

CITY OF MADISON  
**INTER-DEPARTMENTAL**  
CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: March 1, 2021

TO: Human Resources Department

FROM: William Fruhling, Principal Planner  
Heather Stouder, Planning Division Director

SUBJECT: Karin Wolf Reclassification – Supporting Materials

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This memorandum provides additional information supporting the reclassification of the City’s Art Administrator, Karin Wolf. It highlights how the responsibilities of this position have grown as the importance of art and culture in connecting with diverse communities has been elevated in the organization and community. Karin has led this transition but her classification has remained the same as when she was hired 15 years ago.

Current: CG 18/10 Madison Arts Program Administrator  
Proposed: CG 18/14 Arts and Culture Administrator

Overall Justification: When Karin was hired, the focus of the municipal art program was visual arts. This has evolved in major ways to include poetry/spoken word, music, performing arts, and other forms of cultural expression. The Madison Arts Program Administrator is the City’s expert on matters related to art and culture. This position provides professional staff support to the Madison Arts Commission (and 3 subcommittees) and a variety of community partners to support artists, arts venues, etc. It requires coordination with the Mayor and alders, a variety of boards, commissions, committees, other City agencies (especially the City Attorney’s Office, Parks Division, Engineering Division, Finance Department, Risk Manager, etc.), artists and arts organization, neighborhoods and other stakeholder groups. The position provides day-to-day supervision of other Planning Division staff assisting on individual public art projects and other activities such as Make Music Madison and the poetry program, as well as supervision of interns, work-study students, and volunteers.

The table on the following pages identifies some selected examples to illustrate how Madison’s art and culture program has expanded and new responsibilities of this position since the incumbent was hired.

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES OF NEW DUTIES SINCE HIRED	DESCRIPTION
<b>PUBLIC ART</b>	Percent for Art Program	Karin coordinated the development of an ordinance requiring that one 1% of City capital projects go towards integrating art. This required negotiations with multiple City agencies and policymakers. She now is responsible for its implementation.
	BLINK Temporary Public Art Program	This major new (and popular) component of the City's Arts Grant Program quickly became very popular as it provided opportunities for emerging artists who may not have felt "established" enough to apply under other categories
	Special Initiatives	The City constantly receives ideas for potential public art projects. Appropriately and tactfully responding to them requires an experienced arts professional. The Downtown Doors project that Karin led with community partners was an economic development initiative to support local businesses. Another example that Karin led was recruiting artists and coordinating with utilities to wrap utility boxes in art. These are just two examples of special initiatives that Karin was able to foster for the benefit of the community.
<b>MUSIC</b>	Madison Music City	This is a multi-faceted initiative aimed at bolstering Madison's music scene for the benefit of musicians, businesses and residents. The many initiatives around music were not part of this position when Karin was hired.
	Task Force on Equity in Music and Entertainment	This effort, commonly referred to as the Hip Hop Task Force closely examined the complex and controversial perception of this popular art form. Karin provided support and guidance to this effort and is responsible for coordinating the implementation of multiple recommendations.
	Between the Waves Music Conference	This is an annual conference to connect musicians, promoters, venues, and others to address issues and strengthen the local music scene for the benefit of musicians, businesses, tourism, and residents.
	Supervision/Mentorship	Karin provides first-level supervision and mentorship to professional and para-professional staff assigned to assist in this new program area.
<b>CITY PLANS + POLICIES</b>	Cultural Plan	Provided professional staff support to a City committee charged with developing this first ever plan.
	Public Engagement	Using art and Social Practice Artists as a way to engage community members in City planning and other processes is gaining popularity across the country. Under Karin's guidance, Madison has used this in several processes and found that it is particularly effective in engaging underrepresented communities and has resulted in increased participation.
	Integrating Art in Community Plans	The concept of "art in city building" has evolved from an "add on" to an expectation under Karin's leadership. Art and culture is now as standard in many plans and transportation or parks. People feel more connected to a place if they see art in their neighborhood that reflects their lived experiences.
	Madison Performing Arts Facilities Study, 2014	Oversaw development of this first comprehensive study to understand the needs of the wide-ranging local performing arts organizations and developed recommendations. Karin is now responsible for the ongoing implementation of many of them.

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POETRY	Poet Laureate Program	Although Madison has long designated a poet laureate, Karin saw the need to elevate the stature of this position and have an open and transparent selection process. She formalized the process and duties and promotes applicants from underrepresented communities.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS	Any Given Child	Karin is the City's representative in the partnership with the County and School District to strengthen arts education in public schools.
	Friends of Madison Arts Commission	Karin has been the driving force behind this recently-established not-for-profit group, whose primary purpose is to raise funds to enhance the work of the Madison Arts Commission.
	Biennial Honors Event	Karin is responsible for all facets of this significant event recognizing community arts partners. This event also plays an important networking, public relations, and funding role.
FUNDING	Room Tax Committee	This City committee is responsible for distributing funding to support the tourism component of the City's economic development strategy through the City's annual budget process. Karin is responsible for developing spending proposals and advocating for funding through this process.
	National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Grants	Karin annually applies for this grant and, when received, is responsible for its administration.
	Fundraising	Perennial budget constraints require non-City funding to realize many projects. Karin's resourcefulness and relationships with many community organizations and individuals often lead to contributions to realize projects that would otherwise not have happened.
SPECIAL PROJECTS	State Street Mural Project	The murder of George Floyd sparked peaceful demonstrations followed by several nights of civil unrest - almost every business along was damaged and storefronts were covered with plywood. Karin quickly conceived of and organized this community response to amplify the voices of people who have been directly impacted by racial injustice. Artists created 70 City-commissioned murals that inspired community dialog by conveying urgent demands for change. This highly visible and controversial project, implemented under intense public and political scrutiny is a great example of the importance of art in the community and its role in dialog, healing, and elevating people of color.
	Look Forward	This multi-agency effort was coordinated by the Madison Arts Commission and the Library to connect Madison residents spanning all neighborhoods and communities during the pandemic stay at home order. Another example of the arts supporting the community in times of need, Karin was key in developing a virtual engagement in creating and displaying art in their communities.

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	Phoenix from the Ashes	This project provided opportunities for artists to create pieces from ash trees removed due to the Emerald Ash Borer. Karin developed the program, solicited artists, secured funding to support a paid internship to help execute the project, and facilitated the creation of a documentary and the works exhibition at the Overture Center for the Arts.
	Winter is Alive	New in 2021, this is an outdoor winter festival centered on art. Karin worked with the original artist and coordinated many community partners to navigate logistical challenges to host this event for residents and visitors.
	Artist in Residency (Thurber Park)	Karin led this effort to locate a new studio an artist in a park in a neighborhood with many low- and moderate income residents. This required coordinating with multiple jurisdictions, navigating legal and building code requirements, securing donations and funding, renovating the building to make it ADA accessible, creating an arts residency program, collaborating with the MPL, and establishing a selection process. The first resident artist is a world renown Black artist who is using the studio space for his own practice, creating public art for the City, as well as providing educational opportunities throughout the community via MPL’s Bubbler program.