

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
August 11, 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, Amy Adams, Vice Chair John LoPresti

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Planning and Community Development Director; Alan Earls, Guest

Upon achieving quorum with the required minimum of members present, Ms. Trahan opened the meeting at 7:12 PM

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Trahan motioned to accept the meeting minutes for the July 14, 2022 Cultural District Committee meeting; seconded by Mr. John LoPresti. Mr. John LoPresti voted yes. Ms. Amy Adams voted yes. Dr. Carlucci voted yes. Ms. Botelho voted yes. The motion to accept passed 5-0-0.

Elections/Vote

The Committee discussed and elected the following officers:

Motion to elect Pandora Carlucci and Roberta Trahan to the position of Co-Chairs by Ms. Adams; seconded by Mr. LoPresti. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No)

Motion to elect John LoPresti to the position of Vice Chair by Ms. Adams; seconded by Mr. LoPresti. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No)

Motion to elect Katherine Botelho to the position of Clerk by Ms. Trahan; seconded by Ms. Adams. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No)

Review Goals for FY23

Ms. Trahan suggested the Committee not spend any time on this issue, given the FY23 Goals had been discussed thoroughly and voted on at the July 14 Committee meeting. The rest of the Committee agreed to Ms. Trahan's suggestion and moved past discussing the goals once again.

New Committee Members

Vice Chair LoPresti provided a short update on communications with the Town Administrator. Of the Franklin residents that had filed applications for various Town committees, only one had expressed interest in the Cultural District Committee. The Town Administrator hopes to post for

all open volunteer positions soon and have candidates vetted and on the August or September Town Council agendas for ratification. The Committee can seek out individuals for the two open seats and ask that they complete a Town application.

Cultural Wednesdays

Ms. Trahan discussed how Dr. Carlucci had given so much time to creating the Newsletter for the Committee in the past year, but now those efforts have been shifted to creating a Blog that will be less effort per post, but posted in a greater frequency. She added that Dr. Carlucci and Mr. Stephen Sherlock had been collaborating on creating and publishing the Blog, and overall reducing the workload on Dr. Carlucci in this area of helping the Committee. Dr. Carlucci then explained what information was being shared via the Blog. She described how she and Mr. Sherlock have been working on Cultural Wednesdays, previews what events/performances/etc. will be happening for the week after each publication up until the Tuesday before the next Cultural Wednesday. Dr. Carlucci then provided some statistics on who is reading the Blog; 60 percent of the 400 people the Blog goes out to open it, and 90 percent are reading from a desktop computer. Dr. Carlucci said that they had expected a larger portion of readers to be from mobile devices. Overall, they are getting effective feedback that is enabling them to be more nimble and inform readers of sudden changes and updates, such as a rescheduling of a book reading at Escape Into Fiction.

Dr. Carlucci extended her thanks to Maxine Kihnart for her work on the website. Ms. Trahan encouraged the rest of the Committee to share and promote the Blog on their own social media to help grow readership.

Cultural Festival: September 10, 2022

Ms. Trahan turned the conversation over to Dr. Carlucci to discuss staffing for the Cultural Festival, as well as updates on events that Kaye Kelly had provided to the Committee. Dr. Carlucci started by telling the Committee that the Cultural Festival continues to evolve each year. The Festival will take place on September 10 from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm on the Town Common, and will feature a Beer and Wine garden on the Hayward Manor estate across the street from the Common. Additionally, this year there will be what Kaye Kelly called a Cultural Lane. The Cultural lane will have booths staffed almost exclusively by members of the Cultural District, where sales and fundraising are not allowed and the focus is on presenting and discussing culture, projects, and events with people who visit during the event. Kaye Kelly has told Dr. Carlucci that the Cultural District Committee will have the first booth and tent in the Cultural Lane, but the Committee will have to provide its own tables, chairs and booth decorations. The Committee needs to be there before 11:00 the day of when the street closes, or else they will need to walk a long distance with their supplies.

Dr. Carlucci then asked the Committee if, as they are promoting the Cultural District, they have any ideas to grab people's attention and bring them over to their tent to explain what the Cultural District and Cultural District Committee is.

Ms. Adams asked if she could be at the booth early on in the festival, from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm, during which she could do live painting as a way of entertaining and attracting visitors. Dr. Carlucci and Ms. Trahan expressed agreement with Ms. Adams' idea, and then asked the rest of the Committee for other such ideas.

Vice Chair LoPresti agreed with Ms. Adams' idea as well, and proposed expanding upon it to have Partners be at the tent in half-hour intervals, with each of those Partners being able to help explain the importance and purpose of the Cultural District from a perspective that might be different to that of the Committee members. The other Committee members agreed with Vice

Chair LoPresti's idea, with Ms. Adams pointing out that it would make the booth a place to actually visit and not simply one for people to observe as they walk by to head to other parts of the Cultural Festival.

