

**Minutes  
Council Meeting  
December 7, 2023  
9:00 a.m.  
Virtual Meeting  
via Microsoft TEAMS**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS:** Chair Parks, Mr. Alaquiva, Mr. Astorino, Senator Bartolotta, Ms. Cohen, Mr. Gabel, Ms. Goldberg, Representative Labs, Judge Morgan, Mr. Stull, Ms. Vilayphonh,

**COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** Representative Ciresi, Ms. Gunderson, Mr. Warfield, Ms. Zaborney

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Karl Blischke, Executive Director; Heather Doughty, Deputy Executive Director; Christopher Duerr, Program Coordinator & Grants Specialist; Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning; Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration; Norah Johnson, Director of Public Awareness & External Affairs; Laura Kline, Executive Assistant; Amanda Lovell, Director of Access to the Creative Sector; Sarah Merritt, Director of Creative Communities; Dana Payne, Director of DEI Initiatives, Diverse Cultures & Heritage; Seth Poppy, Director of Data Systems & Creative Services; and Ian Rosario, Director of Arts Organizations & Arts Programs & Grants Liaison

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Amber Sizemore, Chief Counsel; Rachel Wenrick, Founding Director, Writers Room, Drexel.

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER:** Karl Blischke welcomed those in attendance and informed them that the meeting would be recorded for the administrative purpose of minute taking. Mr. Blischke then turned the meeting over to Chair Parks.

Chair Parks introduced and welcomed new Council Member Susan Cohen.

Ms. Cohen stated that she is thrilled to serve on the Council and provided some information about her background. She stated that she recently met with PCA staff, which was very inspiring and that she is looking forward to working with the members of the Council.

**ROLL CALL:**

*Karl Blischke, Executive Director*

Mr. Blischke called the roll. A quorum was established.

**ITEM 2: REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Chair Parks asked if the PCA received any requests for public comments. There were no requests for public comment.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

*Jeff Parks, Chair*

Chair Parks reminded the Council of the PCA's Conflict of Interest Policy.

**ITEM 3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the October 5, 2023, Council meeting minutes.

Ms. Goldberg made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Stull seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

**ITEM 4: Recommendations for Creative Catalyst Grants**

*Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning*

Ms. Dunlap provided a summary of the Creative Catalyst grant program, which has been in existence for approximately 3 years. Dunlap stated that these grants are designed to provide support to a new idea, a new initiative, an event like a statewide conference, or a research project. She added that there needs to be a project component with a statewide or regional reach, and all the grants require a one-to-one match.

Ms. Dunlap provided an overview of the 2023/2024 Creative Catalyst grant funds.

**Applicant:** Penn Hills Charter School for Entrepreneurship – Allegheny County      **Proposal:** MicroSociety Conference

Ms. Dunlap stated that the Penn Hills Charter School of Entrepreneurship (PHCSE) requested funding for its MicroSociety Conference that will be held on March 20-22, 2024, in Pittsburgh.

Dunlap explained that the conference will bring together local, national, and international education leaders that are a part of a modern education program called MicroSociety.

Ms. Dunlap stated that at this conference, PHCSE plans to present a large-scale showcase of a new music arts program that they have initiated in the 2023-2024 school year. She indicated that PHCSE has partnered with a local organization called Conduction, which created a software program that allows young students with little to no music background to have the ability to arrange, compose, and remix music. Ms. Dunlap explained that the student created music is then converted into sheet music which community musicians will perform live by a 30-person orchestra comprised of local Pittsburgh musicians.

Ms. Dunlap stated that by showcasing this software program and the associated student-created musical performance at the conference, educators will gain knowledge of how to support the interest of a budding DJ/producer generation and how to integrate this interest with an accessible music education program.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the organization has requested \$12,500 and that PCA’s recommendation is for \$10,000.

**Applicant:** Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council – Allegheny County      **Proposal** Culture Counts 2.0

Ms. Dunlap reported Culture Counts 2.0 is an initiative of the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council (GPAC) to establish indicators that measure the social, educational, and economic factors that represent the size and health of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County's creative and cultural sector. Dunlap stated that the initiative builds off of GPAC's existing research projects to assemble shared metrics for the arts and humanities in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, create opportunities for coalition-building within the sector, and serve as an advocacy tool for greater philanthropic and public support of the sector.

Ms. Dunlap explained that key metrics will be gathered and analyzed over time to monitor the sector's well-being and whether it's improving, declining, or staying the same and added that the resulting indicators will help GPAC and its collaborators decide how to focus resources to improve the vitality of our sector and then monitor the collective impact of our shared efforts.

Ms. Dunlap stated that GPAC hopes that Culture Counts 2.0 can be used as a template for work being done by other arts organizations throughout Pennsylvania. She explained that research methods, project management, areas of inquiry, and output of results are intended to be replicable by other arts organizations and nonprofits throughout the Commonwealth.

Ms. Dunlap stated that PCA staff is recommending an award of \$25,000.

Ms. Goldberg asked if the students from the Penn Hill Charter School will open their performance to the public and asked for some additional clarification on how that will work.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the audience members at this conference will be other schools that use this micro society approach, which will include educators, teachers, and staff from schools across the country. In addition, Ms. Dunlap stated that at the conference, local musicians will be performing the student-created pieces.

Ms. Goldberg asked for the age groups of the students and Ms. Dunlap replied that they are elementary and middle school students. Dunlap added that she will look for information to share with Council following the conference.

Chair Parks asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve this recommendation.

Mr. Gabel made a motion to approve the recommendations. Ms. Cohen seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

#### **ITEM 5 ACTION: 2021-2022 Grants Report**

*Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance and Administration*

Ms. Gabriele reported that every year, the PCA staff publishes a full report to give the Council a complete picture of the direct and indirect grants for the AIE Partners, PPA partners and Folk Art Partners.

Ms. Gabriele stated that this report starts on page 23 of the Council book and added that it represents the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 grants.

Ms. Gabriele explained that there are almost 1,300 grants on this list and that all of Pennsylvania's 67 counties are represented.

Gabriele added that summaries are located on pages 86 through 88 of the Council book and explained that these summaries show grant totals to each track, program, or division. She also reported that it shows grant totals to each county with two sorts, one in alphabetical order and the other by per capita.

Ms. Gabriele reported that this is the first year that included the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program with 110 grants made in Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Ms. Gabriele also stated

that Pennsylvania state per capita funding of grants to the arts is \$0.75 by county and explained that the per capita PCA allocations ranges from four to two cents per capita in this report. Gabriele added that PCA publishes this report every year in order to provide Council with a picture of the number and variety of grants that come from the PCA, and it shows PCA's statewide presence throughout the Commonwealth.

Chair Parks asked if Ms. Gabriele can provide any comparison for the \$0.75 per capita in relationship to the 49 other states. Ms. Gabriele stated that she will provide that information to Council.

Mr. Blischke stated that Pennsylvania is slightly below average. Blischke explained that Pennsylvania is not competitive in in the Mid-Atlantic, aside from West Virginia, but other states are anywhere from \$2 to \$5 per capita.

Ms. Stull asked why Green County is so low with two cents. Ms. Gabriele explained that PCA only funds one grant in that county and that Green County also has a lower population. Gabriele added that last year, Green County was not on the list at all.

Chair Parks stated that PCA did reach into all 67 counties and that for many years, that has been a challenge. Parks added that some of our partners have been more successful than others and stated that there are some areas where there are no programs to apply for so that one goal has been achieved.

Senator Bartolotta stated that she represents Greene County and explained that although it has a vast footprint geographically, there are only about 35,000 residents in the entire county and that they have been losing population drastically since the demise of the coal industry. Senator Bartollotta said that they are doing everything they can to bring in more families and added that they are hardworking people trying what they can, but it's a very sparsely populated county.

Ms. Cohen asked if there are any follow-up protocols for the grantees and also asked if PCA staff felt satisfaction in the completion of what the grantees said they were going to do.

Ms. Gabriele stated that the PCA requires final reports for every single grant, and they are all reviewed and read by staff. She also stated that certain grants are given via a reimbursement process, so PCA staff knows exactly how those funds were spent via receipts.

Ms. Gabriele explained that other program directors review the final reports of their respective program's grant recipients.

Ms. Gabriele reported that there is a lot of back and forth with the grantees if a final report is not complete, if there's something missing or if something is materially different from what was spelled out in the application and contract. Gabriele added that PCA staff does follow up and has requested funds be returned if things are not the way they should be.

#### **ITEM 6 ACTION: Creative Communities Initiative Update**

*Sarah Merritt, Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities & the Creative Economy*

Sarah Merritt provided a brief overview of the Creative Communities program. She stated that the program was rolled out in 2019 and added that at this point, PCA has received about 265 project proposals and that the program is very competitive.

Ms. Merritt stated that the memo in the Council Book lists the 18 communities that are currently in the program and pointed out that the four pilot communities that entered in 2020 are in their last year in the program.

Merritt explained PCA has engaged with a consulting firm, Metris Arts Consulting, to evaluate these four communities throughout the life of their projects.

Ms. Merritt stated that she will be coming before Council in March 2024 with a report on those evaluations as well as some interesting information and data that the consultants are currently compiling.

Ms. Merritt also reminded Council of the eight new communities that entered the program in July. She explained that this is the most communities that have been brought into the program at one time since 2019. Merritt explained that throughout the Fall, these new communities have been hosting community announcement events, which have been a great way to promote the work that they are doing in their communities and to highlight the support of the PCA for this work.

Merritt stated that these announcement events include local government officials, legislators, and a lot of press, and that it has been great to see how they've been received in these communities and to be able to highlight this wonderful work that PCA is supporting.

Ms. Merritt reported that on October 6th, she and Karl Blischke attended the dedication ceremony for the Meadville project, which is the art community green space that has activated what was once just an asphalt covered vacant lot in downtown historic Meadville into a lively community space that all community members can enjoy. Merritt added that the focus of that project is the clients of the Arc of Crawford County, which supports people with developmental and physical disabilities.

Merritt explained that Meadville's next phase is to continue to activate that space with arts programming throughout the year.

Ms. Merritt reported that a successful convening was held in State College in October with all of the creative communities which included a couple of days of networking, discussion of projects, and learning about best practices in this work. Merritt stated that she will continue to do these types of convenings as the program moves forward.

Merritt stated that December 1, 2023, was the deadline for the latest call for letters of interest. Ms. Merritt explained that because the program is so competitive, that it was not promoted during this round. She said she still received 50 letters of interest and that 17 of the project proposals came from arts organizations. Merritt stated that the other 33 came from local governments, chambers of commerce, tourism, higher education, and social service organizations.

Merritt reported that 50 letters represent 21 of Pennsylvania's counties and stated that she is in the process of working with the four panelists who will convene in January to review all of the letters.

Ms. Merritt concluded by saying that she is happy to have the opportunity direct this program and that she is looking forward to it growing.

Chair Parks described his experience of creating a music festival in the middle of a downtown area in a city that was losing its major industry and had no confidence in itself. Chair Parks stated that the long and short of this is there was no state grant to address an opportunity like this idea to try to bring the community together to save itself. Parks explained that this festival today generates well over \$100 million in economic activity in this community annually, and according to one survey, contributes a similar amount to social capital in the community.

Chair Parks explained that PCA has an endless opportunity with this program to really support communities. He added that Council needs to be greater advocates for more funding for programs like this.

Ms. Merritt asked the Council to take a look at the Creative Communities page on the PCA website and shared that it provides a summary of all of those 18 projects. Merritt explained that she is currently working to update some of those summaries and added that the site also lists the community partners that are also working on these projects.

#### **ITEM 7 INFORMATION: Presentation by Writers Room Drexel**

*Rachel Wenrick, Founding Director*

Ms. Merritt introduced Rachel Wenrick, the Founding Director of the Writers Room Drexel.

Ms. Wenrick began her presentation by thanking the PCA for its important and transformative funding that has been received by the Writers Room Drexel. She explained that they have received Creative Catalyst funding, long term residency funding and are now part of PCA's Creative Communities initiative portfolio.

Ms. Wenrick stated that it is vital that their organization keeps its programming free and open to all, that it continues to remove barriers to participation for everyone and be able to leverage additional funding.

Ms. Wenrick provided an overview of the Writers Room and explained that it is a program that was co-created from the beginning with Drexel students, faculty, staff, and neighbors living in the metro and surrounding neighborhoods of West Philadelphia.

Wenrick stated that one of the programs they run is called Tripod, which received long term residency funding. She explained that it is a year long residency that brings together high school students, Drexel students and older neighbors to document their lives together in Philadelphia.

Ms. Wenrick also provided an overview of a new program that's supported by the Mellon Foundation, and it's called Un-mapping. She explained that this is a three-year program that involves fellows doing research and as well as developing a new interdisciplinary course of study at Drexel.

Ms. Wenrick stated that some of the benefits for students participating in the Writers Room is that they gain the skills that the world needs from them, that they can collaborate across diverse communities, and it sets a foundation for a meaningful life.

She stated that participation in this program makes students very adaptable, very nimble and they are finding that a lot of students will come in for a primary course of study like

business, communications, engineering, or biology, but then they coupled those with these deeply immersive humanities and arts learning and working in partnership with their neighbors.

Ms. Wenrick also discussed how the arts and housing are related. She provided a background story of how Second Story Collective, a CCI initiative was created and explained that it is cross discipline work.

Ms. Wenrick explained that Second Story Collective has two main components. She stated that one is through funding they receive from DCED to repair homes for the elderly.

Ms. Wenrick stated that the second piece of this project is working with a black developer, Charles Lomax, who is currently developing the largest piece of land in the neighborhood of Mantua. She explained that it is a \$65 million multi use project that encompasses two city blocks. She added that it includes plans for a supermarket, a healthcare clinic, a radio station, affordable housing rentals, market rate rentals, workforce housing, as well as 18 for sale homes.

She said they believe this has huge implications for university adjacent communities across the state and across the country and pointed out that there is an affordable housing crisis, an aging crisis, and a crisis of social isolation and loneliness.

Wenrick stated that just as the arts draw people together to create community, the arts have been the nucleus for attracting partners and funders.

Ms. Goldberg thanked Ms. Wenrick for her presentation. Goldberg stated that she had the opportunity to visit the project and that it is transformative. Goldberg added that she can see this model spreading throughout the country and throughout the rest of the city and stated that this is one of the most exciting projects that she has seen in all of her years at PCA.

Ms. Cohen congratulated Ms. Wenrick. She said she participated in Drexel's Story Lab for three years and that it was a wonderful program. She added that she is excited because this is an example of the arts being a change agent in a community.

Ms. Cohen stated that this work is transformative, and she is excited for the future and that this work at the intersection of creative placemaking and housing and addressing the housing crisis is very interesting.

Chair Parks thanked Ms. Wenrich for her presentation and discussion.

### **ITEM 8: Action Plan Update**

*Karl Blischke, Executive Director & Heather Doughty, Deputy Executive Director*

Mr. Blischke provided an update on PCA's action plan that was adopted by the Council in 2019.

Mr. Blischke directed the Council to the memo in the Council book that outlines the action plan. He explained that plan lists the PCA's targets and shows the progress toward the targets.

Blischke reported that PCA staff has worked diligently and has been able to materially cover a lot of the targets outlined in the plan and he then provided a summary by goal area.

For Goal 1, Strengthen Communities Through the Arts, Mr. Blischke reported the Council adjusted the funding strategy to be able to provide the most meaningful levels of support with special attention to those areas that had been historically underrepresented or underserved.

Blischke stated that PCA is now several years into this new funding strategy and that it has made a difference by increasing the most valuable type of support that the Council gives which is a general operating support to organizations particularly in rural areas to small organizations and to BIPOC organizations. He added that PCA has been able to provide significant support and increases to about 70% to 73% of those organizations.

Mr. Blischke reported that PCA aligned and rewrote the guidelines and the review criteria to focus on community.

Blischke stated that PCA's Creative Communities initiative was specifically developed to work deeply with communities and center arts-based strategies on community and economic development. Blischke reported that this program has grown and that PCA has expanded its reach in coverage in folk arts, making those services available in more counties.

Mr. Blischke reported that one additional area that PCA has looked at are the creative industries and the creative economy and explained that PCA has launched a creative entrepreneur program and the creative business loan program.

Blischke provided an overview on Goal 2 of PCA's Action Plan: Lifelong Learning.

Mr. Blischke reported that Jamie Dunlap has done a lot of work in that area. He stated that in particular, she has focused on how to make PCA partners and communities aware of all kinds of artists that might be available for teaching artist positions or resident artist positions.

Blischke stated that PCA has expanded its reach and partnerships, such as the Creative Aging Academy.

Mr. Blischke provided an overview of Goal 3, which is awareness and stated that PCA has changed its brand, logo, look and feel. He stated that PCA has updated its messaging to focus on place and the power of creative industries and has also created new collateral materials, a new podcast, and a new creative business spotlight series.

Mr. Blischke stated that some areas that Council may consider in the next plan are ways that PCA can advance its mission through non-grant making strategies, such as assistance to local governments and county governments on embedding the creative sector as part of their local plans as well as part of their comprehensive economic development regional strategies.

Mr. Blischke said that there is an opportunity for PA to raise creative industries as a target for growth. He stated that it's not just about support that PCA gives, but it is an opportunity for the state to be in a space with some of the most talented, innovative, and



creative people and to have Pennsylvania be seen as a great place for the creative industries.

Mr. Blischke stated that the Council has the opportunity to play a significant role in place and be a facilitator of improving place for Pennsylvania. For many communities, place is their top concern because of changing demographics and changing industries, and some communities are experiencing population loss.

Blischke explained that this is a real challenge, and it is where some of the biggest opportunities lie. Mr. Blischke stated that 2024 will be the time when the whole Council can get together and work on the next iteration of the strategic plan.

Ms. Goldberg said that it is thrilling to see how far PCA has come in accomplishing goals. She explained that before the plan, it was just words and ideas on a page and now to see them actually come to fruition is exciting. Goldberg congratulated PCA for the hard work done to put the ideas into action.

Mr. Blischke stated that he would be remiss not to mention that the Council also developed the overarching value which is about the ability to equitably serve the entire state. Blischke stated that this is another area where the Council made great strides and added that Dana Payne worked on a specific plan around that.

### **ITEM 9 Chair's Report**

Chair Parks stated that this will be his last Chair's report.

He congratulated Jamie Dunlap on being named the Governor's Advisory Council on Veteran Services Employee of the Quarter.

Parks stated that he recently had the opportunity to attend an arts and culture summit with Mr. Blischke and Ms. Merritt at Lehigh University Zoellner Arts Center, which was arranged by the director of Zoellner Arts Center. Parks reported that it was an incredibly successful event and there were people from all over the state in the arts and culture field. He added that he thought it would serve PCA well to consider finding a partner to make this a regular event.

Chair Parks stated that the Legislature's Arts and Culture Caucus is hosting a networking breakfast on Tuesday, December 12th, 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM at the Main Capitol and encouraged Council members interested in attending to contact Mr. Blischke.

Chair Parks reported that he originally sought a seat on the Council back in 2013 when he was preparing to retire from the arts organization that he founded. He explained that he had been involved on boards and other councils in Southeastern PA and was interested in learning what goes on beyond the Susquehanna.

Chair Parks explained that PCA was founded in the mid-1960s when the National Endowment for the Arts was created, and every state created a vehicle to receive the federal funding that was going to come from the establishment of the NEA.

He stated that the whole culture of the organization and the purpose, as it was in almost every state, was simply a grant maker in the arts that used public funding, not private funding.

Chair Parks stated that in 2006 and early 2007, Pennsylvania had \$15 million in funding, but when the financial crisis hit, it had \$9.5 million in grant funding from the state and added that this amount has not changed since that time.

Parks stated that he was surprised in 2016 when he was asked by the Wolf Administration to chair the PCA and that he was charged with finding a successor to Philip Horn, who had been the PCA's Executive Director for 25 years. Parks stated that his goal was to find a new Executive Director who understood the power of the arts as it relates to community and economic development because that wasn't a focus of the Council at that time.

Chair Parks stated that Council found the right person with Karl Blischke. Parks explained that Mr. Blischke actually worked at the PCA back in the early 2000s and then went to Florida to try to encourage businesses to move there. Parks stated that Mr. Blischke is fully versed in economic development matters and that he is fully versed in how to deal with state government.

Chair Parks explained that the Council was in the historic mode of funding arts organizations with some other very well-planned programs for minorities, individuals, and a few creative ventures. He explained that PCA has changed its focus in terms of the AOAP program, which was geared to support higher income arts organizations with more money, and the lower an organization's income was, the lower their grant support was.

Parks reported that during the COVID epidemic, Council was able to radically change that by saying if a traditional organization is already well funded, then their annual grant is going to be \$13,000 and if an organization is BIPOC or rural their funding will be \$26,000, which is a far more equitable way to be spending PCA's money in programs that that really need that support.

Chair Parks also stated that Mr. Blischke has been able to reach out to other state agencies to finally bring to the attention of the Administration and particularly the Department of Community and Economic Development on how essential it is to have arts and creative activities all at the table when discussing economic development in this state.

