of the main points:

- Instead of a single curator selecting the theme and artists, due to the short timeline, we will go to a jury process to select the artists. Names for potential jurors will be collected from the committee by Lynn and sent to Firebelly, who will provide their own suggestions. Three jurors will be jointly chosen by Lynn and Firebelly, and will be approved by PTA. Criteria for jurors are that they have a high-profile and good critical reputation among the Chicago art community. This will help support our Promote the Arts goals by generating a buzz that will bring more attention, audience, art-world credibility and quality artist applications; enhance marketing efforts; add more prestige to the portfolios of the exhibiting artists; make artists and property owners want to continue this in the future.
- Firebelly and Pivotal will come up with the overall concept for the project (ie "theme"). They will present a number of choices from which our committee will select one. They hope to finish their brainstorming and be able to give their presentation to us at a specially scheduled meeting either next Friday April 16<sup>th</sup> or the following Monday April 19<sup>th</sup> depending on everyone's ability to meet. It is critical that we have as many committee members there as possible, since this decision will define the direction of the program.
- We discussed artist compensation, although nothing was specifically resolved. Shannon is writing the Artist RFP and will address this issue in it. Part of the difficulty in deciding artist compensation is that it will depend on the nature of the storefronts that are used, because some may need more work or materials on the part of the artist or the Firebelly Pivotal team for the installation. An amount of \$500 to each artist was

mentioned, but was not anything specific. We also discussed the possibility of definitively quantifying the exposure of the artist and installation in the media as an additional source of “compensation”. This is part of the media buy budget that WPB will be providing, but we will await FB/PP suggestions for specific media as the overall marketing strategy will relate to which media to purchase.

- We also discussed the focus group idea. In Laura’s and Lynn’s email of 3/25 it states that “the CSS (a curatorial selection subcommittee) will help organize the focus group discussion, identify stakeholders, develop the questions to reveal and understand the unique characteristics and resources of the WPB to provide a context for the curator” and that FB/PP will “select a host site for focus group discussion, record and provide a written report of the results to SSA.” We all agreed that given our timeline, it would probably be better if our PTA committee took on the task of the focus group, or perhaps in lieu of organizing such an event, perhaps we could draft our own report to brief the jury on the Wicker Park/ Bucktown artist community and the vision for our storefront project in relation to that. (Given their expertise and history, would Laura or Allison be willing to write something?) Firebelly can provide a corresponding paragraph or two on the vision regarding the marketing part, but this activity will for now remain outside the scope of Phase II for our team.
- Although the RFP states that “in order to have the most impact, the project should be scheduled for 12 months. . .from June 2010 to June 2011”, we re-opened this issue. We all agreed that the logistics of such a program would be difficult (and probably exceed the \$50,000 budget as stated in the RFP). Furthermore, having installations in difficult weather months could dilute the impact of the program. We felt that concentrating the installations from June/July to October/November would work the best (June 1<sup>st</sup> being a very tight deadline). It is important to note that after this period (as they do in similar programs around the country) the installation could be left up by negotiations between the property owner and artist. Since this is a change from the RFQ, please let us know if you have another opinion!
- Some other good ideas emerged such as the possibility of having sponsors and underwriters (Baum Realty seemed eager), and adding another interesting layer of providing bikes or bike rickshaws between sites on weekends if multiple clusters of installations were slightly farther apart than walking distance.

Hopefully Eleanor took notes also and will fill in any gaps in our reporting!\*

Claudia Skylar  
Lynn Basa

April 8, 2010

\*EM note: I have filled in some notes and the text of the motion for the Commission meeting herein.