



AGENDA CITY COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2020
4:00 PM
EMMA HARVAT HALL
CITY HALL

1. Call to Order
2. Organization of Committee
3. Consider approval of minutes from the October 28, 2019 Economic Development Committee meeting
4. Consider affirmation of FY21 budgeted amount and intent to budget FY22 and FY23 financial assistance for Riverside Theatre
5. Staff report
6. Committee time
7. Other business
8. Adjournment

If you need disability-related accommodations in order to participate in this program/event, please contact Wendy Ford, Economic Development Coordinator at 319-356-5248 or wendy-ford@iowa-city.org. We ask that contact us early to allow sufficient time to meet your access needs.

**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 28, 2019
EMMA HARVAT HALL, CITY HALL, 4:00 P.M.**

Members Present: Rockne Cole, Susan Mims, Jim Throgmorton
Staff Present: Wendy Ford, Simon Andrew, Ashley Monroe, Eleanor Dilkes
Others Present: Curt Nelson (EDC Inc.); Andrew Sherburne (Film Scene)

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

**Cole moved to recommend funding for FY21 for \$25,000 in assistance for Entrepreneurial Development Center, Inc. in Cedar Rapids. Throgmorton seconded the motion.
The motion carried 3-0.**

**Cole moved to recommend funding for FY21 financial assistance for Film Scene and the new Refocus Film Festival. Throgmorton seconded the motion.
The motion carried 3-0.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 P.M. Chairperson Mims then asked those present to introduce themselves.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 28, 2019 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING:

**Throgmorton moved to approve the minutes from the August 28, 2019 meeting as presented. Cole seconded the motion.
The motion carried 3-0.**

Update and consider request for funding for FY21 for \$25,000 in assistance for Entrepreneurial Development Center, Inc. in Cedar Rapids:

Ford introduced Curt Nelson, President and CEO of the EDC, Inc. in Cedar Rapids. She noted that for the past six years he has been coming to the City with a request for assistance. Ford explained EDC, Inc. helps businesses in various stages, from start-up to established reach the next level in their businesses. Ford noted that Iowa City supports the entrepreneurial community in several ways – assisting the Iowa City Area Development Group with the Co-Lab initially and continuing with MERGE. She added that in working with EDC Inc., they can help to build those much-needed connections to resources for success.

Curt Nelson provided some history of EDC Inc., noting that they just completed their 16th year of service. He stated that they work across the state with businesses, but that their focus is on the 'creative corridor.' Continuing, Nelson described EDC's reach and the number of businesses for whom they have been able to provide support over the past 16 years. EDC Inc.'s primary focus,

is on interstate commerce and high impact scalable businesses. He shared with Members stories of some of the businesses that they have been able to provide support to over the years.

Mims then spoke to Nelson regarding EDC Inc.'s expertise and how they have been able to help businesses achieve success. She stated that she believes this to be a good investment for the City. Throgmorton spoke to the City's recently passed climate crisis resolution and how there is a need for entrepreneurs to create ways to reduce carbon emissions. He stated that his appeal to EDC Inc. would be to help entrepreneurs accomplish this, which in turn would help cities reduce overall carbon emissions. Cole spoke to the many entrepreneurs in Iowa City within the Sudanese community. He asked how people can connect with and find out about EDC Inc.'s services, noting that under-served populations should be a target. Throgmorton added that the Congolese population may also benefit from EDC's services. Nelson responded, stating that they no longer spend money on outreach because they remain at capacity by referrals. He stated that entrepreneurs come to them through many channels, adding that they would be glad to come to any planned meetings with these communities, to talk about their services.

Cole moved to recommend funding for FY21 for \$25,000 in assistance for Entrepreneurial Development Center, Inc. in Cedar Rapids. Throgmorton seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

Annual report and consider request for FY21 financial assistance for Film Scene and new Refocus Film Festival:

Ford gave some background information to Members, noting that Film Scene has just expanded operations with the opening of their new location in the Chauncey. They have doubled the number of employees with the addition of staff for the new location at The Chauncey. Their request for \$25,000 is the same as last year and includes a request to increase the amount over the coming two fiscal years.

