



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of January 23, 2010**

DATE: January 12, 2010

SUBJECT: Name the new cultural center located at 1101 Wilson Boulevard "Artisphere".

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the naming of the new cultural center located at the 1101 Wilson Boulevard "Artisphere" as favored by a community vote in the recently completed "New Name Campaign".

ISSUE: Community voting process to determine preferred name for the new Cultural Center

SUMMARY: A "New Name Campaign" was undertaken to elicit the community's preference for the name of the new Cultural Center scheduled to open in October at the former Newseum space in Rosslyn. Voting was conducted both online and in person at seven community locations between December 17, 2009 and January 11, 2010. Three names were presented for the community to choose a first and second choice. Over 1,400 votes were cast. The community's first choice was Artisphere. Staff supports this choice for naming the Cultural Center.

BACKGROUND: The Arlington County Board approved plans to transform the former Newseum site in Rosslyn into a cultural center on July 14, 2009. The Cultural Center combines this space and the Rosslyn Spectrum as one jointly programmed, managed and marketed arts facility that will serve as a draw to Rosslyn, enliven the street life and complement the next generation of Rosslyn redevelopment while at the same time create a critical mass of space that offers Arlington an exciting and diverse mix of cultural programming. Programming will include innovative national and international artists as well as showcase award-winning Arlington-based companies. Conceived as 'an arts space for everyone,' the 54,000 square foot Center will be the venue for dozens of weekly events, ranging from community-specific activities, to live bands in the 3,000 square foot ballroom. It will house well established Arlington-based arts groups such as Synetic Theatre and Washington Shakespeare Company, as well as a restaurant, a wireless town square, and a new home for the arts exhibition program previously presented at the Ellipse Gallery.

The center is designed to be a new model that will encourage the creative participation of diverse audiences, utilizing state of the art technology, active entertainment and the best in contemporary

County Manager: *BMD*

County Attorney: *SW*

Staff: Jeffrey Marin, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources
Norma Kaplan, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources

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visual and performing arts. The Center is expected to have an estimated \$10 million in annual economic impact, enhance street life in Rosslyn and attract an estimated 250,000 visitors.

Arlington County's objectives for the Cultural Center project are to fulfill the original purpose of the Newseum space by providing a destination attraction in Rosslyn and to create a dynamic and diverse Center to showcase the arts in Arlington. These objectives will be met in a highly cost-effective manner with up to a 20-year lease that includes 17+ years rent-free in a visible and accessible space in Rosslyn and through a business partnership with the Rosslyn Business Improvement Corporation.

To assist the County in meeting the Cultural Center's objectives, Arnold Worldwide, an international marketing firm located in Arlington, has offered its support on a pro bono basis. The first task Arnold assisted with was the naming of the center, given the importance the name plays in capturing the center's essence, helping to raise awareness, and allowing marketing to commence. A presentation was made to the County Board at a work session in November by staff and Arnold suggesting the community naming campaign, choosing from three names identified by Arnold and narrowed by staff. The three names were Orb, Artopolis, and Artisphere. The County Board indicated that it was supportive of proceeding in this direction provided that an outreach plan was developed to encourage participation from all parts of the community. As the marketing campaign for the new Cultural Center progresses, a tagline will also be developed to be used in conjunction with the new name. While the exact phrasing for the tagline needs to be finalized, an example of what it might be is *Arlington's Arts Space for Everyone*.

DISCUSSION: An outreach plan was implemented by staff that included an e-mail blast to arts groups, multicultural groups, civic groups, and Arlington non-profits with a promotional piece and link to the ballot, prominent placement on the County and the Arlington Arts websites, media announcements (including Spanish media), paper ballots in seven community centers and libraries (posters in the others), and a reminder e-mail blast the last week of the campaign. The promotional pieces were done in both English and Spanish. Voting was held between December 17, 2009 and January 10, 2010.

Voting could either be done online or in person at one of the seven locations. Ballots were offered in both English and Spanish. The ballot listed the three names – Orb, Artopolis, and Artisphere – and the community was asked to indicate a first and a second choice. The ballot also provided a textbox or comments line for feedback on the names and interests for the cultural center. An Arts Commission marketing committee will review the comments and summarize findings so that this information can help with future marketing. The voting software was configured to only allow one vote per computer except for known public access computers. Those voting via paper ballot were also asked to vote only once. Only the first vote from the same computer was counted (other than votes from known public access computers).

After elimination of the known repeat votes, there were 1,404 votes cast, 96% of which were cast electronically. Artisphere was the clear winner. Orb was the second choice. Assigning two points for first choice and one point for second choice, the point totals are as follows:

Artisphere	Orb	Artopolis
1,742	1,389	725
45%	36%	19%

Artisphere also received the most first choice votes and the most second choice votes.

	Artisphere	Orb	Artopolis
First Choice	658	510	176
Second Choice	426	369	373

The County engaged the services of a copyright and trademark attorney to ensure that the County will be able to register the chosen name and utilize it without conflict. There is no trademark conflict with the name. The City of Greenville, SC uses the name Artisphere for an annual arts festival. However, the name is not registered. Since the Greenville Artisphere Festival is not advertised or promoted in the Washington Metropolitan area, it is not expected to conflict with the County's proposed use in this region.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact.