

[VMAAC]

The Veterans Memorial Arts and Athletic Center

Re: The repurposing of the Memorial Coliseum and Rose Quarter;

July 26, 2010

To: Mayor Sam Adams,

Thank you for your continuing efforts to preserve and enhance the Memorial Coliseum. We too continue to be actively invested in this process and offer our continued support and suggestions for improvement.

It is regrettable that the RFP process was set aside rather than being amended so that we could address the “fatal flaws” in the three final proposals. Had this occurred, during the 6-week RFP phase, the VMAAC would have revised the original design in order to address any new requirements. We could have removed the exoskeleton and preserved the entire bowl by limiting our programming.

The City Council’s decision to ratify the SAC’s recommendations and to distribute the RFP was in our eyes, acknowledgement of our right to remain a part of this process. Therefore, if extracting programmatic elements from the three remaining proposals and distributing them throughout the Rose Quarter is the compromise necessary to proceeding with the RFP, it is important that we be an active part of the discussions. The City and the Blazers’ representatives, having expressed their openness to providing leasable space for our programmatic requirements, would then better understand our goals, specific programmatic components, and spatial requirements.

In preparation, the VMAAC is now narrowing our efforts and focusing only on the arts division of our program. We are contacting potential community supporters and organizations, developing potential sources of rental income, and are developing foundation support for outreach and scholarships. In order to effectively facilitate our actions, we have incorporated a companion organization, Pacific Center for Artistic Development (PCAD), as the program development and support arm of VMAAC.

This aligns with the PDC’s suggestion to integrate an arts academy within the Rose Quarter. All along, the VMAAC/PCAD mission has been to foster a lifetime of education and skills development through participation, instruction, and training. The PCAD anticipates developing abilities and skills of local and regional youth, focusing on those burdened by financial disadvantage, through the delivery of world-class instructional curriculum and training, and scholarships.

In order to implement this goal, we have met with organizations such as Portland Youth Philharmonic, Portland Youth Jazz Orchestra, and other tenured organizations that have already expressed interest in joining the PCAD. PCAD anticipates acting as a hub for like-minded organizations desiring to grow and prosper under a shared roof. A major part of our proposal is to capitalize on the income from renting space on a shared use basis. However, it is unfortunate that many thriving organizations and a majority of the public have been confused by the media’s accounts of the whole process continuously altering course. This has made our work more difficult. For this reason, we request a letter of support from the City. Also, we would appreciate a letter of interest from the Trail Blazers assigning us a home after our presentation of a satisfactory detailed business plan.

Finally, we request that the original \$40,000 stipend be made available to us in order to continue our efforts. A portion of this fund will go to pay off development costs that were incurred in good faith, believing that they would be reimbursed from the stipend. We believe that this is only fair in return for dedicating thousands of unpaid hours toward this process, which was invited by the City.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

The VMAAC/PCAAD Development Group

CC: City Council, PDC, and the Rose Quarter SAC