A second part of the request includes \$7,000 for a new film festival called the Refocus Film Festival. The inaugural year would be next September, with a planned \$80,000 budget. The \$7,000 request also comes with a request for an increase in the coming two fiscal years.

Ford noted that staff is recommending the requested amounts of \$25,000 and \$7,000, however, cannot recommend including the intent to budget increases over the coming two fiscal years, due to nature of everything being so new. Rather, staff recommends revisiting the request for an increase in funding next year with more financial information on the first year of operations at the Chauncey and after the inaugural year of the Refocus Film Festival.

Ford then introduced Andrew Sherburne of Film Scene. He addressed Members, stating that it has been a busy year for them. Looking back over the past five years, he noted a steady growth of the organization, in terms of both size of their operation and their economic impact. They currently have four screens between two locations, with a fifth screen opening soon. Sherburne then spoke to their financial status over those five years, noting that last year they were able to start an operating reserve. He stated that their current operating budget is around \$900,000. This will almost double next year with the Chauncey location opening. He added that Film Scene

has about a \$1.3 million impact on the local economy, beyond Film Scene itself. This impact is also expected to grow substantially, with expectations coming in around \$2.3 million. Continuing, Sherburne spoke to some of the partnerships they hope to gain this coming year as they expand their programming. One would be with the Summer of the Arts, in their movie series at the Chauncey Swan Park. He gave several other examples of outreach that Film Scene does within the community.

Sherburne then talked about the new Refocus Film Festival, noting that this is something they have been discussing for a number of years. He stated that they want to capitalize on what they believe Iowa City is best known for – Literature and looking at how the written word translates to the big screen. This festival is planned for September of next year, with a budget expected around \$80,000 for the first year. They hope to grow this fairly quickly over the ensuing years.

Mims stated that she thinks Film Scene's growth is phenomenal for such a short period of time. She added that this is a testament to the leadership of the organization and the people who work at Film Scene. She stated that she is more than pleased to continue the support for Film Scene.

Cole spoke to whether there has been a multiplier analysis done in terms of every public dollar that goes in, what type of return is there. He also asked about goals in terms of outreach to certain areas of the community that may have problems getting downtown. Sherburne stated that they do plan to expand their outreach in the next year, but added that their new location does sit on a bus line, making accessibility much easier. He also spoke to some of the organizations they have reached out to, such as the Center for Worker Justice, the United Action for Youth, the Dream Center, and many other organizations within the community. Cole stated that he is also supportive of the request.

Throgmorton agreed with Cole's comments, adding that to the extent they can, he does not want to see Film Scene get the reputation of being an 'elite institution,' to which people from various under-served communities don't feel welcome or can't figure out how to access Film Scene's programming. He said he feels the Greatest Small City for the Arts campaign is more a campaign for the Englert and Film Scene than a campaign for all of the arts in the community. He believes they need to provide equivalent assistance for the diverse arts-related organization in Iowa City, so that all arts can thrive. Sherburne spoke to Throgmorton's concerns, noting that this has been going for about three years now, being about six months into the 'public phase.' He stated that a goal for the campaign is for it to be aspirational, leading to increased collaboration and cooperation among the arts organizations. Members continued to discuss the importance of arts in Iowa City.

Cole moved to recommend funding for FY21 financial assistance for Film Scene and the new Refocus Film Festival. Throgmorton seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

STAFF REPORT:

Ford stated that she had hoped to have the financials for the Tail Winds project, but they are still waiting.

COMMITTEE TIME:

None.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

**Cole moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 P.M. Throgmorton seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3-0.**

**Council Economic Development Committee
ATTENDANCE RECORD
2017 - 2019**

NAME	TERM EXP.	07/21/17	09/15/17	10/10/17	11/27/17	10/20/18	01/18/19	06/03/19	08/28/19	10/28/19	
Rockne Cole	01/02/20	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Susan Mims	01/02/20	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Jim Throgmorton	01/02/20	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Key:

X = Present

O = Absent

O/E = Absent/Excused



CITY OF IOWA CITY MEMORANDUM

Date: January 17, 2020
To: Economic Development Committee
From: Wendy Ford, Economic Development Coordinator
Re: Riverside Theater, Annual report and request for continued funding

Introduction

Riverside Theatre (RT) has been a cultural staple of the Northside Marketplace and Neighborhood for almost 40 years – and of the Festival Stage in Lower City Park since 2000. Last year, the EDC recommended continued funding of \$20,000 for FY20 with an intent to fund the same amount in FY 21 and 22.

This year staff is recommending affirming the funding amount for FY21 with an intent to budget the same in FY22 and 23. While the intent to fund for future years is not binding, memorializing the intent has been helpful for the organization and for staff in budget preparation.

History/Background

For almost 40 years, RT has offered year-round programming at its Gilbert Street location and a run of Shakespeare in the Park on the Festival Stage in Lower City Park since 2000. For the last three years, Riverside has made the outdoor Shakespeare in the Park available for free to the entire community to draw new and larger audiences to the theater.

The City has an established history of helping ensure this cultural asset remains strong. One of the many public benefits of RT is that it will continue to offer Free Shakespeare at the Riverside Festival Stage in City Park. This festive outdoor event helps build theater audiences and awareness of the theater's now full year of indoor productions. The public benefit of offering free theater on a public stage in lower City Park is substantial and doubles as a strategy to benefit RT's financial stability by exposing more people to the theater.

The theater employs more than 100 mostly local artists and maintains a focus on gender parity and racial equity in its casts. They are good Northside Neighbors, having enhanced their building façade this year with a new mural and having taken part in the ICDD Co-Sign program to commission a new vertical sign for the entrance.

History of City funding for Riverside Theatre:

Fiscal Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	\$30,000	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$16,500	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$20,000

Recommendation

The Comprehensive Plan cites Riverside Theatre as an asset to the vitality of the city and states that support for the arts and culture of the community enhances our position in the region. It adds to the quality of life of the community and should be continued and institutionalized as an economic development and community betterment tool for the city.

Ensuring that Riverside Theatre continue as a viable arts business in Iowa City is also consistent with the Central District Plan (updated in 2008), which calls for preserving and promoting the unique aspects of and supporting the economic vitality of the Northside Marketplace. In keeping with the Strategic Plan Priorities, funding RT's request is aligned with advancing social justice and racial equality, enhancing community engagement and promoting a strong and resilient local economy.

Staff recommends continuing the funding amount for FY21 with an intent to budget the same in FY22 and 23.

RIVERSIDE THEATRE

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November 26, 2019

Wendy Ford
Economic Development Coordinator
City of Iowa City
410 E. Washington St.
Iowa City, IA 52240

Dear Wendy,

Thanks so much for taking the time to meet with our Development Director Kate Markham and me earlier this month to discuss Riverside Theatre's operations and needs in the coming season.

We would like to request that the City consider \$20,000 in funding for Riverside Theatre for its FY 2021 budget.

This support will help Riverside continue to provide the Iowa City community with a full year of programming at our Northside location, in addition to Free Shakespeare at the Riverside Festival Stage in Lower City Park in June. We plan on extending our Free Shakespeare programming by one week in order to achieve greater accessibility and attendance in the coming year, while continuing the strides made at Gilbert Street in increasing diversity, gender parity, and visiting writers. In short, we wish to maintain a broad range of voices and stories on our stage while reaching a greater number of Iowa City residents – all while building towards Riverside's 40th Anniversary.

The attached pages briefly describe our current and upcoming plans.

Thank you for facilitating this request. We're grateful for the City's longtime partnership with Riverside Theatre.

If you have any questions or would like to meet again to review specifics, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,



Adam Knight
Producing Artistic Director

RIVERSIDE THEATRE

Funding Request November 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Riverside Theatre is requesting renewed support from the City of Iowa City in the amount of \$20,000 for the City's upcoming FY2021. This amount matches the amounts requested and granted for the last two fiscal years, which we hope the City will continue to find appropriate.

City funding will help sustain Riverside Theatre through its full-year season at Gilbert Street, in addition to providing a financial cornerstone for Free Shakespeare in Lower City Park. Last summer's production of "Henry IV, Part 1" had attendance of approximately 1,550 audience members, many of whom came with their families to the park early for games, concessions, and the all-ages "Green Show". Providing professional productions of Shakespeare free for all is a notable example of what makes Iowa City such a vibrant and accessible community.

Riverside is building towards its 40th Anniversary Season in 2020/21. Upcoming programming will bridge 40 years of history at Riverside Theatre, honoring the past and looking towards the future, while continuing strides made in increasing representation onstage and expanding the types of stories that we tell.

2018-19 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

Attendance Summary

- Seven full productions at Gilbert Street Theatre, serving 5,785 patrons (including 425 students) over 92 performances
- Two weeks of Free Shakespeare in Lower City Park, serving approximately 1,550 audience members

Increased Employment, Diversity and Gender Parity on our stages

- 103 artists employed (97 local)
- 50/50 gender parity in casts (up from 60/40 in 2017-18)
- 3 out of 7 Gilbert Street plays written by women
- First gender non-binary actor on our Gilbert Street stage
- 23% non-white actors on our stages (up from 6% in 2017-18), which better reflects the diversity of Johnson County

Increased Press Coverage

- Front page coverage in the Iowa City Press-Citizen
- Cover stories in “Go Iowa City” (Press Citizen), “Hoopa” (The Gazette), the Daily Iowan, and Iowa Source
- Winner: 2018 and 2019 Best Theatre Company (Little Village Best of the CRANDIC)
- Winner: 2019 Best Theatrical Production: “Men on Boats” (Little Village Best of the CRANDIC)

Unique, Quality Programming

- Regional premieres of “The Cake” by Bekah Brunstetter, “Discord” by Scott Carter, and “Men On Boats” by Jaclyn Backhaus
- World Premiere of “Apple Season” by E.M. Lewis (National New Play Network rolling world premiere, in association with New Jersey Repertory Theatre and Moving Arts in Los Angeles)
- Two playwrights in attendance: E.M. Lewis and Scott Carter (Executive Producer of “Real Time with Bill Maher” on HBO)
- First Riverside production of celebrated playwright August Wilson

Education

- Will Power educational tour brought Shakespeare workshops to 8 area middle schools

Free Shakespeare

- “Henry IV, Part 1” was the 2nd Year of Riverside’s Free Shakespeare initiative
- Served approximately 1,550 attendees, including 300 school-age children
- Partnered with local businesses and individuals to underwrite free attendance

Facade Improvements

- New mural on our Gilbert Street facade (Downtown District’s Mural Program)
- New projecting sign (Co-Sign Project grant)
- Activating our front window and entrances in order to increase visibility as a cultural hub of the Northside

CURRENT 2019-20 SEASON GOALS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Goals

- Maintaining or expanding gender parity and diversity in all roles and positions
- Three playwrights in attendance (Megan Gogerty, Mat Smart, David Lee Nelson)
- 25% overall increase in attendance at Gilbert Street (6,550) and in the Park (2,500)

Partnerships

- Iowa City Book Festival (“Uncle Vanya”)
- Witching Hour Festival (“Feast.”)
- Iowa Writers’ House (“Stages”)
- Mission Creek Festival (Lit crawl reading on our stage)
- International Writers Program (panel discussion on our stage)
- UofI Center For Advancement - Senior College (spring class taught by Miriam Gilbert on “A Doll’s House” and “The Winter’s Tale” to coincide with Riverside programming)

Increased Student Attendance

- Offering \$10 student tickets (non-subsidized) for students of all ages
- Goal of 10% overall student attendance (up from 7% in 2018-19). We are currently at 11% attendance through the first two productions.