Chair Parks also congratulated each and every member of PCA's staff and explained that essentially there isn't a staff member whose job description hasn't changed since 2019 and not only have they embraced it, but they have really moved goals forward.

Parks stated that it is incredible to watch the strategic plan turn into actions that are now impacting real communities with real issues.

Chair Parks stated that he had the opportunity to join some of PCA staff in Dickson City, which is outside of Scranton a couple weeks ago, and let them know that they were one of 18 communities at that point that had received the Creative Communities Grant.

Parks indicated that he learned that it wasn't so much the money as the imprimatur of the state arts agency saying this program is worthwhile and that their community deserves funding. He added that the effect that this has in terms of getting the local community and local funders and other funders involved in their projects is great. Parks explained that he saw how much this means to a community and how much that will generate support for its community revitalization.

Chair Parks said that he is very excited about Susan Cohen not only joining the Council but also sharing with the Council because she has valuable experience in terms of being familiar with the operation of the legislature.

Parks stated that at this point, the members who are on this Council need to reach out to legislators wherever possible to try to generate additional funding for the PCA. He explained that at this point, the cause is vital to our communities so this state can thrive and prosper.

Parks shared a story that happened recently where he had a phone call with a client from India. Chair Parks stated that this gentleman said how he was dedicated to his small community of 80 people and that he and community members had worked to get payment for 2 1/2 kilometers of Internet cable to their community. Parks explained that this client has one of the largest post production companies in the Indian film industry, and he's very proud of it.

Chair Parks stated that Pennsylvania has internet to Green County, in Elk County as well as other rural counties. He stated that because of this, Pennsylvania has great potential in establishing creative communities, creative jobs and creative activities that can generate economic benefit to the state.

Chair Parks thanked PCA staff members as well as PCA Council members for all that they do and said had it has been an amazing five-year transition.

He explained that PCA started as just another grant funding agency and another council in the nationwide parameter of arts councils and said it is now one of the most forward and progressive councils in the country.

#### **ITEM 10: Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Blischke indicated that he was currently in Santa Fe, NM attending the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) Executive Forum. He stated that this NASAA forum was a convening of representatives from state art agencies around the country addressing the potential for state arts agencies and the power of creative industries. Mr. Blischke indicated that Norah Johson attended this forum as well.

Mr. Blischke reported that Dana Payne was able to put together a webinar on behalf of PCA: Serving Individuals with Disabilities through the Arts on Monday, December 4th. Blischke explained that this was in connection with an RFP that was put out to identify organizations that PCA could learn from in order to provide services or gain relationships around working with individuals with disabilities. Blischke stated that this learning group came together and had a great conversation. He also thanked the Council Members who participated in the discussion.

Mr. Blischke reported that Sarah Merritt has been working very hard putting together Creative Communities announcement events including in Dickson City, Erie, Butler, and Lewisburg. Blischke explained that it makes a real difference for PCA to be in communities and to invite the authorizers, the stakeholders, and the communities together.

Mr. Blischke reported that PCA staff will participate in an Art Sparks unveiling on December 13th at the Allentown Turnpike Service Plaza. He stated that this is a project where PCA

staff works with the Turnpike Commission as well as with local high school students and PCA's arts and education partners to create very visible public art that speaks to the history and the geography around the Turnpike Plazas.

Blischke advised Council Members to contact him or Jamie Dunlap for more information about the upcoming event if they are interested in attending. Blischke mentioned that to date, there have been 13 Art Sparks events at the 17 Turnpike plazas and the goal is to have the remaining plazas events occur by the end of 2024.

Mr. Blischke stated that he will be reaching out to Council Members in early 2024 to find the best time frame and the best way that the Council can engage in person in 2024 around PCA's strategic plan. Blischke stated that he thinks it is important to do this in person and to spend the time seeing each other and talking about deep opportunities and challenges that remain.

Mr. Blischke closed his report by saying a very special thanks to Jeff Parks who has worked very closely with him and has mentored and taught him a tremendous amount over the last six years. Blischke explained that this has been very meaningful to him professionally and personally and he thanked Chair Parks for his service on the Council.

Mr. Blischke also stated that he is excited that Susan Cohen has joined the Council and added that she is coming in at a profoundly exciting time.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:37 am.