

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
March 23, 2022
Held as a Virtual Meeting
via Remote Access Zoom Platform**

As stated on the agenda, due to the continued concerns regarding the COVID-19 virus, this meeting was conducted as a Remote/Virtual Cultural District Committee meeting. In an effort to ensure citizen engagement and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens were able to dial into the meeting using the provided phone number or participate by using the Zoom link provided on the agenda.

Members present: Roberta Trahan, Dr. Pandora Carlucci, Katherine Botelho, Vice Chair John LoPresti, Amy Adams, Pat Timmons

Members not present: Jamie Barrett,

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Planning and Community Development Director

Dr. Carlucci opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

The members of the committee began by discussing the continuation of in-person meetings that had been suspended because of the pandemic. Dr. Carlucci said she would be away at the time of the April 13 meeting, but would try attending the meeting remotely.

Ms. Adams joined the meeting around 7:08 PM

Dr. Carlucci expressed gratitude for the non-members who help the Committee regularly, including Mr. Taberner, Ms. Lily Rivera with the website, and Ms. Maxine Kinhart.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Trahan motioned to approve the February 17 2022 Committee minutes with the addendum to remove Candice Narsasian-Healey from the membership attendance list, as she was only ever a prospective member but never became a full member. Seconded by Vice Chair LoPresti. The Committee voted unanimously 5-0-0 to approve with the addendum.

Ms. Trahan motioned to approve the February 17, 2022 Partners minutes with the same addendum as to the February 17 Committee minutes. Seconded by Ms. Adams. The Committee voted unanimously 5-0-0 to approve with the addendum.

Ms. Trahan motioned to approve the March 9, 2022 Committee minutes. Seconded by Vice Chair LoPresti. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes with no changes.

Grant Liaisons for MCC and FCC Grants

Dr. Carlucci reminded the Committee that there had been previous discussions of appointing liaisons to the MCC and FCC. If people would volunteer to be the point person for each granting entity, this arrangement could begin, but Dr. Carlucci has not heard from anyone who expressed interest in being a liaison.

The grants and grant liaisons will support the partners in setting up their events and programs they have planned to hold at the ArtWalk and Strawberry Stroll later this year. Those Partners and programs are:

- The Franklin Art Association with its storefront art displays
- Expressions Enrichment hosting 2 classes in their studio at Franklin Village Plaza
- Farmers Market holding performances on Friday afternoons
- FPS using the FCC grant to hold performances in the schools and one on the Saturday afternoon of the ArtWalk (TBD)
- LiveArts Saturday morning performance at the Historical Museum

Vice Chair LoPresti asked Dr. Carlucci to elaborate on the role of grant liaisons. Dr. Carlucci answered that she had read the grant applications and found that former Chair Nancy Schoen had been handling all of the grant applications in the previous year. Not only is that a lot of work for one person to handle, but only addressing one member does not provide recognition of the work being done by the rest of the Committee. Having a grant liaison for each Partner who is applying for a grant would lessen the workload on Committee members, as well as familiarize the Partners with each of the Committee members who are there trying to help them with their programs and events.

The Liaison would answer any questions the Partner would have, reconfirm that the partner will be present, and monitor the Partner's social media. If the Partner does not have social media, they can relay information they want to share to the liaison who will then send it to the blog and other platforms to advertise whatever the partner is planning. The liaison would also attend the Partner's event and observe it to see how many people participated or watched it and record that data for the Committee to later use.

Dr. Carlucci then asked if any of the Partners' events interested each of the Committee members. Ms. Adams responded that she would be happy to continue being a liaison for the Franklin Art Association. Mr. Timmons said he would be willing to act as liaison with the Farmers Market. Ms. Trahan pointed out that the FPS performances were happening on multiple days, those being Wednesday June 1, Thursday June 2, and Monday June 13; she added that she could help with the June 2 and June 13 performances. Ms. Botelho said she could help with the performances by JFK and Parmenter schools as well as the event on the Town Common. Vice Chair LoPresti said he could act as Liaison for LiveArts, but he would be away during the first 2 weeks of June. Dr. Carlucci and Ms. Trahan responded that would mean he would miss the most important phases of their performance, so Dr. Carlucci would try to reach out to LiveArts to see if she could help. Vice Chair LoPresti then said he could instead help Expressions Enrichment on days he will be available. Ms. Trahan suggested Mr. Barrett could help on the days Vice Chair LoPresti will not be available.

