

**DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Tuesday, May 23, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.
5555 Perimeter Drive**

Council Chamber

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Reiner called the May 23, 2023 Community Development Committee meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Members present: Ms. Amorose Groomes, Mr. Keeler, and Mr. Reiner

Staff present: Mr. Ranc, Ms. Goliver

Also present: Duncan Webb, Webb Management

Minutes of the March 29, 2023 Meeting

Ms. Amorose Groomes moved to approve the minutes of the March 29, 2023 CDC meeting. Mr. Keeler seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Keeler, yes; Ms. Amorose Groomes, yes; Mr. Reiner, yes

Performing Arts Center Update

Mr. Ranc introduced the consultant, Duncan Webb of Webb Management. Webb Management previously did a study in 2015 for a performing arts center (PAC) in the City of Dublin. They have returned to do a feasibility study for a PAC for the City.

Mr. Webb shared a progress report as this moves into Phase 2. Phase 1 of the Performing Arts Center Study showed that there was a strong case for a new facility. There was significant audience demand as well as with artists and art educators. The study showed gaps in regional facility inventory. He noted that there are very strong opportunities to align this project with the goals of the City. They are recommending an Arts & Innovation Hub. This is a building that could include many components. It would include 400-800 seats and be good for a range of activities. The facility would also include a second smaller, flexible space and smaller educational spaces around that. Webb Management held a scheduling charrette on April 5 and invited potential users to come and talk about their needs both physical and operational. There was a good turnout of school groups and local art organizations. There was good discussion about the need for rehearsal space and the importance of acoustics. Many groups talked about needs for storage. He is not supportive of Council building an expensive storage facility. Another concern that came out of that meeting was that the school groups all

spoke about the need for rehearsal space. He is not sure the City should take on the responsibility for building rehearsal space for school-based programs. There was good discussion about concentration of demand, food and beverage operations, and why that is a good amenity. It is about providing an amenity for users and not primarily a profit-generating activity. A calendar survey was distributed to understand demand and potential use dates. There was a good level of demand for the main theater. There was less demand for the smaller theater. They surveyed the groups again as well as groups that did not attend to better understand the demand. The demand was higher but there is still concern because a lot of the demand was for school-based rehearsal space as well as the Abbey Theater presenting. Presenting is when the building books an artist, pays up front, and then markets and sells tickets. The results from the charrettes and Schuler Shook, a design firm, developed a space program. Two versions were done – one for a 700-seat concept and one for a 500-seat concept. The space with the 700-seat theater would include 55,756 net square feet. It includes front of house, main theatre, studio theater, multipurpose space, studios, and classrooms, etc. In the second smaller concept, the seats were reduced to 500, and the second performance and one classroom were removed while the multipurpose capacity was increased in order to facilitate additional performances. Those changes reduced the net square footage to 39,474 square feet. On that basis, a capital budget was developed. The 700-seat concept had construction costs ranging from \$95,128,800 to \$118,911,000. The 500-seat concept construction costs are estimated to range from \$66,712,880 to \$83,391,100.

Mr. Webb reviewed a business plan based on four goals:

1. Attract and support good programs and partnerships for the benefit of Dublin residents;
2. Provide great spaces for local organizations, community groups and businesses;
3. Contribute to the economic vitality and vibrancy of Dublin; and
4. Sustain operations with an appropriate balance of earned income and contributed income.

He noted that the vast majority of performing arts facilities require contributed income. These buildings can be operated/managed in many different ways: schools, non-profits, professional organizations, etc. They are developing more specific policies around operating functions like scheduling, ticketing, beverage operations, security, etc. The policies will be in the completed business plan.

Mr. Webb stated that they have begun to build the operating pro-forma for the two scenarios. The theory is all about projecting activity. Because there is a good understanding of the uses, that allows the projection of earned income and operating expenses. That leads to a gap, which must be filled with contributed income. The gap would be filled with contributed income as well as individual contributions, corporate contributions, government grants, and foundation grants. In the third year of operations (the first stable year), there is an additional funding requirement of \$856,702 for the 700-seat concept and \$281,207 for the 500-seat concept.

Mr. Webb reviewed site considerations and typologies. Performing arts facilities are located in many different types of locations. It is too early to identify an exact site but there are types of sites to consider in preparation for that decision. Those types are:

1. Downtown location,
2. Civic campus, or
3. Corporate campus.

He shared the pros and cons as well as example locations of each of the site types. Downtown sites can be a way to renew a downtown core. It is a great choice when trying to drive economic activity to nearby locations. It can be difficult to attract tourists to the performing arts facility itself but when it is in a district, it can become a powerful way to attract visitors. The cons have to do with parking and access. Example locations: Virginia Beach, VA and Carmel, IN.

Cities choose civic campuses as a means to create a gathering place and to showcase civic assets. Usually parking is good and it can contribute to the production of large outdoor events and festivals. The downside is the lack of other evening events and amenities. Example locations: New Albany, OH and Franklin, TN.

Corporate developments are generally chosen as a means to bring vibrancy to existing prospective corporate tenants. They can help build identity as a place of creativity and innovation with ample parking. The downside of a corporate campus is usually a lack of other evening activities and amenities to support the customer experience. Two examples: Osceola County, FL and Richardson, TX.

Mr. Webb shared that, in summary, a 500-seat facility is largely responsive to community needs while being more cost effective in terms of capital and operating budget. It is important to design an operational model that can sustain operations with an appropriate balance of earned and contributed income. All three site typologies might be appropriate for Dublin based on the City's objectives. It matters that Council decides what is important about the project and how it will service community goals.

Staff provided discussion questions for the Committee's feedback.

1. What is the CDC's feedback regarding the Space Program for the two concepts developed by Webb and Schuler Shook?
2. What is the CDC's feedback regarding the pro forma operating budgets?
3. What is the CDC's feedback regarding the site type analysis?
4. Does the CDC have feedback regarding the potential next steps for a potential performing arts center?

Mr. Keeler stated that the 500-seat seems more profitable earlier. It is much easier to manage the budget for building and operating that option. He believes the smaller facility meets the needs of the community. The Coffman Performing Arts Center is over 700 seats. While we want to offer kids a premier location to perform occasionally, this is not intended to be an extension of the School's resources. The stakeholders that were brought in for feedback were mostly local organizations looking for space. There are

business opportunities, such as national acts, Broadway shows, music acts, lecture series, comedy acts. This would fare well (in Dublin?) in comparison with other communities. The smaller facility would have more seats than McConnell; 300 more seats than the Abbey Theater; 250 more seats than the Avalon Theater in Marysville. One stakeholder stated it would be a shame to build the small one and then regret it a few years later. The magnitude of \$75 million is significant. He is supportive of the smaller option. He does not see value in a small, 100-seat mini-theatre. What happens to the Abbey Theater remains to be seen. He does not want this to be on an island. He does not see the performing arts center fitting in with the sports complex being discussed. It is really important that there are high end restaurants within walking distance. That is almost a dealbreaker for him. Bridge Park is much more than an office park because there are other attractions that keep people into the evening. He thinks Metro Center is an intriguing possibility. Next steps for him is deciding on the large or small performing arts center. It might be worth talking to companies like Corna Kokosing and Ohio State to see if the numbers presented are accurate. After that, funding sources have to be determined.

Mr. Ranc stated that if the project continues, that is when staff will look at getting into detailed cost estimates to put together a financing plan and fundraising strategy. They would then move into picking a design team, site, etc. Staff is looking for feedback and a recommendation or direction after reviewing the entire study.

Mr. Reiner asked if not having a site selected causes gaps in the next steps. Mr. Ranc stated that they would use a cost estimator to help do planning.

Ms. Amorose Groomes stated that relative to the space program, she would hate to replicate things we already have. It seems like the larger performing arts facility would be something we do not have in the community at this time. If that is not affordable, maybe we could build a smaller one that could be designed for expansion. Looking at the calendar from the scheduling charrette, the Abbey Theater, middle school arts and community band would be the largest users. She would like to lean on them regarding how many tickets they can sell, how much they can charge for them, and what is remaining after they have paid their costs. Council often receives requests to waive fees for use of the Abbey Theater. She would like to ensure these entities are capable of paying fees and what they can contribute in ticket sales. That would be part of the proforma and operating budget that she would be interested in seeing. It does not appear that many of those entities are charging significant attendance fees at this point. Regarding site type, it is already an expensive facility to build; putting a performance arts facility on an expensive piece of property would make this more expensive. She would imagine this would be a non-profit organization from which property taxes for the schools and other entities will not be garnered. It could be revenue-generating in some other form. To say where is irrelevant until we know the exact site. The individual parcel is as important as the site type to her. For potential next steps, if this is

something we are willing to pursue, the next step would be to set a timeline to have raised the money in this period of time to cover the cost of construction and have at least 75% of operating funds committed. Direct next steps would be to take this to Council as a whole. Her concern would be setting a window to raise funds for construction as well as the gap identified in the operating expenses.

Mr. Reiner confirmed that the consultant recommended the 500-seat facility. Mr. Webb stated that is a good scenario. There are many opportunities to adjust that. What tends to happen is that seating capacity numbers rise and fall throughout the process. Numbers will evolve. He is comfortable with the work as a starting point recognizing it will change. Mr. Reiner asked what a 500-seat theater could draw. Mr. Webb stated that it could draw ballet, modern dance, probably not opera. Mr. Reiner stated that proximity to restaurants is important. He asked about parking (free vs. cost). Mr. Webb stated that perception around parking is worse than actuality. When these buildings open, people find a way. Perceptions of parking can derail a project like this. Mr. Reiner stated parking is an important consideration, especially in the Midwest.

Mr. Keeler stated Council needs to answer a philosophical question. For example, Grant Park reserves a certain amount of fields each week for residents. There are performing arts centers that receive no City funding at all. Those are typically only good for a theater. We are considering building a cultural arts center. To what degree are we willing to subsidize this to allow community groups to use this facility? He would prefer to have national acts on weekends, but perhaps there are other days other groups can use the facility. He thinks there are opportunities for community groups to use this. For him, the next step is to develop a timeline/deadline and to pin the numbers down more.

Ms. Amorose Groomes stated that the City will contribute something, but where the money will come from and what cuts would need to be made would need to be identified. Those are policy decisions for Council. Mr. Webb stated that some cities find it easier to provide the bulk of the operating support while others find it easier to provide operating support and the private sector to be more involved in the capital part. Ms. Amorose Groomes stated that for her, the answer would be both the City's limit of participation on construction as well as the limit of participation on the operating side.

Mr. Reiner asked the consultant about their next step. Mr. Webb stated that they will flesh out the business plan and develop a critical path plan.


Mr. Ranc inquired if the Community Development Committee would be supportive of bringing the full report to Council, and getting better costs and developing a financing plan from that report.

Mr. Reiner confirmed the Committee is recommending looking at the smaller facility. Mr. Keeler stated that in the report to Council, the Committee would suggest presenting both options to see what Council would prefer. Mr. Webb offered another option where

they trim down secondary spaces in order to increase the capacity of the main space. Mr. Keeler stated that as a cultural arts multipurpose facility, he does not want it to become the Palace Theater. There has to be gallery space and classroom space. All of these things feed each other. If we start removing too many elements, it could lose something. Mr. Reiner stated that he sees it more as a performing arts center. Mr. Keeler suggested having a ring around the theater that is all gallery space. Presentations of art could operate concurrent with performing arts. Ms. Amorose Groomes stated the next step is deciding if \$800-900/square foot is the right number. A lot of legwork has been done. There is a body of work to take to Council and ask for their feedback before we go further. The result of that would be a timeline/deadline. Mr. Reiner asked about labor costs, union versus non-union. Mr. Ranc stated that those costs are generally inclusive in the market. Ms. Amorose Groomes stated that labor is a small portion of the overall cost. Mr. Ranc stated that there could be a number of funding models.

Mr. Ranc stated that staff will finish this work with the consultant and bring this back to Council for their direction on next steps.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.



Chair, Community Development Committee



Deputy Clerk of Council