

MOSCOW ARTS COMMISSION



Lauren McCleary
Chair

~Agenda~

Megan Cherry
Staff Liaison

<https://www.ci.moscow.id.us/452/Moscow-Arts-Commission>

**Tuesday,
November 14, 2023**

5:00 PM

**Council Chambers
206 E. 3rd St.**

WELCOME AND ATTENDANCE

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Reading of the Mission Statement

The mission of the Moscow Arts Commission is to enrich the community by celebrating and cultivating the expression of all forms of art and culture. Fulfillment of this purpose shall be based upon the following values:

- Recognition and promotion of artists' value by creating opportunities for work to be experienced.
- Facilitation and promotion of the social, educational, and economic value of all forms of art and culture in the community.
- Performance of leadership, collaboration, and outreach in the conversation between all forms of art and culture with partner agencies, city leaders, and the community.

2. Approval of Moscow Arts Commission August 8, 2023 Minutes (ACTION ITEM)

PROPOSED ACTION: Approve minutes, amend minutes, or take such other action deemed appropriate.

3. Public Comment and Response to Previous Comments (limited to 10 minutes)

Members of the public may speak to the Commission regarding matters NOT on the agenda or currently pending before the Commission. Please state your name and address for the record and limit your remarks to three (3) minutes.

REPORTS

1. **Public Art Subcommittee Report (Walker)**
2. **Volunteer Hour Tally for August – October, 2023 (Cherry)**
3. **Staff Report (Cherry)**
 - 2023-2024 Artwalk Season Update
 - Third Street Gallery & The Box Gallery
 - 2024 Arts Programming Update

ADJOURN

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MOSCOW ARTS COMMISSION



Lauren McCleary
Chair

~Minutes~

Megan Cherry
Staff Liaison

<https://www.ci.moscow.id.us/452/Moscow-Arts-Commission>

**Tuesday
August 8, 2023**

5:00 PM

**Council Chambers
206 E. 3rd St.**

McCleary called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lauren McCleary, Chair: Cindy Barnhart, Katherine Clancy, Sue Clark, Aaron Johnson, Gail Martin, Sandra Stoops, Erica Wagner, JacQueline Walker, Donna Woolston
MEMBERS ABSENT: Sonja Foard, David Wilson
OTHERS: Julia Parker
STAFF: Megan Cherry, Jennifer Fleischman, Cody Riddle

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Reading of the Mission Statement

The mission of the Moscow Arts Commission is to enrich the community by celebrating and cultivating the expression of all forms of art and culture.

Fulfillment of this purpose shall be based upon the following values:

- *Recognition and promotion of artists' value by creating opportunities for work to be experienced.*
- *Facilitation and promotion of the social, educational, and economic value of all forms of art and culture in the community.*
- *Performance of leadership, collaboration, and outreach in the conversation between all forms of art and culture with partner agencies, city leaders, and the community.*

The Mission Statement was ready by McCleary.

2. Approval of Moscow Arts Commission July 11, 2023 Minutes

Barnhart moved for approval of the minutes as corrected, seconded by Clancy. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Barnhart, Clancy, McCleary, Wagner, Walker, Woolston (6). Nays: None. Abstentions: Clark, Johnson, Martin, Stoops (4). Motion carried.

3. Public Comment and Response to Previous Comments (limited to 10 minutes)

Members of the public may speak to the Commission regarding matters NOT on the agenda or currently pending before the Commission. Please state your name and address for the record and limit your remarks to three (3) minutes.

None.

4. Commission Survey Questions

During the regular meeting on July 11, 2023, the MAC identified some areas of interest for inclusion in a Commission Survey to be released in 2023. The MAC is now invited to consider the five questions identified and to discuss any recommended edits. Discussion and action may also include the identification of three questions that would be the highest priority in the instance that the overall Commission Survey needed to be edited for length. The intent is to prioritize questions that can be repeated over the course of several survey periods in order to study consistent data points over time.

The Commissioners discussed five questions as drafted by Staff, and ranked them in order of priority.

Johnson moved for approval of the Commission Survey questions as ranked and edited, seconded by Clark. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous (10). Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

5. MAC Band

At the July 11, 2023 MAC meeting, members of the community and the Moscow Arts Commission Band presented ideas for consideration in the planning of MAC Band performances for 2024. MAC discussion could include program history and evolution as well as options for booking the MAC Band to play at existing City of Moscow events.