“The Agitators”

- In January/February, Riverside will present the Iowa premiere of “The Agitators” by Mat Smart, a new play about the friendship and rivalry between Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony.
- This play is presented in celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Women’s Suffrage and in honor of Black History Month – and in the midst of the Iowa Caucuses.
- We are partnering with the League of Women Voters Johnson County on a panel discussion and outreach, and will hold three student matinees for area high schools. The playwright will also be in attendance and will participate in a post-show discussion.

“Stages”

- In February/March, Riverside will present the Iowa premiere of “Stages”, written and performed by David Lee Nelson. The play chronicles Nelson’s diagnosis at age 39 with Stage Four colon cancer, and his subsequent treatment. It is a story not only for those whose lives have been affected by the disease, but also for health care professionals
- This play is presented in March as part of Colon Cancer Awareness month

- Riverside is seeking partnerships with the medical community in Iowa City, particularly the Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center, to engage with doctors and health care professionals and encourage attendance
- The play, co-created with Producing Artistic Director Adam Knight, also reflects Riverside's support of the artistic process. This will be the first fully-realized production of this new play.
- The playwright will in residence at Iowa Writers' House for the duration of the run

Free Shakespeare in Lower City Park: "The Winter's Tale"

- This summer we will present "The Winter's Tale" - a late "romance" play, providing a fantastical mix of comedy, tragedy, and political intrigue. The tale of a ruler whose jealousy causes him to become a tyrant, with fatal consequences. Only through time, and a renewed friendship with a foreign kingdom, is redemption found, along with the promise of a new generation.
- We believe that great theatre needs to be accessible. There are over 31,000 families in Johnson County and almost 24% have annual household incomes of less than \$50,000 (ACS 2017). Free Shakespeare provides an opportunity for these families to experience professional theatre without worrying about the cost of a ticket or hiring a sitter.
- Riverside will add a third week of performances (4 additional shows), which we anticipate will add 900 attendees. Along with this expansion, we will increase advertising and outreach to schools, rec centers, retirement communities, and churches to reach more facets of the community who might not regularly attend the theatre. Adding an additional week will also mitigate the risk of losing an entire weekend of performances in the case of inclement weather.

2020-21 SEASON PLANS (40TH ANNIVERSARY)

We are in the planning stages for our 40th Anniversary Season. Current plans include:

- An American Premiere of a foreign-language play in October
- A partnership with Iowa City Book Festival and Music IC
- Productions involving past leaders and key artists throughout Riverside's history
- A workshop of a new play by Scott Carter (writer of "Discord")
- The return of our "Walking the Wire" series highlighting local writer/performers
- Celebrated plays by Henrik Ibsen and Edward Albee, along with a world premiere and two regional premieres

BUDGET SUMMARY

We are projecting a slight surplus in FY20, which will go towards offsetting losses and long-term debts accrued over the previous three Fiscal Years.

FY20 BUDGET (September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2020)

INCOME	\$
Earned Income	188,601
Contributed Income	267,775
TOTAL INCOME	456,376

EXPENSES	\$
Artistic	149,991
Production	56,104
Education	3,157
Marketing	19,678
Patron Services	38,594
Administration	58,429
Development	48,695
Facilities	71,460
TOTAL EXPENSES	446,108

NET INCOME	10,268
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CONCLUSION

For the last two seasons, Riverside has been increasing partnerships with other arts and civic organizations in order to bring high-quality theatre to more patrons and constituencies, and to be a more positive force in the Iowa City cultural landscape. After two seasons of Free Shakespeare in Lower City Park, we are ready to expand our production calendar in order to make this event more accessible to more residents. Riverside Theatre will continue its strides in increasing representation on its stages, while connecting audience members to nationally recognized writers and the best in local talent. Riverside Theatre is incredibly grateful for the City's continued partnership and willingness to consider funding to support these efforts.