



**Reel Grrls**  
4408 Delridge Way SW  
Seattle, WA 98106

2/21/18 Public Comment  
COW - 2018-0086

February 21, 2018

To the Honorable King County Council Members,

My name is Nancy Chang, I am an arts administrator, and I live in District 2. I am heavily engaged in local and statewide arts and culture, specifically to correct gender and race imbalances. I serve as a board member of Artist Trust, I am a founding advisory member of the Womxn's Creative Industries Meet-up, and serve as the Executive Director of Reel Grrls, a non-profit that serves young people county wide to support them to explore, critique and author media through a feminist lens. I am here to advocate for 4Culture's work of building trust with grassroots organizations like Reel Grrls, and to express my disappointment that 6 council members can say they love the work of 4Culture, and also work to push through Ordinance #2018-0086, without any consultation with Jim Kelly and his dedicated 4Culture team.

Although Reel Grrls is based in Seattle, we have had the opportunity to work throughout King County thanks to 4Culture funding, providing programs to rural young people in Skykomish, north towards Shoreline, as well as various cities in south and east county in Burien, Auburn, Redmond, Renton, North Bend, Carnation, and many more.

I have worked in community development for almost 20 years; serving at the City of Redmond for a decade, and in my current role for almost four years. I know how difficult it is to build trust with the community, and have experienced trust and care by Jim and his team. 4Culture as a fledgling Public Development Authority, under the leadership of Jim Kelly has supported an amazing feat of FUNDING and prioritizing art and culture in King County. As someone that knows government process, and understands how to navigate bureaucracy, 4Culture is a breath of fresh air to my work in gender and racial justice, because they are committed to making sure that I can serve young people and support my focused outreach to young women and youth of color. Because of this Reel Grrls is able to launch our #BlvckGrrlsMagic track that train next generation Black and African-American teen women to be their generation's Ava DuVernay.

In a written statement by Council Person Upthgrove he stated he loved the work of 4Culture, which does not align with the intentions of Ordinance #2018-0086, because truly the tone that is being set right now is of mistrust. If Ordinance #2018-0086, was discussed with the beloved team of 4Culture, I would not be here to advocate and fight for 4Culture to remain to be independent PDA that is run by a team of expert arts administrators that are trusted by the diverse community they serve. Please do not support Ordinance #2018-0086, 4Culture is not broken, so please don't fix a non-existent problem when there are plenty of real ones you should be focused on.

Sincerely,

Best,

**Nancy Chang**  
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MICHELLE DE LA VEGA

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Feb. 21, 2018

RE: King County Council Proposed Ordinance 2018-0086

Good Morning,

I want to address your concerns about diversity.

I have been an artist in King County for the past 25 years, and I've been a proud resident of Unincorporated King County District 8 for the past 13 years. My work has been funded by 4Culture 3 times, I've had a solo exhibition in their gallery, I've been a speaker for their events, I've been a peer panelist for their grant programs, and will soon be serving on the Public Art Advisory Committee. I am a person of color and I live in a highly diverse, and what many would describe as a low income "under served" neighborhood. I am therefore a prime example of exactly the kind of person the sponsoring council members of this ordinance are using to characterize people from whom 4Culture is supposedly withholding support and excluding from opportunities for influence.

There is a high priority at 4Culture to develop diversified accessibility to funding. This is evidenced in their organizational initiatives as well as in the instructive language their facilitators use during the grant application review process.

I would like to introduce you to Artist Up.

Artist Up is an in depth collaboration between 4Culture and the Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs to reach out to diverse and under served demographics state-wide to understand how to make arts funding more accessible. Both organizations have actively applied Artist Up's copious research to their respective funding programs. They've also conducted a pilot grant program to continue testing and gathering more data. I have served as an ambassador and advisor for Artist Up and I would like to suggest partnering with them as a resource for the Council to begin building real context about how to enhance the accessibility of arts funding to the under served communities for whom you do express concern.

As an additional example of 4Culture's pioneering efforts I would like to tell you about the new ARC Fellowship program for which I served as a peer panelist this year. The eligibility requirement to apply for the fellowship was a physical, developmental, cognitive, intellectual, or emotional disability. There were 98 applicants in total. 70% of those applicants had never applied for arts funding before. I think you will agree that this unprecedented program is a huge success in reaching and serving an underserved community whose artistic voices are a vital part of the fabric of our county's culture.