Cherry gave a presentation about the history of Entertainment in the Park (EITP) and the MAC Band, and recommended that the Commission invite the MAC Band to play at both EITPs and/or play at a second Farmers Market with a smaller group or different genre of music.

The MAC Band is part of the City of Moscow Arts Programming and would not be able to plan their own events. It was suggested that the MAC Band could be transitioned to function as a separate organization with a different band name. The Commission members talked about how expensive and time consuming it is to host live performances and how to balance that with the tradition of providing multiple annual performance opportunities for the MAC Band. Various options were discussed to provide for more concerts. Community Events Staff sets the performance schedule for the Farmers Market and they would be amenable to the proposed inclusion of a second performance by the MAC Band, if it was markedly different from their other scheduled performance.

The Commission agreed with Staff's recommendations. Staff will discuss the options with the MAC Band Director and report back at a different meeting.

REPORTS

1. Volunteer Hour Tally for July 2023 (Cherry)

None.

2. MAC Volunteer Shifts (Cherry)

Poetry in the Park *Thurs., Aug. 24 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.*
Katherine Clancy volunteered.

Elevated Perspective *Thurs., Aug. 31 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.*
Katherine Clancy volunteered.

3. Staff Report (Cherry)

Mural at Jackson & A Street
Staff is reviewing the budget for addressing the mural.

2023-2024 Artwalk Season Preparation

There have been some Artwalk poster submissions, but Staff is hoping to get more before the closing date. Season host and sponsor registrations will be opened next week.

Current Opportunities: Palouse Plein Air, Artwalk Season Poster

Palouse Plein Air has about fifteen (15) registrations now, and will be open for approximately another month. Artwalk season poster submissions are open until Friday August 11th. The Palouse Plein Air reception is scheduled for September 21st. New Public Art maps were handed out to the Commissioners.

Johnson motioned to close the meeting and Clancy seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

MOSCOW ARTS COMMISSION



Entertainment in the Park and MAC Band History

MAC Regular Meeting

August 8, 2023

Moscow Arts Commission Band

- The band was founded by the MAC in 1982.
- 30-40 volunteer musicians participate in rehearsals and performances as their individual schedule allows.
- Musicians of all ages and abilities sign up to play without audition requirements.
- The band's repertoire includes the classics, Broadway, Hollywood, and Sousa marches.
- MAC Band Director is paid by the City of Moscow to manage rehearsal spaces, equipment, music, and to conduct the band.



The MAC Band performs at the Entertainment in the Park in 2023

Entertainment in the Park

This event evolved from:

- Fresh Aire Concert Series (starting date unknown – 2007)
- In the Park (2008 – 2011)
- Entertainment in the Park (2012 – present)

Entertainment in the Park takes place every summer at Moscow's East City Park. This series aligns the Moscow Arts Commission's arts education programming with the Moscow Public Library's summer reading program, which encourages school-aged children to engage in reading and learning throughout the summer. Past lineups for the event have included Traveling Lantern Theatre, The Reptile Man, Matt Baker Comedy + Stunt Show, and magic by Star Alexander. One favorite feature of Entertainment in the Park is the Moscow Arts Commission Band, or MAC Band, a group of volunteer musicians led by director Albert Miller.



The MAC Band performs at the Fresh Aire concert series in 2003

Entertainment in the Park 2012 – 2019

The performance series featured 4-5 performances by children's entertainers and the MAC Band on each Thursday in June.

Concerns with the 2012-2019 event model:

- Frequent rain-outs in June result in shift to Hamilton Indoor Recreation Center (HIRC). The MAC Band has historically declined to play at the HIRC, resulting in cancellation of the second half of the event if weather prevents performances at East City Park.
- Increases in children's entertainer costs challenge the budgets of City of Moscow and Moscow Public Library.
- Quantity of Arts Department events scheduled in June (up to 6, including Artwalk) dilute the audience and represent operational challenges for staff at Moscow Public Library and City of Moscow.
- Annual schedule of multiple bookings for the MAC Band raises concerns about creating opportunities for other musicians across the community.



L Bow the Clown performs at the HIRC in 2019

Entertainment in the Park Event Visioning and Updates in 2020

- Event re-scheduling shifted from 4-5 EITP events to 2, scheduled for late June/early July with consideration for Rendezvous in the Park scheduling.
- New standard MAC Band schedule includes one performance at EITP and one at Moscow Farmers Market (MFM).
- Scheduling later in the year:
 1. Avoids rainy weather, increasing chance of holding the event at the park and thereby maximizes potential for the full MAC Band to play at the park as scheduled;
 2. Eliminates overlap with school district calendar, easing the scheduling burden for parents;
 3. Streamlines event scheduling for overall scope of Arts events by avoiding overlap with the Artwalk Season Finale in June.
- Updated MAC Band Director contract notes the possibility of substituting a small ensemble to play at the HIRC instead of the full band in case of a weather-related cancellation.

Consultation and consensus included:

- **Moscow Arts Commission**
- **Moscow Public Library**
- **MAC Band Director**
- **Rendezvous in the Park**
- **City Administration and Arts Staff**



MAC Band in 2020 - 2023

- 2020 Event cancelled due to pandemic
- 2021 MAC Band declined to play due to ongoing pandemic concerns
- 2022 & 2023 MAC Band performed at one EITP and one MFM event in each year



Audience members enjoy the MAC Band at East City Park in 2023



Director Albert Miller leads the MAC Band at East City Park in 2023

2019 Commission Survey

The 2019 Commission survey was conducted, though never approved by City Council and published as the onset of Covid prioritized other projects and the survey results were not revisited.

The following question provides a point of reference for attendance at a variety of City events.

Do you attend the following performance art activities hosted by the City of Moscow?	
Entertainment in the Park	22%
Farmers Market live music performances	38%
Moscow Arts Commission band	4%
Artwalk music stages	20%
Other	2%
No Response	14%

Public Input

During the MAC's regular meeting on July 11, 2023, community and MAC Band members offered public comment regarding ideas for additional bookings and increased promotion for the MAC Band.

Staff Recommendation

In order to balance MAC vision with operational capacity, options include:

- Invite MAC Band to play at the 2nd Entertainment in the Park event
AND/OR
- Invite the MAC Band to rehearse a small ensemble (10-15 musicians) with a repertoire distinct from the full MAC Band to play a date in addition to their traditional performance on 4th of July weekend at Moscow Farmers Market (e.g. Memorial Day weekend or Halloween)



Mural at Jackson & A

Moscow, ID

Project Description

The City of Moscow and the Moscow Arts Commission invite artists and artist teams to submit qualifications for a mural to be installed on the City of Moscow building located at Jackson & A Streets. The community of Moscow rises up from the fertile ground of the Palouse, where water, seeds, and soil create a playful dance of transformation. Joining in this growth are the intertwining stories of students and life-long residents. Rooted in Moscow, these stories are a celebration of potential, of opening and stretching toward the sunlight. The mural at the building at Jackson & A will reflect the spirit of play, celebration, and transformation at the core of Moscow community.

Budget

The artist honorarium for the mural installation is not to exceed \$25,000. Included in this budget are the artist's fee, insurance, travel, fabrication, engineering, materials, installation, documentation, and all other costs accrued by the artist specific to this project. The artist honorarium does not include costs associated with surface preparation, priming, and the application of an anti-graffiti coating after the mural installation. These processes will be completed by the City of Moscow.

Eligibility

Artists from Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana are eligible for this project. Artists are eligible regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital or familial status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, and gender expression or identity. Artist teams are eligible to apply, including teams of artists from multiple disciplines. Selection panelists and their immediate family members are not eligible for participation. No artist sitting on a Selection Panel may submit a proposal for the project for which the Selection Panel was formed.

Artwork Design Parameters

The mural area wraps around the northwest corner of the building, including a 14' x 30' section on the north-facing wall and a 15' x 56' section on the west-facing wall. The mural is anticipated to last between 5-8 years, so paint materials used to complete this project must be professional, exterior-grade, water-based coatings designed for exposure to year-round exterior conditions. This site cannot accommodate murals on panels, kinetic or sculptural works, or any artwork that requires power or water. This mural site is near a busy intersection; as such, the site is not compatible with highly-reflective materials.