Ms. Trahan summarized:

- Ms. Adams would help the Franklin Art Association
- Mr. Barrett might help Expression Enrichment if Vice Chair LoPresti's had scheduling troubles
- Mr. Timmons would help the Farmers Market and Ms. Trahan would also be present to help
- Ms. Botelho and Ms. Trahan would help the schools with all of their performances and the Amaya Dance Performance on the Town Common
- Dr. Carlucci will help LiveArts at the Historical Museum

Dr. Carlucci then interjected to bring up a possible scheduling conflict involving the LiveArts Dance Performance at 11:00 in the morning at the New England Chapel. The Committee then

discussed times in the afternoon of that day where they could plan to hold an event after 2:00 in the afternoon. Ms. Trahan noted that the representative from Amaya has not confirmed that they could make it after 2:00. If the representative can only attend from 1:00 to 2:00, then the Committee will have to hope that the weather will allow an outdoor performance to be viable. After further deliberation from the Committee, Ms. Adams suggested simply contacting Amaya to see if they could adjust their schedule for the day, as the performance is months away and they could still have flexibility in their schedule at this point. Ms. Trahan suggested to Ms. Adams that she contact Amaya to see if they could give a rain date of Sunday, June 12. She added that she believes a lot of money will be spent on an event in an auditorium that may only get 50 or so people to attend. Mr. Timmons agreed that an outside performance would be best held outdoors both for the experience and the lesser cost. Ms. Botelho asked where the performers would be in relation to the gazebo, to which Dr. Carlucci answered the gazebo would be an audience standing area and the performers would be on a stage. Ms. Trahan confirmed she would contact Amaya to see if they could work with a rain day.

Review FY22 Goals

Mr. Taberner displayed a list of the 5 goals for the fiscal year of 2022 to the Committee. Ms. Trahan asked about the first goal on the list: Coordinating resources to assist FCD Partners, local businesses and art organizations to recover from the pandemic. She asked how much more can be done to meet this goal when attempts to reach out to Partners and artists are not receiving many responses, which Vice Chair LoPresti agreed was an issue. Vice Chair LoPresti continued by thanking Ms. Trahan and Ms. Botelho for their efforts and suggested having the Partners host the Partner meetings on site at their businesses, so as to encourage attendance and show what the partner is working on at their business. Ms. Trahan said she liked the idea. Vice Chair LoPresti said this plan had previously been tried and appeared to be working, but was stopped when the pandemic began. Ms. Trahan then suggested a Partner be found who would be willing to host the May 12 Cultural District Partners meeting, to which the rest of the Commission agreed. Dr. Carlucci asked Ms. Adams about the new bookstore and Cultural District Partner called Escape Into Fiction, who responded by describing what space and scheduling availability the store would have. Other locations like the library, High School, and museum were suggested, but Vice Chair LoPresti emphasized the idea of having a different host for each meeting.

Mr. Taberner interjected to mention the possible issue of hosting public meetings in non-public places, so meetings held at Partner locations would need to open, accessible, and spacious enough for public attendance. Ms. Trahan suggested planning the next meeting at a town-owned public space and then offering a tour of a Partner business after the conclusion of the meeting. Mr. Taberner reminded the Committee that having 4 or more Partners at the meeting would constitute quorum and necessitate making it public. There was then some discussion about what locations would be allowed if the meeting was not broadcasted on Zoom, with Mr. Taberner saying that town-owned buildings like the High School and Senior Center would be permissible for meetings.

Vice Chair LoPresti asked if all meetings had to be available for online and in-person attendance, to which Mr. Taberner answered that Zoom was required, but not in-person meeting. Ms. Trahan then suggested that Committee members put the matter off and give time to think about meetings with Partners in the future.

Ms. Trahan then directed the meeting towards discussing the 2nd goal: Working to increase economic activity and attract new businesses, including artists and cultural enterprises, to the

Cultural District. Ms. Trahan said that this goal was being achieved with the help of the Planning Department as 4 new businesses have arrived in the Franklin downtown area. She suggested the Committee should foster that success by reaching out to the new businesses and building interest on their part in creating potential programs and events in the future. At the request of ideas from the Committee, Mr. Taberner told the Committee that this goal was one of the original goals that the Committee is going to always have and always need to be pursuing, as there was always room for improvement in this area.

The 3rd goal, Ms. Trahan brought up, is to Continue strengthening the Franklin Cultural District Partnership and broadening the ethnic diversity of the arts and culture in the town. A secondary task for achieving this goal has been to develop a process for greater inclusion of diversity within the Cultural District's vision and its activities. Ms. Trahan said she and Dr. Carlucci were trying to work with Kay Kelly and prepare for the Metrowest Cultural Arts Symposium later in the year. She also reminded the Committee to mark the September Fall Festival in their calendars to prepare for the event. Ms. Trahan then brought up previous events that had been ethnically diverse and it is important for Committee members to keep goal 3 at the forefront of their minds. Ms. Adams then weighed in to say that the ArtWalk event and the Amaya group's work have been important acknowledgements of diversity of culture present in Franklin. She then added that the Committee should work to connect such groups with grant opportunities that may make the difference between them being able to make themselves known to the community and not being able to put on any programs. Being aware of the grants would also pull those groups into becoming more involved with the rest of the Cultural District. Ms. Trahan agreed with this sentiment.

