

Interlochen Public Radio (IPR) Community Advisory Council (CAC)

Notes from the November 28, 2017 Meeting

In attendance:

- Peter Payette, Executive Director, IPR
- Trey Davey, President, Interlochen Center for the Arts (ICA)
- Evy Sussman (telephonic)
- Sarah Helge
- Stephie Luyt
- Bob Giles
- Nancy Giles
- Whitney Waara
- Marcia Curran
- *Jane Becker, IPR's representative on the Create Amazing campaign cabinet*
- *Suzanne Sorkin, Member of the public*

CAC members not in attendance:

- Isaiah Wunsch
- John McDonald

Context for these discussion notes: Peter presented an update to the CAC, including information on further developing the CAC, a program report, financial report, and station highlights for 2018. We also took much time for discussion during each of the topics and after.

Comments from the discussion are not verbatim, nor are they attributed to individual members, but they are intended to reflect the discussion, questions and concerns, and various viewpoints expressed.

TOPIC: DEVELOPING THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Suggestion that we help ensure that this group is able to provide is recommendations and council to the ultimate decision makers overseeing IPR, the ICA Board of Trustees. As such, a goal for there to be a secretary / note-taker in the group and for us to work to deliver occasional reports, updates and recommendations to the Board of Trustees.
 - In an upcoming meeting we may wish to make this a more formal / long-term appointment, or we may choose to rotate the role, as needed.
 - Future possibility of also establishing a more formal role with a CAC Chair.
- As Peter noted in the message to the CAC preceding our meeting:

Part of this discussion needs to be your feedback on the priorities you see IPR setting and the decisions we are making about programming. The [rules for stations](#) that receive funds from the CPB require that the CAC, "advise the governing body of the station [Interlochen trustees] with respect to whether the programming and other policies of the station are meeting the specialized educational and cultural needs of the communities served by the station, and may make such recommendations as it considers appropriate to meet such needs." The way we meet this requirement is by gathering your thoughts and submitting them in written form to the trustees.

- What does it mean to “meet the educational and cultural needs of the communities served...”?
 - IPR does a lot to that end, and this Board is meant to help assess what this means and whether it is being met
 - The language is rather vague and there is no further specificity offered in guidance to the stations by the CPB, but there are also no known instances where the CPB Inspector General has identified that a station with a qualifying council is not meeting that broad definition. *I.e.*, this is unlikely to be challenged at the funding level, but as an advisor to IPR our role is to help ensure we believe that need is fulfilled.
 - Is there a survey needed to gather further community input to that effect?
- The station has also set goals (beyond the CPB requirements) for the CAC. In particular, the requirement to representing the *diverse needs of the community* seems an area ripe for improvement. In particular, there is a goal to recruit participation and input from our regions tribal interest, and to broaden the regional representation of the CAC to include at least one person from the north (Petoskey, Charlevoix area).
- With such a central role in the community, does IPR have a mission requirement to educate the public? Yes, there are nods and affirmations of that idea.
- Is there an ideal size for this group?
 - On classical side, it would be good to have a group (perhaps a subgroup from this CAC) that is interested in helping give advice and feedback on general flow of music.
 - Because the CAC has no power to take action, so we don't need a certain number of people to be able to vote or make decisions. There is no set goal for the size, but more of a goal for maintaining or improving representation of various parties from around the region.
 - Some who are involved in other groups and nonprofits in the area might have ideas about how to involve the tribe in some aspect of work or another. The CAC will consider and work to help recruit this desired input.
 - All of us could be tasked with this as a way to try and recruit more diverse representation.

- The CAC is subject to open meetings rules as well, so we will need to consider what can be discussed and also given we are not empowered to take action

TOPIC: CONTENT UPDATE

- Kids Commute
 - Support and enthusiasm from the group about Kids Commute
 - Ideas to broaden the reach and use, including some materials, events, etc., are supported and encouraged
 - Idea: (Peter mentioned something about backpacks) – the Rotary Sunrise Club always does a project to fill book bags, wonder if this is another possible outreach opportunity
 - Questions and interest in getting the content out beyond the current borders of IPR territory
 - Peter reports that this has been offered (free of charge) to other stations but none have taken it at this point; some outreach happening but again, a challenge for other audiences outside our region to be interested in something that they don't consider "local" to them
- New York Phil Live broadcast
 - Are there (or could there have been) more promotional opportunities to get the word out?
 - Peter reports that there was an extensive outreach effort for this show and that it was probably more than we've ever done in the past
 - Still, the CAC was largely unaware of the program, and since we didn't hear much (or focus on it), perhaps there would have been other ways to help get that word out
 - CAC commends the great work and was very enthusiastic about the program / partnership
- Irredeemable
 - Great programming, longer-form, offered broadly with some pickup at the state level, hoping to have it take legs even more broadly
 - CAC again very enthusiastic and excited by the reporting, the depth, the sound and feel
 - Podcast potential sounds like a great direction
- News
 - The more time that can be devoted to local news and weather, and greater the diversity of local coverage, the greater the advantage to our listeners;
 - Recommendation and continuing support from the CAC for growing the local news reporting; see if there's a way to bring more stories into the mix

- Challenges currently getting local coverage onto NPR due to current focus of national news