Important Dates (subject to change)

February – March 2024	RFQ Submission Period
May 2024	Finalists create proposals for Selection Panel review
July 2024	Selected Artist Announcement
September 30, 2024	Installation Deadline



Mural at Jackson & A

Moscow, ID

Submission and Selection

Round #1 of the selection process welcomes the submission of artist qualifications and examples of past work. These materials will be evaluated by the Selection Panel, which will then recommend three finalists to create site-specific proposals. Each of the finalists will receive a \$1000 honorarium for creating the site-specific design.

Round #2 will consider the merits of finalist proposals. The Selection Panel will make a recommendation to the Moscow Arts Commission, which will recommend an artist/artist team and design to City Council. Upon approval by City Council, all finalists will be notified of the decision and the selected artist will complete a contract with the City for the completion of the mural.

Round #1 Submission Requirements & Selection Criteria

1. Letter of Interest

2. Resume

3. Work Samples

Include up to 6 photographs of no fewer than 2 projects of a similar or larger scale.

4. Selection Criteria

Artist Qualifications

- a. The artist's letter of interest articulates interest in pursuing this project as well as its relevance to their artistic practice.
- b. The artist's letter of interest reveals an understanding of and connection to the public art site and project description.
- c. The artist's resume reveals a record of practice in the art field, including public art commissions.
- d. The applicant submits photographs of at least 2 separate, completed public art projects of similar or larger scale.
- e. The artist's past work reveals aesthetic, conceptual, and technical expertise.



Mural at Jackson & A

Moscow, ID

Round #2 Submission Requirements & Selection Criteria

1. Site-specific Design

Include up to five renderings of the proposed design, preferably overlaid on photographs of the site and shown at the proposed scale.

2. Artist Statement

Describe connections between the design and the project description, site, and Moscow community as well as contextualizing the project within the artist's larger body of work.

3. Professional References

4. Selection Criteria

Artist Qualifications

- a. The artist provides two to three references who confirm the artist's professionalism in communication, previous success in the execution of mural projects, ability to meet deadlines, and ability to stay on budget.

Conceptual Quality and Originality

- a. The proposed design is original to the presenting artist.
- b. The design is unique (i.e. edition of one), rather than a mass-produced item or image.
- c. The artist articulates the connections between the proposed design and the project description as well as the project site and the Moscow community.

Form

- a. The proposed design reveals mastery of formal craftsmanship.
- b. The scale of the proposed design is appropriate to the site.
- c. The colors used, if any, are chosen with an awareness of local educational institutions as well as their athletic rivals.
- d. The proposal aligns with the project's design parameters and does not present a hazard to public safety.

Content and Context

- a. The content of the proposed design aligns with the project description.
- b. The content of the proposed design is relevant to the City of Moscow's values, culture, and people.
- c. The proposed design reflects the architectural, historical, geographical, geological, and/or socio-cultural context of the site.
- d. The proposed design serves to activate or enhance the intended location.
- e. The proposed design has the potential to expand the formal and conceptual range of the Public Art collection.
- f. The artwork's subject matter and content is appropriate for public exhibition and does not contain advertising, religious references, sexual content, negative imagery, or convey political partisanship.

MEMORANDUM



To: Art Bettge, Mayor
Bill Belknap, City Supervisor
From: Megan Cherry, Arts Manager
c: Cody Riddle, Deputy City Supervisor
Date: October 31, 2023
Re: Arts Department Program Proposal

Recent and unforeseen changes to the City of Moscow FY24 budget have prompted a pause on hiring in multiple City departments. The Arts Department, previously staffed by two full-time employees, has been reduced to one FTE. While this staff reduction is temporary, it is as yet unclear when it will be possible to re-hire the Arts Assistant position. City Administration is facilitating Arts Department operations in the form of administrative support from the Executive Assistant. In addition to this, tasks such as graphic design and some elements of event staffing will be completed on a contract basis by local professionals. While these forms of support are helpful, it is still necessary to make program adjustments. The following proposal lays out a plan to either continue, pause, or discontinue programs in FY24 to generate some operational cost savings but primarily to preserve staff capacity.

