

IPR Community Advisory Council Meeting

March 21, 2013

Interlochen Center for the Arts

MTCAL 106/107 meeting room

Called to order at 12:30 p.m.

Present: Peter Bergin, Chris Campbell, Tim Jackson (phone), Erica Karmeisool, Karen Segal, Tom Quinn (phone), Carol Voigts, Suzy Voltz, Jeff Kimpton, Roger Valade (phone), Thom Paulson, Peter Payette, Linda Stephan, Kate Botello.

The meeting began with Thom Paulson asking the group to address the first agenda item, service assessment, but the scope of the discussion soon expanded to include the next two items, listener engagement and fundraising.

--Carol Voigts: stated preference for online service because she can share it with others.

--Suzy Voltz: asked about place for comments; Thom Paulson responded that it's on the web site.

--Chris Campbell: stated his preference for radio broadcasting--portability, fidelity.

--Erica Karmeisool: Need to differentiate news & music services as marketing strategy; need to develop different message for tourists.

--Tim Jackson: Asked whether music & news listeners have different contribution levels. Thom Paulson responded that music listeners give more per person but there are more news contributors.

-- Peter Bergin: Question about locations of listeners. Roger Valade responded that data are not available for the locations of streaming listeners yet. Traverse City is the principal donor center. Jeff Kimpton noted that a sizeable number of donors report listening to both services. The next largest group is news-only; the smallest group is music-only. Ages: Average news listener, 41. Av. music, 63. Facebook majority are 35-54.

--Suzy Voltz: There is a cell phone app that locates public radio stations for travelers.

Also, she observed that the Whitehall area gets the music station but local people tend to donate to Blue Lake or Grand Valley. Maybe IPR needs to pursue greater presence there?

--Chris Campbell: Local programming tends to differentiate stations and create identity.

--Tim Jackson: Asked what news issues would be pursued if there were no money limitations? Peter Payette responded that money is not the limit, production time is. Tim Jackson observed that he doesn't care who he gets ATC from, but he does care about local coverage.

--Tim Jackson: All local music programing is about the same. Jeff Kimpton replied that it's true of purchased programming but local hosts are a commitment of the station. Peter Bergin related that he's a relatively new learner about classical music. Tom Quinn said that he hears too much Perf. Today (morning & evening).

--Chris Campbell: Suggested outreach to area teachers.

--Carol Voigts: Praised Jeff Haas as a model for classical music outreach. Peter Payette reminded us that 1 hour of programming is 40 hours of production time. Same for news. Issues of quantity vs. quality.

--Erica Karmeisool: Asked about listener surveys--or letting donors determine distribution of their money: "pay to have your say." Listeners could choose local vs. syndicated (or maybe just use a voting system to determine preferences). Peter Payette said that existing research data indicate that listeners usually vote "just about right" when asked about programming--they like whatever they hear. There's not much more syndicated programming available. More locally produced would require more money. Erica Karmeisool noted that surveys give donors power and the means of indicating what's important. Jeff Kimpton inquired whether donor or listener surveys would sequester funds or simply serve as a tool to gauge sentiment. Chris Campbell stated that it's the classic problem of direct democracy that led us to adopt a representative government system that lets elected leaders make informed choices. Thom Paulson said that putting Jeff Haas on the air was a management risk--would listeners like it? Linda Stephan suggested sharing survey data already on hand.

--Suzy Voltz: asked whether underwriters can choose which program to underwrite, and which do they choose? Thom Paulson said that on the news station they tend to select a time slot and on the music station they tend to say "any." Suzy Voltz suggested using existing underwriters' commitment to attract others--"this is why she supports the station; you should join her."

Karen Segal suggested partnering with other groups--National Writers Series, etc. Erica Karmeisool suggested IPR partnership would be a boon for her Arts Council (shared credibility). Harder to share fundraising.

--Tim Jackson: Garrison Keillor mentioned the station; cover other events at Kresge.

--Peter Payette: Web site has "Brad's Shoebox Gallery." Gene Jenneman suggested a related exhibit at museum; possibly a traveling exhibit.

--Kate Botello: "Pure Michigan" group meets in TC in 2014; link to that?

--Erica Karmeisool: Develop repeated public exposure to IPR's 50th anniversary logo by making it available to partners, web sites.

--Linda Stephan: Official media sponsorships. E.g., ICA and Dennos Museum as sponsors of event involving Kevin Boyle's book The Arc of Justice. Maybe ask Film Festival, Writers Series, others to acknowledge IPR. Thom Paulson observed that when IPR was seeking "station of the year" award from the Mich. Assoc. of Broadcasters there were several local organizations that provided letters of support when asked.

--Thom Paulson: The week of the summer fund drive is the 50th anniversary of IPR. The endowment is now at \$800,000; a major gift is anticipated that would push it past \$1 million. Chris Campbell suggested explaining the purpose of an endowment to those who might not be familiar with the concept.

--Tim Jackson: Asked how donated money is used? Thom Paulson responded that all donations go to the station. There are overhead cost payments to ICA but all money donated for the stations is used for them.

--Chris Campbell: Observed that Interlochen employees are enthusiastic about the organization; draw on that commitment for local identification.

--Tim Jackson: Asked about 50th anniversary goal? Thom Paulson responded: \$90,000 match for endowment challenge. If successful, total of \$180,000 to endowment.

--Carol Voigts: Use volunteers (listeners, underwriters) to have a presence at summer art fairs.

--?: Inquired about possible NPR cutbacks from sequestration. Thom Paulson replied that the latest "fiscal cliff" was averted but CPB's funding of \$260,000 last year (based on local funding levels) would likely be reduced 5-point-something per cent. The endowment is a potential source of replacement funding. IPR finished the year in the red; this year the worst so far. Fundraising is up but expenses have increased more. ICA fills the gap.

--Erica Karmeisool: Suggested proposing a way to calculate a gift during fundraisers--ways potential donors could identify a number.

Thom Paulson said that can alienate other entities if they are the comparison (e.g., Charter cable).

--Carol Voigts: Reach out to parents of summer campers.

--Erica Karmeisool: Partner with Traverse City convention & visitors bureau? Suzy Voltz: Benzie's CVB too.

--Tim Jackson: Asked about selling ads. Public TV has commercials. Thom Paulson replied that PBS television has different rules ("enhanced underwriting"). Public radio has limits on underwriter announcements. Can't sell spots. Those rules are not likely to be relaxed. The commercial broadcasting supports the limits to restrict competition. Revenues are from 3 principal sources: underwriting (\$350,000/year), listener donors (\$700,000/year); CPB (\$260,000/year). Total budget > \$1.3 million.

--Thom Paulson: There will be a new music-station translator for Traverse City, a poor signal area. It will cover a 15 mile radius with a full-quieting signal.

--Linda Stephan: Asian Carp event was a big event, much work. Radio program plus video online.

--Thom Paulson: May 2, live HDTV showing of "Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me" at the State Theater; possible ticket giveaways?

--Tim Jackson: Asked about "house receptions." Thom Paulson replied that they are events held in private homes for large potential donors.

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Notes taken by Chris Campbell