

Edmonds Arts Summit, June 2013



The free citywide gathering on June 29, 2013, of the Edmonds arts and culture community provided a day of dialogue and discovery highlighting the diversity, scope and strength of the Edmonds arts scene. Open to all, the program included a resource fair, artist performances and exhibits, keynote presentation by Americans for the Arts Executive Director Robert Cohen, skill-building workshops, networking lunch, and facilitated breakout sessions to discuss how to strengthen the future of arts in Edmonds. Over 250 people attended the event.

Background

The Mayor of Edmonds called for an Arts Summit to encourage the numerous and varied artists and arts related organizations in the community to work together to reinforce Edmonds' standing as an arts community.

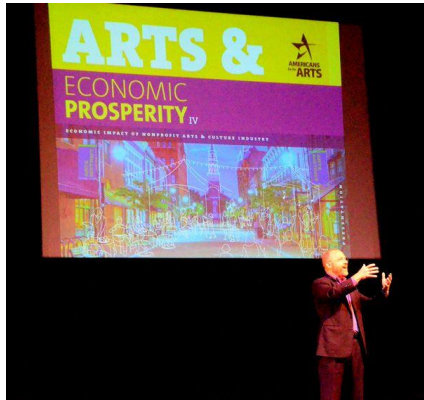
Goal and Objective

The Arts Summit addressed the need for improved communications, including opportunities to share information and partner on events in arts and culture. Primary goals were to bring representatives from all sectors of the arts and culture community together to share information, provide opportunities to learn from experts in various fields, and create a vision for the future of arts in Edmonds with suggested avenues for implementation.



Community and Regional Benefits

Immediate benefits to the community included connections made among artists, arts organizations, and local businesses. A group looking for a place to meet found several offered opportunities; organizations and artists explored ways to partner on projects and bring different resources to the table; organizations learned about new funding resources; and priorities were expressed for future planning. On a broader level, the Big Ideas Board collected comment cards, and the facilitated Shaping the Future breakout sessions provided many ideas. The ideas expressed included the aspects of the arts and culture people



Keynote speaker Randy Cohen of Americans for the Arts. Photo by MyEdmonds News Larry Vogel

value in Edmonds; things they would like to see introduced or further developed; and the areas they see as stumbling blocks to overcome for the future growth of the arts in the area. The information, feedback and data collected from the event provided an opportunity to compare it to the recently completed City Strategic Plan. The information and input were also included in the Community Cultural Plan during the following five months. The regional benefit included bringing a national perspective through the keynote presentation, “The Arts Mean Business”, by Randy Cohen an expert on arts and community development from Americans for the Arts and providing workshops that connected with regional and statewide arts programs such as Arts Crush and the ArtsWA, the State Arts Commission.

Primary Community Need Addressed

One of the obstacles to growing a strong regionally recognized arts community is the tendency and need for small creative nonprofits to focus their primary energy on building their own organization. This sometimes leads to a collection of creative silos rather than an interconnected web of creative industries which collectively stimulate greater activity and visibility in the wider community. The positive impact of constant, effective collaborations is consistently highlighted as a key area to focus on to bring a wider recognition of the arts community in Edmonds.



Resources, Materials and Partnerships

Organized by the City of Edmonds Arts Commission and Cultural Services city staff, the full day event was widely supported by the community. The resource tables provided an opportunity for many organizations and events to provide information. The email list compiled during the lead up to the event has provided an ongoing avenue for communication with a broad array of individuals who are interested in arts and culture issues in the community. The event was fully sponsored through in-kind and cash donations. Sponsors included Edmonds Center for the Arts among other arts organizations, as well as civic sponsors Swedish Hospital Edmonds, Port of Edmonds, and Edmonds Community College. Local foundations, business sponsors, as well as new sponsors such as Panera Bread/Edmonds also provided support.

Follow-up Arts “Mini” Arts Summit, July 2015

Edmonds Arts Commission held an evening community meeting to outline progress since the 2013 Arts Summit and approval of the Community Cultural Plan in 2014.

The Community Cultural Plan goals included thirty-four strategies prioritized and discussed over the past year by Work Groups in six main areas: Space for Art, Communications & Marketing, Programs & Events, Strong Arts Sector, Arts Education, City Advocacy/Programs.

The five arts-related work groups established during the 2013 Arts Summit gave the following progress reports to the assembled arts community stakeholders:

Space for Arts and Culture

The report gave an assessment of the public and private arts space available to the city, noting the city's and arts community's milestones of the remodeled Edmonds Historical Museum, the public arts spaces built into Swedish Edmonds, renovation of Old Milltown into the Hazel Miller Plaza which includes a live music stage for small groups, and the new public art installation in the Five Corners Roundabout project, among others. On the horizon for the city in the way of arts spaces are the Cascadia Art Museum; the remodel of the South Snohomish Senior Center (future Waterfront Center) which will include an art space; an upgrade of the amphitheater at the Frances Anderson Center; and completion of the Dayton Street Plaza which will feature public art installations.

Communications

[A video highlighting the arts in Edmonds](#), available on YouTube, was shown to the group. The Communications report encouraged all to go to the new Visit Edmonds website. Going forward, communications work group members seek to engage local organizations, event sponsors and representatives of entertainment venues to participate in further development of the community calendar and the Visit Edmonds website.

Program and Events

This work group's report noted it is working on a proposal for establishment of "CAFÉ" – a program whose acronym stands for Creative, Active, Fulfill and Engage. This work group meetings centered around challenges regarding resources and partnerships with the intention of finding ways to use the city's resources to benefit the whole community. The report also included information about Art Walk Edmonds, EPIC Group Writers, an expansion of the Arts Commission's On The Fence temporary public art installations. The report closed with an update on the 4th Avenue Arts Corridor project, noting the selection of Iole Alessandrini's "Luminous Forest" proposal as the interim public art installation, which will feature solar-powered illuminating LED disc displays that will lead pedestrians from the Edmonds Center for the Arts to downtown Edmonds.

Arts Education

This work group outlined the many established programs that have been enhanced through the efforts of this work group. The group has sought to leverage partnerships that focus on access to the arts for all youth, including those who may need assistance through economic access such as scholarships, Teen Tix, and Edmonds Center for the Arts' "Music for Life" program.

Breakout Group Discussion

Each work group broke into forums to discuss four questions meant to challenge the creativity and thoughtfulness of the assembly:

1. How can each of us ensure that all relevant players populate the calendar with timely information? How can we make the calendar more visible?
2. How can we best create a citywide focus on improving access to arts for youth (K-12) in 2016?
3. How might each work group play a role in leveraging and/or supporting what [has been] heard from other work groups today? Where are key places to work together?