Arts programs recommended for implementation as planned in FY24 include:

- **Artwalk**
This event takes place on every 3rd Thursday of the month from October – June. Artwalk presents literary, visual, performing, and culinary arts offerings in host locations throughout the community. The nine-month event season culminates in a June Artwalk Finale street fair. Registration for the event has been strong and continues to grow; the most recently-completed Artwalk season featured 177 arts listings at 92 host locations as well as 31 on-street vendors. The Artwalk Season Host option, a new addition in the 2022-2023 season, has quickly grown in popularity, with a 71% increase in participation in this registration category during the current season.
- **Mayor's Arts Awards**
The biennial Mayor's Arts Awards event celebrates the good work of local artists, arts educators and students, arts advocates, and businesses that nurture the arts ecosystem of Moscow. The event spotlights the award recipients with a ceremony led by the Mayor at the 1912 Center.
- **Public Art Permanent Collection: Mural at Jackson & A**
This project will replace a mural at the same site that was irreparably damaged by vandalism in May 2023. The Public Art Subcommittee of the MAC is currently advising staff in the development of the RFQ, which is slated to open for submissions in early 2024.
- **Intermodal Transit Center Sculpture Garden**
The ITC Sculpture Garden is an annual component of the Temporary Collection and is operated in partnership with the University of Idaho Art + Design program. Following a submission period, a selection panel identifies up to four sculptures to be installed in the garden for a one-year period.

- **Palouse Plein Air**

Palouse Plein Air is an annual event that attracts artists from across Idaho and Washington to paint the Palouse landscape. Following a nine-day painting period, artists submit works for exhibition at the Third Street Gallery. Registration, exhibition attendance, and artwork sales numbers have been continually increasing. In 2023, 40 artists exhibited 104 paintings at an exhibition attended by 150 people. Additionally, 2023 artwork sales were the highest in event history, with a total of \$2368 paid to artists and \$597 in sales commission revenue for the City.

- **Third Street Gallery and The Box Gallery**

The galleries inside Moscow City Hall provide aesthetic value to members of the public, elected officials, and staff members as they participate in the business of the City. The galleries also offer exhibition and networking opportunities to participating artists, who represent a wide range of ages, geographic locations, and are working at multiple levels of experience in the arts field. Thus far in 2023, the galleries combined have presented 306 artworks made by 85 artists, with receptions attended by 495 people. In addition to the annual Palouse Plein Air exhibition in September, Third Street Gallery features four shows each year. The Box Gallery on the first floor of Moscow City Hall presents exhibitions on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, primarily during the Artwalk season.

Programs recommended for a one-year pause are the following:

- **Moscow Poet Laureate (selection process only)**

The current Moscow Poet Laureate's term will continue until September 30, 2024, with features including readings, workshops, and the Poetry in the Park event in August. Under ordinary circumstances, Arts staff would release a call for applications for the next MPL in spring of 2024 in order to have a new Poet Laureate in place by the time the previous MPL's term ends. During this particular year, the regularly-scheduled programs would have a call for MPL applications going out at the same time as a call for Mayor's Arts Awards nominations. These programs do not always overlap in this manner. Mayor's Arts Awards is biennial, while the MPL terms have until this point been set for three years, meaning that their RFP periods overlap only periodically. Another aspect of the recommendation is to reduce the MPL term to two years which, in combination with the one-year pause on selecting a new Poet Laureate, will set the heaviest workload periods for the two programs to alternate years. While this proposal means that there will not be a Moscow Poet Laureate from October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025, there is always the option to contract with area literary artists for any readings or other poetry services needed during that time.

- **Vinyl Wraps and Storm Drain Murals**

These very popular programs are also quite labor-intensive in terms of administering RFPs and following up with vinyl printing and installation. While the systems for bringing these programs to the public have been greatly refined in recent years, they still represent a considerable investment of staff time. In addition, the vendor who has provided vinyl printing and installation services for this program since its inception has recently announced his retirement. Foregoing new Vinyl Wrap and Storm Drain Mural installations for one year will allow time for remaining staff to identify new vendors and become accustomed to an adjusted programming schedule and workload. Existing installations will still be available for the public's enjoyment during this time.

