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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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METRO ARTS COMMISSION APPROVES EQUITY-CENTERED ACTION ITEMS AT SPECIAL MEETING

Commission Supports Actions for Agency to Better Fulfill Equity Work

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — At a specially-called meeting, the Metro Nashville Arts Commission Thursday approved six action items as a commitment to the betterment of Metro Arts' workplace culture and equity practices.

The meeting and action steps came in response to investigations conducted by Metro Human Resources (HR) into complaints filed by two former Metro Arts employees alleging discrimination. Although the HR fact-finding reports found no evidence of discrimination and no violations of rules, policies or laws, HR staff did make suggestions for improving communications tools and methods, clarifying and strengthening processes for employee feedback, developing management skills and continuing work within the agency's internal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts.

The Commission developed and approved the following action items to encompass the recommendations set forth in the HR fact-finding reports, as well as some suggestions expressed in public comments to the Commission from the arts community and some of the desired results expressed by the former employees in their official complaints.

- Hiring an additional, outside consultant experienced in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) field to work with agency staff in collaboration with the efforts already underway
- Continuing work with Metro HR equity personnel and with Ms. Andrea Blackman, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Office for Metro, to lead internal conversations with staff
- Reviewing and recommending additional management and leadership training for all management-level employees
- Conducting a specific review, with Metro HR, of the use of Metro's standard Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) to ensure they are utilized appropriately, and involving the Commission's Committee for Antiracism and Equity (CARE) in this process
- Utilizing the agency's upcoming strategic planning process to better define our racial equity and antiracism work to ensure community needs are being met
- Review the progress on these action items in three months' time

“This list is a start,” said Commission Chair Jim Schmidt. “The reports may have found there was no violation of policy, rule or law, but that does not mean there was no harm done. We acknowledge that, and that’s part of the reason we are starting this process immediately and putting forth recommendations. This work will be ongoing.”

The Metro Arts Commission’s next scheduled meeting is Thursday, February 17. More information about the Commission, its committees and their meeting schedules is available at [Metro Arts’ website](#).

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About Metro Arts

Metro Arts is the Nashville Office of Arts + Culture. Our mission is to drive a vibrant and equitable community through the arts. Metro Arts strives to ensure that all Nashvillians have access to a creative life, and we work toward this goal through community investments, artist and organizational training, public art and creative placemaking, and direct programs involving residents in all forms of arts and culture. Metro Arts receives operational support from the Tennessee Arts Commission, and additional information is available online at www.MetroArtsNashville.com and in our [2021 Annual Report](#).

The Metro Nashville Arts Commission or Board of Commissioners is appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Metro Council. This 15-member board oversees Metro Arts’ strategic work outlined in the charter.