

# Community Arts Advisory Committee

Meeting #1

July 15, 2019 | 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

3700 South Four Mile Run Drive

# agenda

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

- Welcome
- Introductions

## **LEVEL SETTING**

- Review of Project Scope & Work Plan
- Ground Rules
- Expectations & Responsibilities
- Background & Resources

## **MOVING FORWARD**

- Story Circle
- Interview Findings
- Planning the Work

# introductions

welcome

introductions

# level setting

review of project scope & work plan

ground rules

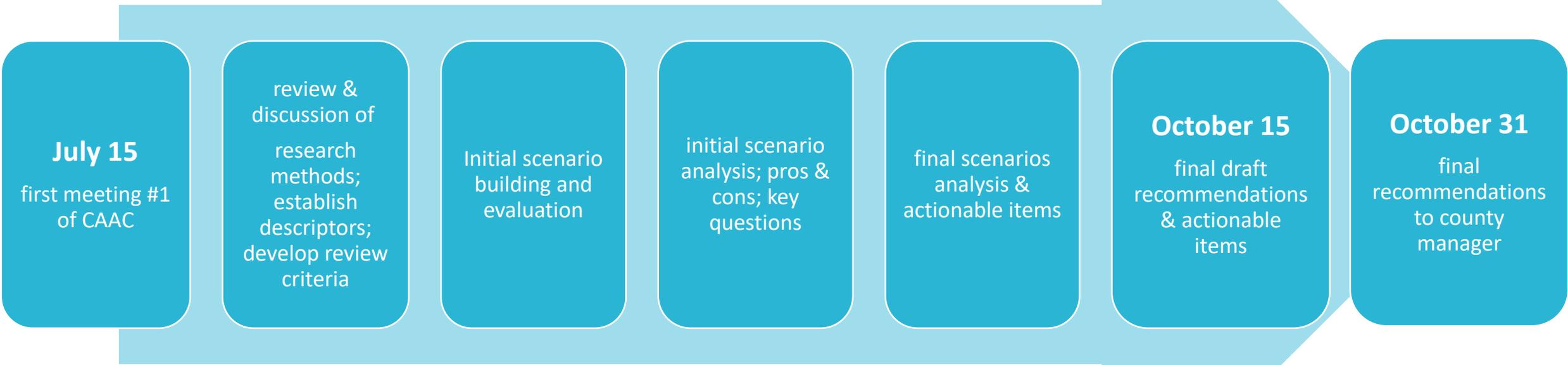
expectations & responsibilities

background & resources

# project scope

1. **catalogue** public and private **arts services** in arlington and the region to include audio-visual services, costumes and scenery construction;
2. develop and analyze **alternative management and service delivery proposals** and funding sources for scenic studio, costumelab and mobile stage operations including a proposed transition for future operations;
3. evaluate and propose **public-private partnerships** for audio-visual services, costumes and scenery construction;
4. develop a new **scheduling process for joint-use theater space** in partnership with arlington public schools.

# work plan



July, August, September, October

# ground rules / working agreements

The Agreements create a safe space for dialogue, critical conversation and decision-making, while aiming to create equity of voice for this work. We will walk through each of the agreements, see what we want to add or change, and then use these to govern all meetings.

- Share all relevant information
- If you miss a meeting, support decisions made in your absence
- Stay on subject; stay on task
- Be constructive
- Listen to each other
- Observe time frames
- Keep to time and agenda
- Start and end meetings on time
- Take risks
- All ideas are valid
- There will be no review for those who are late
- Listen with an open mind before you speak
- No side conversations
- Participate fully
- Think creatively
- Share responsibility for the meeting's effectiveness
- Respect and share air time
- Be brief – share air time
- Speak for yourself, not on behalf of others
- Differences of opinion are natural and useful
- One person talks at a time
- Take responsibility for what you need in the meeting
- Encourage everyone to participate
- Let group know your attendance plans
- Cell phones are off or on silent notification
- Respect confidentiality where appropriate
- Have fun

# expectations & responsibilities

## **consensus prime – decision making**

- The process is explicit, rational, and fair.
- I was treated well and my inputs were heard.
- I can live with and commit to the outcome.



# background & resources

- [Enriching Lives: Arlington Arts & Culture Strategy](#) (adopted June 18, 2019)
- Community Arts Advisory Committee [web page](#)
- arlingtonarts.org [web site](#)
- [Survey](#) for distribution (over 100 sent)

# moving forward

story circle

interview findings

planning the work

# story circle

The purpose of this story circle is to build community among us as members of the Arlington arts community as we endeavor to do this work. Please complete the blank spaces below. Please only use the space provided and be prepared to read aloud. A story circle includes the narratives of every person in the room.

## **Prompt:**

The person who was instrumental in my work in the arts was \_\_\_\_\_.

This person helped me to discover that the arts are \_\_\_\_\_ for a community.

My biggest concern about the arts in Arlington, VA is that \_\_\_\_\_.

My hope for this committee is that we will collectively \_\_\_\_\_.

# story circle

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## **Prompt:**

Write one word to describe what the arts in Arlington, VA mean to you.

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# interview findings

## four topics

- ❑ States of mind and important questions
- ❑ Usage and advantages/disadvantages of these services
- ❑ Alternatives: current knowledge
- ❑ Ideas for changing how the services are delivered and managed

# states of mind and important questions

## at first...surprised

- Scene Shop, CostumeLab and Mobile Stage not expected to be focus of cuts (“I thought they were safe”)
- Suspicion/concern: why such a large cut for the arts, and for this piece of Cultural Affairs?

## and then...energized

- Waves of support; interest from County Board
- Working together

# states of mind and important questions

## now...mixed feelings

- Concern that County minds made up
- Fear that any money saved might leave the arts
- Recognition that Committee's brief is narrow but desire to have (separate) discussion on strategy for the arts
- General view that joint use agreement between County and APS needs thorough review
- Recognition that status quo not an option: potential to make improvements and/or manage services differently

# usage and pros and cons of services

## scene shop

- ❑ Four main users: Encore, Avant Bard, Dominion and The Arlington Players (TAP)
- ❑ Most use in evening and Saturday; Avant Bard use during the day
- ❑ Pros:
  - Affordability
  - Availability of the right tools; largest of three spaces same size as TJ theater
  - Tech. advice and support appreciated, especially by TAP and Encore
  - Convenience, especially for users of Gunston performance spaces
  - For Encore and TAP, part of programming and aligns with mission, respectively
- ❑ Cons:
  - Hours: Sunday access would make major difference
  - Hours: More than 5 weeks would help

# usage and pros and cons of services

## costumelab

- ❑ Most groups on this Committee *occasional* users
- ❑ No large scale use
- ❑ Pros:
  - Large inventory for the area served
  - Some period and other difficult-to-access costumes (e.g. period pieces)
- ❑ Cons:
  - Only adult clothes
  - Lack of awareness in the community
  - Hours (daytime only)
  - Not online
  - Not able to use e.g. dye vat [?]

# usage and pros and cons of services

## performance spaces (under joint use agreement)

- ❑ For theater groups represented on Committee (except Signature,) and Prio Bangla, TJ and Gunston critical: three to six productions a year each
- ❑ TOTR important, especially for Jane Franklin Dance
- ❑ Pros:
  - Good performance spaces
  - Affordable: surcharge is fair/standard; recognize APS maintains as well as provides building
  - Tech. assistance from County
  - Makes sense that community use school resources when not in school use
- ❑ Cons:
  - There is pressure on space in schools
  - Timing of decisions on availability
  - Occasional issues for/with schools or County (from APS perspective)
  - Occasional issues with HVAC
  - No alcohol sales allowed

# usage and pros and cons of services

## 3700 rehearsal rooms

- Important to TAP, Avant Bard, Dominion, Jane Franklin Dance, Prio Bangla (and other 'heritage' and dance groups)
- Busy most evenings, most of year

## technical staff (sometimes seen as distinct from Scene Shop)

- Recognized skills
- Recent positive impact on Yorktown and Wakefield productions
- Schools have theater faculty but not tech. staff or knowledge

# usage and pros and cons of services

## mobile stage

### ❑ Important to:

- Prio Bangla (and some other cultural heritage groups)
- Animal Welfare League of Arlington (AWLA) and CPRO
- The County

### ❑ Busy during the summer, especially September; stored during winter

### ❑ Pros:

- A substantive and well-equipped stage with roof, able to be used for multiple types of event/presentation
- Comes with delivery, set-up, take-down/away, and tech. service
- Affordable: significant discount vs commercial alternatives

# alternative provisions

Facility	Alternatives
Scene Shop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Makers spaces</li> <li>➤ Co-building spaces (e.g. “the Garden”)</li> <li>➤ Large companies in region have own shop and dedicated staff; do not generally share</li> <li>➤ Many small/medium companies make on stage (e.g. Providence Theater in Fairfax County) or “in back yard”</li> <li>➤ Some have own spaces (e.g. Next Stop in Herndon)</li> <li>➤ Commercial warehouse shops</li> <li>➤ Atlas Performing Arts Center has shop, which groups could share (now less so)</li> <li>➤ University and College shops</li> </ul>
CostumeLab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Large companies have own inventory, machinery and staff; do not generally share</li> <li>➤ No known equivalent in area</li> <li>➤ Most groups make costumes, buy from thrift stores or cheap outlets</li> <li>➤ Many also rent to or barter with, other groups</li> <li>➤ Most have own inventory, some substantial (e.g. Reston Community Theater; Little Theater in Alexandria)</li> </ul>
Mobile Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Commercial companies</li> </ul>
Performance Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No dedicated spaces currently open to community groups (except TOTR)</li> <li>➤ APS schools other than TJ and Gunston</li> <li>➤ University and College theaters</li> </ul>

*NB For all these facilities, some interviewees mentioned that the County seems to own various warehouse type spaces*

# ideas for change

## optimize the current business model

- ✓ Understand the real costs of the facilities
- ✓ Increase prices/cost to groups, including through higher surcharge (some disagree)
- ✓ Increase awareness and demand, then rent at good prices to outsiders
- ✓ Achieve same goal by linking up with Maker spaces
- ✓ Change hours to increase usage
- ✓ Diversify ways of using facilities (e.g. other types of 'shop')
- ✓ Improve the efficiency of shop space use so more can use it

# ideas for change

## fully optimize the relationship with the schools:

- ✓ Provide Scene Shop service to groups using schools' shops
- ✓ 'Trade' Gunston Shop and Lab space (for classrooms,) for access to APS shops
- ✓ Use Scene Shop and staff to teach theater tech and general shop to students
- ✓ Use tech. support staff to service school productions and maintain tech. equipment etc.
- ✓ Theater groups to share resources more with middle schools
- ✓ Review from first principles the joint use agreement: what access do schools and groups want and get; who should play what roles; who holds what liabilities; criteria for giving access

# ideas for change

## alternative organizational arrangements

- ✓ One of the four main users, or a collective of the four, run the shop and lab (having culled inventory)
- ✓ Signature to manage shop and lab

## keep in mind other strategic options

- ✓ Move facilities to Four Mile Run Arts and Industry District
- ✓ Use other County buildings in that area

# planning the work

- calendaring meetings
- homework/subcommittees

# homework

## initial thoughts

See Proposed Work Program

Critical Stages

- Data gathering
- Criteria for evaluating models/scenarios
- Generating ideas
- Narrowing down
- Transition plan development for favored options
- Recommendations

Sub-committee work results explored by committee of whole, stage-by-stage

# sub-committees

Scene Shop and CostumeLab	Mobile Stage	Joint Use Agreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maggie Boland</li><li>▪ Sara Duke</li><li>▪ Jane Franklin</li><li>▪ Tom Prewitt</li><li>▪ Steven Yates</li><li>▪ Alex Bryce</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Pryalal Karmakar</li><li>▪ Amy McWilliams</li><li>▪ Kat Williams</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Pam Farrell</li><li>▪ Carol Cadby</li><li>▪ Ava Boston and Yasmina Mansour</li><li>▪ Janet Kopenhaver</li><li>▪ Leslie Peterson</li><li>▪ Matthew Randall</li></ul>