The proposal is to discontinue City operation of the following related programs:

- **Entertainment in the Park**

This event has had many different iterations over its history, evolving from the Fresh Aire Concert Series to the In The Park event series, and has been known as Entertainment in the Park since 2012. This series aligns the Moscow Arts Commission's arts education programming with the Moscow Public Library's summer reading program, which encourages school-aged children to engage in reading and learning throughout the summer. It is presented to the community in partnership with the Moscow Public Library. The event, held at East City Park, presents children's entertainment followed by a musical performance, often featuring the MAC Band. In 2020, the event was adapted to a two-night series instead of the previous model featuring four or five evening performances to address budget constraints related to the rising costs of children's entertainers as well as operational challenges related to limited City staffing. The scheduling was also shifted later in the year, thereby mitigating the risk of the event being rained out at East City Park during June. The children's entertainment portion of Entertainment in the Park is indeed popular, and is booked in such a way to facilitate block-booking for area Library District events. While well attended, the event does feature entertainers that can be seen at several other venues in the region. With the recent loss of one FTE in the Arts Department, concerns with staff capacity identified and addressed in 2020 have increased to the point where it is no longer sustainable to operate Entertainment in the Park as a City event. This proposal to discontinue the City's operation of the event preserves the opportunity for the Moscow Public Library to carry the tradition forward if they choose to do so.

- **Moscow Arts Commission Band**

The Moscow Arts Commission Band was founded in 1982 and consists of 30-40 volunteer musicians led by a paid MAC Band Director. The band's repertoire includes the classics, Broadway, Hollywood, and Sousa marches. They have been featured performers at Entertainment in the Park and Moscow Farmers Market, playing two concerts annually in recent years. The band recently presented a proposal (attached) to expand their presence in the community by offering 4-5 stand-alone concerts supported by additional marketing efforts. The MAC Band's passion for the tradition is admirable and their years of service to the community are appreciated. Though Arts Department staff capacity cannot provide the level of service they describe in their proposal, it appears that they have identified funding and volunteers to support the growth of this community band. This proposal is to encourage the band's expansion of service to the community independently of City operations, foregoing the use of the "Moscow Arts Commission" element of the band name.

TO: Moscow Arts Commission
FROM: Bill Voxman and Kenton Bird, MAC Band members
RE: Future of the Moscow Arts Commission Band
DATE: Sept. 19, 2023

Dear Commissioners,

First, thank you for hearing our presentation at your July meeting and for your preliminary discussion in August. We appreciate your questions, comments and concerns. Since the formats of these two meetings did not allow a direct dialogue with you, we would like to address the following issues which seem to be at the heart of the current discussion.

Background

From the beginning, the MAC Band was conceived to be a “park” band that would give members of the Moscow and Pullman communities the opportunity to listen to lively, enjoyable summer music in an informal setting. The park provides a venue where attendees can mingle with old friends, meet new ones, watch children tap their feet and dance when not running through the park, and generally savor the informal ambiance of such an event. The MAC Band also has provided a wonderful opportunity for musicians of all ages and skills to get together to rehearse and perform before appreciative audiences. Summer “park bands” are found throughout the country. As we noted at the July meeting, the [Twin Falls Municipal Band](#) offers 10 outdoor concerts each summer. Closer to home, the Pullman Community Band provides audiences with multiple outdoor performances at Reaney Park, Sunnyside Park (on July 4), and elsewhere.

Based on the responses we received at the August meeting in Director Cherry’s presentation to the commission and informal conversations with commission members, the biggest obstacles to extending the MAC Band’s season in 2024 and beyond are the following: weather, cost, and the partnership(s) with other groups for children’s activities in the park. We will address each of these in turn.

Weather

For nearly 40 years, weather was not an issue from the standpoint of either the band or its audiences. There have been, of course, occasional cancellations of concerts in the park due to inclement weather. This is to be expected of any outdoor event in the Northwest. Such cancellations, however, have not diminished the enthusiasm of the audiences (or the band members) for the park concert series. Weather should become even less of a factor in future years as climate change since the mid-1990s has tended to reduce the amount of rainfall occurring in June and July. In June 2023, Moscow recorded precipitation on only two days, for a total of .36 inch of rainfall.

