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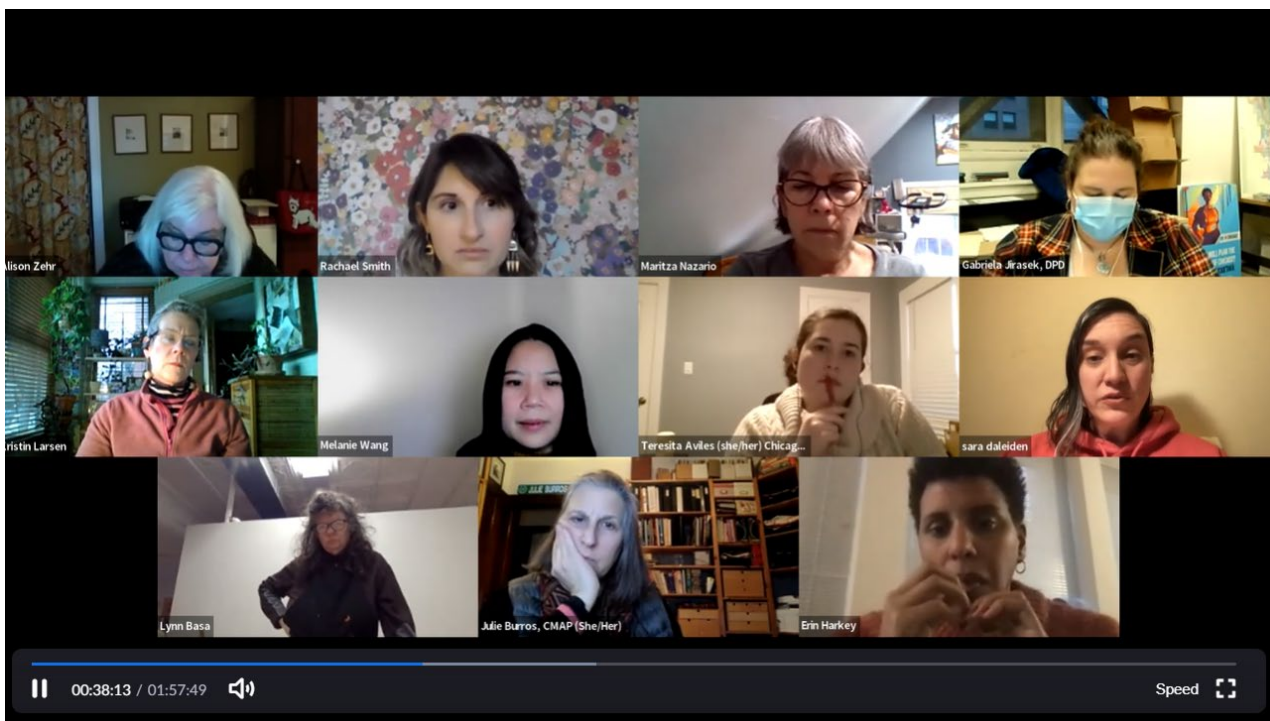
## Arts and Culture Meeting #8

January 10, 2022, 4:00PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Jonah Nink

### ATTENDEES

- Alison Zehr
- Abby Foss
- Erin Harkey
- Teresita Aviles
- Henry Wishcamper
- Kristin Larsen
- Julie Burros
- Anezka Gocova
- Devonta Boston
- Julia de Bettencourt
- Dawn Posey
- Lynn Basa
- Sara Daleiden
- Wisdom Baty
- Peggy Stewart
- Martiza Nazario
- Rachael Smith
- Gabriela Jirasek
- Clevan Tucker
- Melanie Wang
- Kim Jay



## MEETING GOAL

*Revisit and revise the final objective drafts before moving into policy creation.*

## WHERE WE ARE



Step 1

**We Are***Setting the Stage*

Step 2

**We Have and Need***Develop A Policy Toolkit*

Step 3

**We Will***Set Policy Framework*

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

In her guest speech, Sara Daleiden discussed in depth why it's best to approach independent artists as small businesses. Arts and culture topics often include issues of funding such as artist grants and community investment, so it only makes sense to consider artists as a small business in the same way you'd consider a restaurant or a locally-owned store.

2

Alison Zehr mentioned that as the pillars move into the policy stage of We Will Chicago they should start to consider policies that can overlap with other pillars.

3

A common theme throughout the discussion was the importance of collaboration between governments, communities and businesses when supporting artists. As Lynn Basa touched on, a lack of cooperation can quickly lead to a stalemate for progress.

## CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

*“Chicago is not unique in having neglected Black and brown neighborhoods for decades, starving them of resources and support for just about everything. The We Will Chicago plan will be successful only if it includes policies that begin to reverse this so that in the end we can legitimately say, as we do in our guiding question #3, that artists and cultural organizations are active in and contribute to the life of all Chicago communities.”*

**Alison Zehr** | Nonprofit Consultant

*“I’m really making an economic development argument through the mechanism of neighborhoods and the people who are already there. And they all have networks.”*

**Sara Daleiden** | Artist

*One of the unique things about us as a group, and some of the value of us as a group, is that some language that would be perceived as neutral in other circles can have very specific meaning to whether it’s our individual organizations or the artists that we work with.”*

**Melanie Wang** | 3Arts, Director of Development and Partnerships

*“The thing that discourages me so much I just want to quit is that we are running up against, for lack of a better word, capitalism. Even when it’s in the property owner’s own best interest to activate their spaces with artists or creative businesses or whatever, they are just holding out for this mythical top dollar, and they’re letting their buildings deteriorate year after year. ”*

**Lynn Basa** | Artist

## NOTES

**Community Partner Updates**

- The Chicago Cultural Alliance hosted its first meeting with the Illinois Arts Alliance on Jan. 5 to discuss the use of city funding.

- There will be one meeting event per week until the end of January, and all events are open to the public.
- En Las Tablas Performing Arts held their first meeting this year on Jan. 4.
- Other community outreach organizations held their first meetings of the year.

### **Finalizing Pillar Objective Drafts**

- The following are guiding questions discussed by the pillar that will eventually inform policy making. Feedback for each guiding question draft is given where applicable.

#### **“How can we support creative workers to ensure resiliency and diversity, recognizing that past support has not always been equitable?”**

1. Increase a variety of monetary and technical support systems for creative workers.
2. Incentivize and regulate best practices for creative workers.
3. Decrease barriers to access grant funding and other resources for individual creatives.
4. Employ artists to advance the City’s community improvement agenda.
5. Advance the creation of accessible information centers.

#### **Feedback:**

- It was asked how “best practices” were being defined in point #2, in order to avoid unfairness and keep a level playing field for funding. They decided to replace it with the term “standards.” It was also noted that the future addition of supplemental copy will help clear up the issue. Highlighting standards and core competencies was another suggestion.
- **Gabriela Jirasek:** “The point is that equity is a lot more a process than it is an outcome.”
- Members asked if the term “creative worker” was too limiting, and might not be inclusive to unpaid employment such as internships.
- It was asked by multiple members if the “barriers to access” could be clarified.

#### **“How can we reimagine support for cultural organizations to realize a sustainable level of investment that is equitably allocated and driven by the community?”**

1. Diversify types of funding available to support needs-based equitable investment.
2. Increase support for culturally responsive and locally-driven programming.
3. Expand applicant eligibility to include a wider variety of cultural programs.

#### **“How can we ensure that artists and cultural organizations are active in, and contribute to, the life of all Chicago communities?”**

1. Prioritize cultural investment in communities that have historically been under-resourced.
2. Leverage the power of arts and culture to build vibrant, cohesive communities and to facilitate their resilience, health and healing.
3. Increase the number of creative businesses and cultural spaces in underrepresented communities.
4. Foster the development of supportive networks of creative workers contributing to the life of creative workers.

#### **“How do we provide support for, and access to, culturally responsive arts education, workforce development and creative engagement for learners of all ages?”**

1. Advance arts and culture as a critical component in formal education for young Chicagoans.
2. Support culturally responsive and cross-disciplinary arts education.
3. Center creative workforce development efforts.
4. Support informal arts education for all ages and skill levels.

**“How do we promote and build awareness of Chicago’s arts and culture assets within and across communities, citywide, and beyond our borders?”**

1. Expand the focus of the city’s marketing efforts to include cultural assets in all communities.
2. Support marketing efforts by community groups.

**Feedback:**

- Melanie Wang noted that the Arts and Culture pillar was in a unique spot regarding language, as it can refer both to organizations and individual artists. She applauded the team’s acknowledgment of this fact throughout the process.

**Cross-Pillar Topics**

- It was noted that while the Arts and Culture pillar does share a topic with each of the other pillars, that doesn’t mean they share the same issues. Transportation for example means something different to accessibility than it would to Arts and Culture.
- It’s anticipated that each pillar will develop policies in an overlapping structure that will allow for policies to overlap.

**Guest Presentation from Artist and Civic Engagement Facilitator Sara Daleiden**

- Alison Zehr begins the discussion by asking what the starting point should be for the Arts and Culture pillar to create equitable policy for historically marginalized Black and brown communities. Daleiden responds that the best way to approach problems is with the mindset that every Chicago neighborhood has working artists both formally trained and informally trained.
- Daleiden discussed the importance of neighborhoods in both Chicago and Milwaukee, where she is currently based. The variety within each of these neighborhoods is what makes them feel so “human,” according to Daleiden, especially with respect to the artistic communities they facilitate.
- **Daleiden:** “I personally see [artists] as for-profit businesses. And again, most artists for the duration of their career will stay a small business. Some may just work out of their Social Security number their whole life. Some will go as far as to build an LLC or a corporation but whatever that is, they are ready and, again, could be invested in.”
- Daleiden explained that arts nonprofits and government organizations are very important, but still supplementary to artists, and that it is important to invest in local talent.
- Like a small business, artists have a support system directly tied to their community through family, friends, clients, etc. Artists also receive motivation socially through their network.
- Daleiden discussed the importance of government investment in the arts as a form of rebuilding community trust. “It’s a slow process to build trust as you’re all probably aware of, but it is a place to start in all of this. Just delivering a resource or support you’re still mending in my mind, in most instances, I’m guessing it’s a mending process around [community’s] relationships with the government, or at least the mixed feelings we can say.”
- Lynn Basa noted that hesitation from building owners and asked how to discuss creative development projects with property owners.

- **Daleiden:** “Policy is one of the mechanisms the government has to start to create a different dynamic on Milwaukee Avenue by you ... At some level, the government does have to show up, and I’m arguing [that] connecting on the ground with the actual small businesses first that are there, even if it’s a business of one, that that is a way to start changing the dynamic of the capitalist value system.”
- Giving artists and businesses opportunities to work with property owners and leverage through investment and tax incentives are all ways the government can help artists better sustain their place in the community.
- **Daleiden:** “It’s always about true partnership between sectors like government, foundations, nonprofits, for-profits at different scales. It’s that true mix of getting that in the room.”

### **Pillar Metrics**

- Meeting attendees were asked to rank topics relating to each guiding question in order of what they would like to see at future meetings.
- Attendees favored topics related to public and private artist support, creative worker demographics, where support is going geographically, and the number of arts facilities, audience growth and activities in each community.

### **Breakout Groups**

- Breakout rooms #1 and #2 discussed how the pillar could focus citywide spaces and events on cultural innovation. The groups considered the topic to be very broad, which could be a barrier for organizations that did not have the right resources. Specifics could be found through community input.

#### RESOURCES

**ARTS & CULTURE PILLAR MAIN PAGE**

<https://wewillchicago.com/arts-and-culture>

**CHICAGO CULTURAL ALLIANCE**

[A consortium of local cultural centers, museums and historical societies](#)

**SARA DALEIDEN'S WEBSITE**

<http://mke-lax.org/about/>

#### NEXT STEPS

- Members felt confident that they were ready to begin working on policy at the next meeting, which is set for February.