

TO: Council President Pro Tem Michael Stinziano
Councilmembers Mitch Brown, Jaiza Page,
Emmanuel Remy, Priscilla Tyson

FROM: Council President Shannon Hardin

RE: Admissions Fee Consideration

DATE: September 14, 2018

Councilmembers:

In anticipation of the Greater Columbus Arts Council's proposal for an admission fee, which reportedly will be delivered on September 17, I want to outline a process to begin our Council's consideration of the matter. Feedback is already coming in from GCAC's public forums, the Columbus Metropolitan Club event, letters, calls and meetings. I am eager for Council to provide additional venues through which all our residents, arts organizations, event organizers, artists, businesses and stakeholders' voices can be heard.

Following the delivery of a proposal to Council, we will work to convene a public hearing during the second week of October. The purpose of this hearing will be for the City to review the original recommendations and impact of the Funding Review Advisory Committee convened in 2011, for GCAC to present the details of their proposal, and to provide an open forum for public input. The text of the proposal will also be posted on City Council's website with a form to solicit residents' feedback.

Along with hosting an initial public hearing, we will call meetings with concerned stakeholders. Our office will compile and review the feedback from residents, businesses and Council members, before our team suggests revisions to GCAC's proposal. If the decision is made to move forward, drafting of a revised proposal will occur in October through early November, and then we would host any additional public hearing(s) for residents and interested parties.

Our team anticipates many interested parties, as the GCAC proposal cannot be wholly separate from many others made by our partners working on critical issues facing Columbus residents.



In effect and in principle, this process will serve as the first major opportunity since the FRAC committee's work to talk about long-term structural changes in what the City funds and how we partner with nonprofits in the arts, travel and tourism, affordable housing and human services. I believe these are important public concerns and am committed to working with the Administration in the coming year to explore our options to meet the myriad funding requests and citizen needs.

Our Legislative Research Office will provide research support to inform Council's deliberations, including information on peer city admissions fees, competitive rates and the impact of fees, and the use of those funds to advance public goals. This work will be particularly valuable because we already invest millions annually to support various public assets, co-owned and managed venues, and the operations of arts organizations and festivals of all sizes. We would be remiss not to research every opportunity to reduce the impact of these costly projects and programs from the City's General Operating Budget.

Any new measure must advance our city's standing and competitive edge in an economy that increasingly demands creativity and ingenuity. Furthermore, any measure must broadly open the doors of our world class arts and cultural scene to Columbus' families, especially children. As I have said before, if it is not for all, then it's not for us.

I am looking forward to an open and public discussion of this proposal and the most efficient, effective, and equitable way to support arts and culture in Columbus. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Regards,



Shannon Hardin
President
Columbus City Council



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