It is important to note that though a concert may be canceled, the rehearsal prior to the concert is not. Rehearsals form an integral part of the MAC Band’s participatory activities. The MAC Band usually practices for two hours prior to each concert. These rehearsals give the musicians – the young and the more elderly, the accomplished (such as UI Music professor Dan Bukvich) and the neophytes –

a much-appreciated opportunity to make music together, learn from each other, enjoy new repertoire, re-invigorate our “chops” and interact socially. For most players, the rehearsals are as important and satisfying as the concerts themselves. The MAC Band prides itself on including members of all ages and all abilities, while promoting musicianship through the shared experience.

In case of rain, the MAC Band has on occasion performed at the Hamilton Indoor Recreation Center (HIRC). Unfortunately, this venue does not have the ambiance of a park, and attendance at the HIRC has been minimal at best. We agree that there is little need to continue the practice of using the HIRC as a backup for rain cancellations. To lessen the chances of cancellations, consideration should be given to having the MAC Band perform, say, three times in June and twice in early July prior to the beginning of the Rendezvous in the Park festivities. In sum, weather has never been and is not currently a significant factor in the MAC Band’s success.

Cost

As far as we can determine, the principal cost for the summer MAC Band park series is the director’s remuneration. Moscow High School generously provided the chairs and music stands needed for the park concerts in 2023. The Lionel Hampton School of Music did this in previous seasons. MAC Band members set up and take down the stage for each concert.

The only additional cost appears to be a small P/A system or megaphone for the director (though this was not needed at the last park concert, as the one A. J. tried to use failed). If cost remains an issue, several of our key supporters (including the authors of this proposal) pledge \$1,000, if needed, each year for the foreseeable future to defray costs associated with the MAC Band’s park performances.

Partnerships

For many years after its founding, the MAC Band gave stand-alone concerts; i.e., the musical program in the park was not coupled with any other activities. We could certainly perform this way in the future. Concerts at the Saturday Farmers’ Market are good exposure for the band but they are a sub-standard experience for the audience because of the poor acoustics at Friendship Square, the lack of shaded seating (except a few benches), and background noise from vendors.

In addition, it appears that current Farmers’ Market policies may limit the MAC Band (and other groups) to a single performance each summer. To get around this prohibition, it was suggested that perhaps a smaller group of musicians from the band might perform at the market; however, this poses unforeseen problems, including selection of participants and a loss of *esprit de corps* among the rest of the band.

We want to emphasize that the MAC Band is agreeable to partner on occasion with other groups (such as the Library’s Summer Reading program or the UI Summer Music Camp), as well as at other events (such as the Art Walk finale in June) whenever that is helpful, but we stand willing – and eager – to play stand-alone concerts in the park as it has done in the past.

Marketing

We believe it is possible and desirable to build attendance at concerts – and participation by musicians of all ages – through an intentional and strategic marketing campaign to begin in

mid-May or earlier. We were pleased to hear offers of help in this area from several arts commissioners at your August meeting. It may be possible to find a University of Idaho public relations or advertising student to work as an intern in the spring to augment existing publicity efforts. Again, our key supporters are willing to underwrite additional marketing efforts.

Next steps

We felt constrained at the August meeting by our inability to respond directly to questions and concerns raised by commissioners. We believe that before the commission votes on any change in the band's schedule for 2024, there should be a work session – either by the commission as a whole or the Events and Programs subcommittee. Musicians and audience members deserve an opportunity to roll up our sleeves and construct a strategy to restore the band's prominent position on Moscow's summer entertainment schedule, working in coordination with the Arts Commission and city staff.

Conclusion

The support expressed to us directly (in the form of a petition with more than 250 signatures) and indirectly (through personal contacts, phone calls and emails) make it clear that there is impressive and sustained community and University support for a series of four or five MAC Band concerts in the park each summer. We see no reason why this long and established tradition should not resume in 2024. We have discussed this letter with A.J. Miller, the band's director the past five years, and he is in full support of this proposal.

We hope that the Arts Commission will lend its support to this endeavor and find ways to make the concert series an even greater success. We and a legion of musicians and music lovers are eager to work with you to make this happen.

Thanks for your attention to these comments. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

cc:

Megan Cherry, Arts Director
A.J. Miller, MAC Band director
Julia Parker, City Council liaison
Art Bettge, Mayor
Bill Belknap, City Supervisor

Contact information:

Kenton Bird, kentonbird@gmail.com, 208-669-4080

Bill Voxman, wvoxman@uidaho.edu, 208-301-4988