Thank you.

Michelle de la Vega

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4 Culture  
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2/21/18  
Public Testimony  
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Ken Torp, Seattle, WA, DISTRICT 2

I am a former Chief of Staff to the Governor of Colorado, a former foreign service officer and former Budget Director of the State of Colorado. I have lived in King County since 2002.

I am not an artist nor an applicant or recipient of 4Culture funding. I am an audience member. As such, I value the work of 4Culture and its status as a quasi-governmental agency. In its capacity as a PDA, it has shown remarkable entrepreneurship and professionalism. The programs it funds serve the arts-interested public countywide. It also has undertaken some remarkable initiatives that reach out to underserved audiences and make the arts available to those who would not otherwise be able to afford them. It does it outside of the political process, with integrity and an even hand.

This ordinance would fundamentally change the reporting structure of the agency and leave it vulnerable to politicization of the grant-making process. It puts the County Council in the position of potential conflicts of interest and lobbying by constituents. The existing board structure insulates you from that, which is as it should be.

I am here to oppose Ordinance 2018-0086.

Thank you.

Ellen Sollod, 724 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle, District 2.

I am the former Executive Director of SAC and the Colorado Council on the Arts and Humanities and a professional artist. As a Seattle-based artist with more than 25 years of experience in the public art field and commissioned works from Bellingham to San Jose, I have had in-depth experience with multiple public agencies. 4Culture ranks among the highest for professionalism, valuing the community, and treating artists as professionals and with respect.

I urge you to oppose Ordinance 2018-0086. It potentially politicizes appointments, budgets and grant awards.

It will fundamentally eliminate its PDA status as an independent quasi-governmental entity by changing the structure from a governing board to largely an advisory body.

Changing the governance to provide for Council member appointments to the board and striking the requirement for substantive and balanced expertise in Public Art, Heritage, Historic Preservation and Arts undermines the ability of the board to function effectively in a governance role. This is tantamount to removing scientists from the Advisory Board of the EPA. The potential for politicizing the appointment process and degrading the composition of the board with this ordinance is enormous. The current structure already requires geographic diversity.

Changing the hiring/confirming/firing process of the executive director also undermines the role of the Board. The ordinance seems to want to have it both ways. It says that the Executive would appoint and Council confirm the director and that that the County could remove the Executive Director by Ordinance. It goes on to say that the Board would recruit, hire, annually review the Executive Director and retain authority to remove the ED. This sets up so that both the County and the Board could fire the director. Impossible.

Changing the budget process would have real time impacts on the agency, both its planning horizon and its administration. In particular, Public Art projects are multiyear and tied to construction schedules. The money is allocated annually. Council refusal to approve the budget could result not just in project delays but in a mismatch between construction schedules which could result in significant negative impacts to agencies beyond 4 Culture.

The Council should keep in mind that it is in county's and the Council's best interest to maintain a "firewall" between itself and arts programming, artist selection and the grant process. Through this ordinance, you are potentially setting yourself up for both conflict of interest situations as well as taking the flack for any potentially controversial art programs or projects.

There also seems to be an unstated concern around 4 Culture's allocations countywide. As a recipient of 4 Culture funding and a Seattle-based artist, I can tell you that nearly all of my projects have been outside the city—Woodinville, Bellevue, Renton, for example. All these projects have benefitted these communities. There is no way of knowing by looking at the financial reports because the funds are tracked to the providers of the services not the recipients. A deeper analysis would reveal a different picture.

The biggest question for me that looms is "WHY?" Usually when a change is made in an agency, the community is disgruntled and there are problems. 4 Culture is widely valued by the community that it serves. This ordinance is a "solution" in search of a problem.

If you are truly acting on behalf of the larger community, you will withdraw this proposal and allow 4Culture to continue to function in the admirable way that it has for many years

## Seattle Symphony statement on proposed King County Ordinance 2018-0086

The Seattle Symphony believes that public support for arts and culture is essential to maintaining the vitality of our communities. And so we welcome the opportunity for dialogue with the County Council, and with the community at large, regarding governance and oversight of 4Culture, the agency that administers arts funding in our county.

We have great respect for the work of 4Culture and for the tremendous benefits it has helped create for county residents. Through smart investments in arts and culture, King County and 4Culture have helped shape our region in incredibly positive ways. Those investments include capital funding for projects such as the creation of Benaroya Hall, as well as program funding for Seattle Symphony arts education initiatives in our schools, and for arts-based projects benefiting those in greatest need. King County's support for the arts has enabled us to honor the artistic traditions of diverse people in King County, to instill creativity and sense of purpose in our young people, and to bring us together, collectively lifting the human spirit.

We support transparent and responsible oversight of 4Culture, and we hear the Council's desire to nurture strong relationships with 4Culture and ultimately accountability to voters. We also believe that 4Culture should continue providing their extensive arts expertise and highly respected independent review process for arts funding.

To ensure that continues, we urge the Council to adopt the principles formulated by Cultural Access Washington (see attached), intended to guide the Council and the County Executive in the legislative process of reviewing, amending and passing the proposed ordinance. And further, we urge the Council to ensure that the appointment process for the 4Culture board be designed such that the board remains a governing board separate from the peer review panels. The review panels provide cultural expertise in grant decisions while the board provides governance which requires a balance of talents and skills such as financial background, organizational leadership, legal and other qualifications.

In conclusion, the Seattle Symphony appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed ordinance and we hope to continue a fruitful dialogue to create a strong 4Culture and relationship with the Council.

1/31/18

CAWA Principles relating to Proposed Ordinance 2018-0086 that addresses the cultural development authority (4Culture)

On Monday January 29, 2018, a proposed ordinance (the "4Culture Ordinance") was introduced before the King County Council where it was referred to the Committee of the Whole for review and action. The first hearing is expected on February 21. The main purpose of the proposed 4Culture Ordinance is to provide the King County Council greater control over and oversight of 4Culture, the County's cultural development authority, and to ensure a better partnership between the Council, the Executive and 4Culture.

This control and oversight and partnership would be accomplished in four principal ways: 1. Requiring the Council to accept 4Culture's board-adopted budgets prior to the County transferring lodging tax/special account revenue to 4Culture for the following year; 2. Requiring Executive appointment and Council confirmation of the 4Culture Board's selection for Executive Director and allowing the County to remove the Executive Director by ordinance; 3. By providing that new appointments and reappointments due to vacancies and expired terms would be appointed six by the Executive and one each by each Councilmember; and 4. Allowing the Council to amend the 4Culture bylaws consistent with Council-adopted amendments to the 4Culture Charter, while retaining the 4Culture Board's authority to amend the bylaws.

While CAWA generally supports increased transparency and council oversight of 4Culture, we do have a number of concerns about the current proposal that we hope will be addressed during the legislative process.

CAWA believes that 4Culture is an essential agency in providing vital public funding for arts and heritage organizations, large and small, throughout the county. 4Culture will also play a crucial role in helping to design and implement any future cultural access program. Accordingly, CAWA urges the Council and the County Executive to adopt the following principles in reviewing, amending and passing the proposed 4Culture Ordinance:

- There should be a balance between Council and County Executive oversight and 4Culture independence to provide needed transparency and oversight over public money while ensuring that funding decisions are made on merit by 4Culture.
- The 4Culture Executive Director needs to be a strong leader with a broad vision for providing equitable funding for arts and heritage organizations, large and small, that will provide services and programming throughout the county in a way that enhances geographic diversity, equity and social justice. Accordingly, hiring, evaluation and firing

of the ED should be by the 4Culture Board and with the input and participation of the Council and the County Executive as represented on the 4Culture Board.\*

- Funding and grant decisions should be done independently by expert 4Culture staff overseen by 4Culture board members with broad geographic and racial diversity and expertise in arts, heritage and preservation. We are encouraged that the 4Culture Ordinance purports not to interfere with 4Culture funding decisions and requires cultural expertise of 4Culture board members.
- There should be a clarification in the proposal to affirmatively state that in considering the annual 4Culture operating and capital budgets, the Council will accept them or not as presented and will not make amendments to the budgets as approved by the 4Culture Board.
- 4Culture funds should only be spent on arts, heritage and preservation grants and not diverted to other uses.
- A stronger partnership between the Council, the County Executive and 4Culture should provide a foundation for implementing programs in King County that provide for greater access to cultural services and programs throughout the County and in a way that enhances equity and social justice.

\*We note that the original intention of forming 4 Culture as a PDA was to remove the burden of the cost to the County of staff being County employees. If the Executive Director could be fired by the Council it appears that the position would be a full FTE County employee.