Ms. Trahan then moved the meeting onto goal 4: Continuing to broaden the social media presence to help the Cultural District become more accessible and engaging on a level that will help it connect with, expand, and diversify the audience. Ms. Trahan said this was an area where the Committee could really use assistance. The Committee's social media presence truly needs to be expanded upon, and Ms. Trahan believes a sizable part of Franklin does not even know there is a Cultural District. There has been previous talk of moving to a blog with the help of Stephen Sherlock. Mr. Timmons said that he and Dr. Carlucci are trying to facilitate that shift, but it is time-consuming and complex. Managing the social media is actually a different matter from starting up the blog, and right now Mr. Timmons and Dr. Carlucci are focused on the blog before they work on the social media. Once he has the opportunity, Mr. Timmons believes he will be able to get a lot done with the social media because that is where his experience is. Ms. Trahan said the blog is still a good way to start this initiative. There was further discussion about what and how information should be publicized on the social media platforms on behalf of the partners. Vice Chair LoPresti told the Committee members to remember to mention and tag the Cultural District in any posts they make. Even reposting and forwarding Partners posts will help to achieve this goal. Dr. Carlucci responded by saying that part of the issue with this goal is getting Partners to create and post content to begin with. There was then discourse between the Members on the need and responsibilities of Committee Members to publish and also encourage creation of content. Another issue was encouraging all Committee Members to play a part in helping the social media instead of leaving it to the responsibility of 1 or 2 members that could cause burnout for those few members. Ms. Adams said she would still be willing to assist with the blog, and she had a plethora of social media accounts that she used to connect with groups in not just Franklin but other communities.

The Committee then discussed teaching all of its members how to be active on the Cultural District social media accounts, with general agreement that it should be everyone's shared responsibility to manage them.

The 5th and final goal is to work with Town Administration on the Wayfinding Signage Project. Ms. Trahan said she was not sure this project was in motion, to which Mr. Taberner said the Town Administration wanted to make the signage project a town-wide endeavor. Staffing changes at Town Administration combined with a focus towards other projects meant there has not been many meetings concerning the Signage Project. Mr. Taberner and the Downtown Partnership both want to have their input factored into any decisions made with regards to this project.

Mr. Taberner then discussed all of the goals with the Committee and how they may end up putting the same goals on the FY23 list, in which case they will want to emphasize what work has been done already and rewrite them accordingly. Vice Chair LoPresti asked Mr. Taberner to confirm that the Cultural District Committee's goals needed to align with the State's goals, to which Mr. Taberner said the Committee's goals do fit within the State's objectives. He added that the State will most importantly want to know that the Committee has its goals planned at the start of the Fiscal Year 2023.

MetroWest Arts & Cultural Symposium

Dr. Carlucci then briefed the Committee on the Symposium, mentioning that Kay Kelly –Chair of the Franklin Cultural Council –was interested in finding out if the Committee would be willing to help with the event that was planned for May 14 from 9:00am to 1:30pm at the Franklin High School. The Symposium would feature a variety of different works of art, music, and performances for attendees to experience. More information will be sent to the Committee as the vent draws near. Ms. Trahan said it would be important for the Cultural District Committee to be represented at the Symposium, and hopefully the Committee's help will lead to closer collaboration with the Cultural Council in future events.

Subcommittee Updates

Ms. Trahan said that the updates from the subcommittees had been covered during the discussion of the FY22-23 goals, so further discussion could be put off until May. Dr. Carlucci then discussed ArtWalk and the phrase "Franklin Can" that had been introduced by the Franklin Area Nonprofit Network (FAN) as a way to market events and fundraising. Dr. Carlucci thought the Committee could also utilize the "Franklin Can" phrase for ArtWalk and help contribute to the Town's collective effort to strengthen its community. Ms. Trahan said she would contact FAN about it after the meeting.

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

April 6, 2022 7:00 PM

May 5, 2022 7:00 PM

Cultural District Partners Meeting

May 12, 2022 7:00 PM

Additional Comments

Adjourn

Vice Chair LoPresti requested the meeting be formally adjourned, which Ms. Trahan seconded. No vote was taken to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant