



City of Gainesville Agenda Item Report

File Number: 2024-206

Agenda Date: March 7, 2024

Department: Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

Title: 2024-206 Cultural Arts Center Feasibility Study (B)

Department: Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

Description: Presentation from AMS Planning and Research Corp on the final report resulting from the Cultural Arts Feasibility Study in East Gainesville.

Fiscal Note: The City of Gainesville entered into a contract with AMS Planning and Research Corp for \$125,000.00 to conduct a Feasibility Study to investigate the merits and viability of a Cultural Arts Center in East Gainesville. This project was funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The contract term is from October 7, 2022 through March 31, 2024.

Explanation: The City Commission directed the City Manager's Office to initiate a study to determine the feasibility of a Cultural Arts Center in East Gainesville. In October of 2022, through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, AMS Planning and Research Corp was selected as the consultant to facilitate the study.

The City developed a scope that included the following: The City of Gainesville is seeking an experienced consulting firm that specializes in planning, design development and operation of a cultural arts center. The consulting firm will work with the City, external stakeholders and community members to create a vision for a cultural arts center in East Gainesville, including an assessment of site and facility requirements commensurate with the vision.

Key Dates:

- March 27-28, 2023: AMS Planning and Research Corp held a series of focus group meetings and interviewed 22 individuals and in this phase of the project.
- April 10-13 and April 21, 2023: AMS met with City Commissioners via Zoom and in person to gather input and feedback about the Cultural Arts Feasibility study.

- April 27, 2023: City staff toured several sites with the consultants to evaluate potential locations for a cultural arts center in East Gainesville. Some locations were selected to help the consultants understand the cultural landscape and others were visited as potential sites. These sites included Duval Early Learning Academy, Thelma Boltin Center, Fire Station #1, the Greybar property adjacent to Depot Park, the Cotton Club Museum and Cultural Center, Star Center Theatre, Hippodrome Theatre, and Curtis M. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.
- May 31 and August 9, 2023: AMS Planning and Research Corp conducted two community engagement workshops to gather feedback and input from community members.
- May and July 2023: Two public surveys were developed and released; data was collected.
- September 6, 2023: AMS Planning and Research Corp spoke with Marshall Davis Sr., Managing Director off the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center, Miami Florida. Mr. Davis was contacted to solicit input about the development and sustainability of a cultural arts center in East Gainesville.
- September 25, 2023: AMS Planning and Research Corp held a Visioning Workshop with City staff to present the proposed project outline and receive feedback on the study's direction and eventual final report.
- October 13, 2023: AMS Planning and Research Corp met with members of the Alachua County School Board to discuss the potential use of the Duval Early Learning Academy as a site for a cultural arts center in East Gainesville.
- January 27, 2024: To supplement the community engagement work conducted by AMS Planning and Research Corp, the City hosted an event entitled, "Empowering Communities Through Art," a moderated discussion on the possibilities and benefits of having a cultural arts center in East Gainesville that embraces culture, traditions and history through artistic platforms. The event included a panel discussion with Marshall Davis, director of Miami's African Heritage Cultural Arts Center, and Gainesville native Marion Caffey, producer of Amateur Night at the Apollo, presented at the Apollo Theater in New York City.

AMS Planning and Research Corp has developed the Best Practices and Case Study report and a series of recommendations concerning next steps which will be discussed during today's presentation.

Strategic Connection:

- Goal 1: Equitable Community
- Goal 2: More Sustainable Community

- Goal 3: A Great Place to Live and Experience
- Goal 4: Resilient Local Economy
- Goal 5: “Best in Class” Neighbor Services

Recommendation: The City Commission: 1) hear a presentation from AMS Planning and Research Corp concerning the results and recommendations from the Cultural Arts Center in East Gainesville Feasibility Study, and 2) provide direction to the City Manager for any follow-up actions regarding the report recommendations.