

THE Mansfield

Center for the Performing Arts
ADVISORY BOARD

Friday, March 29, 2013
Gibson Room at the Great Falls Civic Center
Call to Order: 12:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Advisory Board Members Present: Carl Donovan, Joe Fontana, Larry Gomoll, Keern Haslem, Mary Sheehy Moe

Advisory Board Members Absent: Sue Ferrin, Kim Thiel-Schaaf

City Staff Present: Dona Hughes, Events Supervisor

INTRODUCTIONS

None Necessary

OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes

Mary Sheehy Moe presented a correction to the minutes. She is not part of the task force for the Theater Seating Project. Carl Donovan moved and Larry Gomoll seconded to approve the January minutes. Board members present unanimously approved minutes for January 2013. (Note: there was not a Mansfield Advisory Board meeting held in February 2013.)

Theater Seating Project Task Force

The task force for the Theater Seating Project was held February 1st. Minutes are attached.

Commission Work Session Slide Show Presentation

The Mansfield Advisory Board is scheduled for the Commission work session on Tuesday, April 2, 2013, at 5:30 pm. The Mansfield is the only presentation on the agenda. Meeting will be held on the Mansfield Theater stage. Mary Moe will present the slide show. It was recommended that all Advisory Board members attend if at all possible.

The Mansfield Theater Remain Seated II power point was reviewed and the following recommendations for change were made:

- Presentation note: volunteer ushers not only secure the doors, take tickets and seat people, but are trained by the Fire Marshall for emergency evacuation.
- Presentation note: include economic impact #'s based on ticket stats.
- Presentation note: only half of the Mansfield Convention Center's air handling system is operational.
- Presentation note: the expected life span for the 1996 theater seat recover/rehab was expected to last 12 years. We are now in the 17th year.
- Add a bullet "ADA Concerns":
 - Looking to the future - Increase use of wheelchairs
 - Presenter Note: currently, the theater has 6 wheelchair positions. ADA regulations require 15 wheelchair platforms. However, at the time of the last remodel, City received an exception to the requirement through working with the population assisted with wheelchairs in determining the need.
 - Challenge: 48% of the seats are in the loge and balcony (863) and accessible only by stairs
 - Increase use of walkers

- Increase use of walkers
 - Presenter note: Continental seating configuration could allow for patrons to keep their folding walkers with them.
 - Patrons with hip and knee replacements find it difficult to navigate the narrow rows.
- “Under Theater Investments”: change dressing room to dressing rooms.
- Add picture of the continental seating
- Add a bullet: Balcony and loge seating issue
 - Balcony and loge challenge: construction is steps that are poured in cement. Challenge- how would to length the tread or run on the step
 - Add more aisle lights
- Presentation notes: losing seats will be a challenge for those with long-time season series patrons who have always been able to renew their same seat(s)
- Option 2:
 - Change “aisles” to “rows”
 - Would still lose seats over current seating configuration
- Break down the \$800,000 figure into sections:
- Slide 12: Change “memoriam” to “sponsor”

The Board

Kimberliegh Thiel-Schaaf was appointed to the Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts Advisory Board by the City Commission.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business presented

Next Meetings:

Commission Work Session: Tuesday, April 2, 5:30 pm on the Mansfield Theater stage


The next Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts Advisory Board meeting is Friday, April 19, at noon. It is currently in the Gibson Room. Venue may change if the room is rented.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS (Public Comment)

No petitions or communication were presented.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, Larry Gomoll, moved and Carl Donovan seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Board voted unanimously to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 12:58 pm.



 Mary Sheehy Moe, Chairman

Action Items Pending

1. Power Point Presentation for Theater Seating Project

THE Mansfield

Center for the Performing Arts
THEATER SEAT PROJECT TASK FORCE

Friday, February 1, 2013, 3:30 pm
Gibson Room at the Great Falls Civic Center

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Present: Sue Ferrin, Joe Fontana, Larry Gomoll, Keern Haslem, Carolyn Valacich, Dona Hughes
Members Absent: None

Introductions

Members introduced themselves. Advisory Board Members welcomed Carolyn Valacich, Executive Director of the Great Falls Symphony Association.

Configuration of seating

The challenge for the remodel is to achieve a balance - comfort vs. loss of inventory/seats. Current inventory or seating capacity is 1782.

There are two options to configuring the audience chamber:

- Keep the current configuration with 4 aisles
 - Would lose some inventory of seats as seats need to be wider and aisles need to be a little wider
 - Retains a greater inventory of aisle seats which are preferred by many
- Go to continental seating where the aisles between rows are wider, but the rows stretch from one aisle along the outside wall to the other aisle along the other outside wall.
 - Would probably lose more inventory of seats than the above option as aisles would be much wider
 - Asset: would allow much more leg space and space for people to keep their walkers with them. (With an aging population, there will be even a greater need in the near future.)
 - Disadvantage: would lose valuable inventory of seats which is crucial in retaining the performances with higher artist fees such as Broadway in Great Falls and other nationally touring acts.
 - Challenge: both the Great Falls Symphony and the Great Falls Community Concert sell seasons giving their patron the option to renew their seats. The loss of seats in prime locations will be a challenge in retaining the long-time, ticket holder whose seat has been removed due to the remodel.

Committee agreed that both options for seat configuration should be explored.

Caution must be taken to preserve the historic integrity of the theater as well as the acoustics of the theater. The shape of the floor is contributes to the great acoustics in the theater.

Floor coverings also need replacing.

Funding

Carolyn pointed out that it is to everyone's advantage to include the community members and businesses in the fundraising efforts as well as seek some sort of public funding. She suggested that we look at some sort of fundraising efforts along the lines of the 1996 "Remain Seated" campaign that was implemented to raise funds to restore the existing seats. She noted that the plaque in the theater lobby recognizes those contributors who "bought" seat(s). This approach gives ownership to many.

Fundraising for the seat project cannot be solely on the private sector as Montana is limited in the amount of large businesses that have resources to fund non-profit efforts. Therefore, they are tapped for many projects. We need to maintain a balance. Caution must be taken not to shift contributions from the producing and presenting non-profit companies to the seat project as those funds are necessary for programming and operations.

Identify all stakeholders including those national companies who may promote something in Great Falls only once a year. Engage them in creating a positive image in our community.

Funding resources brainstormed:

- Bond issue
- Davidson Companies
- Dennis Washington Foundation (Is Phyllis Washington is originally from Great Falls?)

Next Steps

Presentation at the Commission Work Session on April 2, at 5:30 pm

Explore both seat configuration options:

- Hire an architect
- What inventory is lost?
- Cost estimate