TOPIC: FINANCIAL UPDATE

- \$1.474 annual revenue
 - Major expenses: \$435k content; \$820k staff
 - Net losses of 300k and 400k in prior years, yet with need to cover overhead, etc, the station will continue to have a shortfall (200k projected in FY17)
 - The losses have been covered by ICA, and ICA management has committed to continuing to shrink this deficit over the longer-term
 - CAC offers gratitude to ICA for this long-term support of the station and for allowing it to operate as such; we fully support the goal of trying to move towards a balanced budget and hope that there will be a several year window offered to try and reach that goal.
- How does an endowment fit into the plan, and what are we doing toward that end?
 - It is likely an important solution to the budget shortfalls. \$4-5M endowment would really help fund those shortfalls we're currently facing, for example.
 - In moving toward developing that endowment, the sale of the 100.9 signal in East Jordan (\$600-700k) will become foundation.
 - CAC encourages / interested in seeing how the Create Amazing campaign will prioritize the effort to grown and sustain that endowment.

SOME UPCOMING DEVELOPMENTS AND EVENTS

- NPR ombudsman event – April 5th – will be an event with the International Affairs Forum
- We've Got Issues – continuing to work on this series and considering more outreach typ events at local breweries – TC and Petoskey
- The Moth event – April 20th - Question about partnerships there with local storytelling groups and whether that's a further opportunity to develop (maybe)
- DSO live event from Bay Harbor (GL Performing Arts Center opening July 7th)
- WYSO concert season
- Kids commute summer listening club is being considered / developed
- Elections 2018
- In 2018 hoping to move forward with unearthing more of the IPR archives – more historical music from the campus for use on air.
 - Can the American Archive at WGBH / Library of Congress be helpful resources to keeping the legal costs down?

GENERAL DISCUSSION & OPPORTUNITIES

- Is there any consideration of a news-focused opportunity for kids (ala Kids Commute)?
 - Interest in seeing a news segment or curriculum for kids and parents about information literacy, since parents are clamoring for such information, how to manage technology, etc.
- The environmental reporting has always been strong and CAC expresses hope that that will remain a strong focus for IPR
 - Note that IPR will have another intern funded by the Knight fellowship at MSU this coming year
- Within the Kids Commute program – could there be materials (printable) to be distributed via email and printed for libraries, etc. – (Evie volunteers to help develop some of those materials if of interest)
 - Meeting with TCAPS teachers in January to explore what they would find useful and what they would be able to incorporate in their curriculum
- Emails and sharing info online is really vital for those who are part time residents; much of listening audience is only local for part of the year, but this is the way to maintain local connection and get local info is through IPR and other local news. Online is important connection.
- Election coverage of the 1st district – in 2016, seemed like poor coverage (overall in our region, not IPR in particular) – CAC challenges IPR to step it up and expand that reporting, knowing other news orgs may not.
 - Would be great to be able to let a reporter go out into the field for 2 weeks and drive around...but the station can't afford a reporter to be gone from the general lineup, nor the travel costs. As a result, much doesn't get analyzed and goes beyond the reach of the station to cover.
 - Could there be some fundraising around the election? Special effort to support a regional listening project around the election?
- A few months ago, Peter shared some of the costs for major programs. Looking at overall program costs for some of those programs, Prairie Home stood out as very expensive and a potential to consider dropping it. This time around, mostly nods in favor of letting the show go, given it has had ample time to develop and doesn't have the same widespread appeal.
- Regarding funding, and potential conflicts of interests by funders: What if Koch Industries came and offered support, would you take it? How do you determine which funders are ok, which aren't? What explanation to you offer to audiences? Can you limit size / scale of underwriting packages? What are other stations doing?

- Transparency is critical to addressing these kinds of concerns. Making it clear that funding doesn't drive the coverage.
 - How was the fund drive (sharing that info)? Much appreciation for the transparency!
 - Should we talk about the gap?! (Is it the "institutional contribution"?) "Partnership" is a good word, indicates strength of Interlochen's support for the resource.
- Is there an opportunity for more collaboration or connection with other local journalists, including allowing them to use your great content elsewhere?
 - Maybe, AND, we have an opportunity that CAC member Bob Giles helped surface with *Reporting for America*, which would possibly allow us to get a reporter for a year – they look favorably on joint reporting proposals (with Petoskey News Review, and EUP area?) – it's a great case to make.
- Segments featuring local writers: While we are generally very supportive of our local community of writers and appreciate that there is room for them in this space, the current programming by Karen Anderson has become a bit stale.
 - There is no editor at this point, and Peter is working on developing a collaborative editing method to have a group of local writers do the segment editing. Also a goal of rotating the writers – and Front Street Writers opportunity (Rotary Grant was intended to do just that). CAC agrees on the need for curatorial role / setup.
- Station awareness opportunity – CAC member saw a recent email from Traverse Magazine and Interlochen about auditions – wondered if IPR could send info about the radio station along with the people conducting auditions to share with parents, etc.
 - Point is well taken – if the auditions are in the service area, would be good to bring along...
- Has there been much in the way of station swag (t-shirts, other ways we can both support and market the station? (No, and acknowledgement of a need to improve upon it.)
- Wish to pass along to the ICA Board that there's a lot of encouragement for the great station leadership here; also a thank you to the trustees for all of the partnership / support for IPR over the past many years, and for continuing to give a long runway to the station toward its goal of breaking even financially.