

Published by **4CULTURE** on **February 09, 2018**

## From Our Board: A Message on Proposed King County Ordinance #2018-0086

**Proposed Ordinance #2018-0086** took us by surprise.

As the citizen volunteer Board of 4Culture, we are dedicated to reflecting King County's values of public service, participation, transparency and government accountability to our residents.

Proposed Ordinance #2018-0086 states "the 4Culture board, executive director, staff and advisory committees have demonstrated a commitment to addressing racial, geographic and income related funding inequities and creating an environment in which all King County residents participate actively in cultural opportunities." We believe all of this is accurate.

4Culture is defined by its commitment to the public process. The County Code that governs our funding programs requires distribution of public funding through annual competitive processes that invite applicants from all disciplines, and from all sectors of the county. Those proposals are evaluated by dozens of independent citizen review panelists who generate funding recommendations, which are then reviewed by volunteer expert Advisory Committees before we as the Board review and approve them.

Each of us who serve as board members has been recommended by the King County Executive and confirmed by the County Council after nomination by a Board Nominating Committee that includes board members, three county councilmembers, and the liaison to the King County Executive's office, all of whom are voting members of the committee.

We are proud that both our financial accountability and compliance with state law have been audited 23 times, and that the State Auditor has lauded 4Culture and its board of directors for its commitment to sound financial management.

We take immense pride in navigating complex financial challenges throughout the past 15 years, in our stewardship of public funds, in retaining superb staff, and in the trust we believe we have earned from the arts, heritage and preservation communities throughout King County for our commitment to accessibility, fairness and equity.

The significant changes required by Proposed Ordinance #2018-0086 would result in an agency with very different governance and budget processes, and could very well reduce, instead of improve, community transparency. It is clear that the County Council desires to have closer oversight and involvement in this agency, and a path to grow arts, heritage and preservation capacity in districts throughout King County so that 4Culture funds can be

distributed in a way that promotes equity and social justice, including geographic equity.

We have no doubt that the Executive and Council desire to see 4Culture succeed in its service to county residents.

**We ask that the King County Executive and Councilmembers take a pause in acting on this ordinance and join together to work with us in a public process that will address the Council's primary concerns about including geographic distribution of cultural funds and any other matters of concern.**

Sincerely,

The **4Culture Board of Directors**