Mr. Taberner said that, even if a Partner could not be at the booth or the Cultural Festival, then they could still have a brochure at the booth and provide visitors with an idea of what is actually in the Cultural District, as well as provide a wide representation of the Partners. Mr. Taberner recalled that THE BLACK BOX had previously supplied such information and brochures to the Committee at one point in the past. Ms. Trahan asked Dr. Carlucci if they had already met with Kaye Kelly about putting together an informational map of the Cultural District that would clearly and concisely display where Partners are. Dr. Carlucci responded that they had been discussing creating a map like what Ms. Trahan described, that would explain what buildings are what and if whether or not they are a Partner. Ms. Trahan then continued by telling everyone that Alan Earls of the Franklin Observer offered to create a QR code that would allow people to easily find this information; no definitive plan was decided upon for a QR code. She added that, once it is clear which Partners will be at the Cultural Festival, then the Committee's booth can be set up to display the information of those without a booth. Being the first booth in the Cultural Lane, Ms. Trahan explained, would behoove the Committee to act as a sort of introductory kiosk for people to learn more about each of the Partners there.

Ms. Trahan asked if the Committee could have a musical artist from LiveARTS be set up at the booth, but then rescinded her idea after remembering that there would be a stage with music playing nearby. She then asked Ms. Adams if 12:00pm to 3:00pm would work for her to stay at the booth and paint while two other people engage visitors in conversation, to which Ms. Adams agreed that plan would work for her.

Vice Chair LoPresti proposed another idea, going off of the QR code, that they could make a board with the logos of all of the Partners, as well as QR codes to each of the Partner's websites. Such a poster board would be more feasible in the timeframe the Committee has left to work on than a collection of brochures or a map. Mr. Taberner said that he could see if Lily Rivera and Tyler Paslaski could help with such a project, and added that the Planning Department could help with setup that weekend if the Committee needed. Ms. Trahan agreed with Vice Chair LoPresti on having a poster board with Partner logos and QR codes.

The Committee then started organizing how they would set up and occupy their booth on the day of the event, Vice Chair LoPresti said he would bring the table around 11:00 am. The Committee then went through organizing time availabilities:

Vice Chair LoPresti from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm;

Ms. Adams from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm;

Ms. Botelho would not be available at the time of the Cultural Festival;

Ms. Trahan from 11:00 pm to 6:00 pm, but would need some time to go help at the Honey Booth;

Dr. Carlucci from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm;

Ms. Trahan said she, her husband and Tyler could handle clearing up the table at 6:00pm. The Committee then clarified which members were currently in possession of what supplies and decorations. Ms. Trahan added that anything that is missing or not in good condition can be replaced before the Cultural Festival.

Harvest Festival: October 1, 2022

Dr. Carlucci told the Committee Members to think about what they could do at the Harvest Festival that would be different from the Cultural Festival. For this event, they would need to provide their own tent, which Mr. Taberner said could be provided by the Planning Department

to the Committee and set up similar to how it was at the previous Harvest Festival. Ms. Trahan and Dr. Carlucci reminded the Committee that they have not yet registered for the Harvest Festival, so they should make sure to do so soon. As the Harvest Festival is busier than the other festivals in Franklin, Ms. Trahan is considering asking Lisa Piana if the Cultural District Committee could partner up with the Downtown Partnership and have booths adjacent to each other—similar to the Strawberry Stroll—to make it easier to have people staffing their booths. Dr. Carlucci remarked that there were only three Committee members at the Strawberry Stroll and they did the best they could, but it was still hard to bring in people to recognize the Cultural District. Ms. Adams mentioned that, for Harvest Festival, she had already registered herself for live painting at her own tent, so she will not be able to sit at the Cultural District Committee booth. Ms. Botelho said that she has a flexible schedule for the Harvest Festival and can fill in at the booth in time slots where staff are most needed.

Annual Report

Ms. Trahan asked Mr. Taberner and Vice Chair LoPresti if the annual report is complete, to which they both answered that it is. Mr. Taberner told the Committee that, for next year, if any Committee member wanted to write up a paragraph for the annual report, then they should try to send it in before June and whoever is putting together the report next year will add it in. Any paragraphs should try to adhere to the same basic structure as have previously been featured in annual reports. Vice Chair LoPresti asked about the possibility of having Ms. Botelho capture the details of any activity worth mentioning in the next annual report as it is happening, so that way it would be easier to reference when drafting up the annual report. Ms. Trahan replied that this is a great suggestion, but wanted to make sure that Ms. Botelho understood what annual reports consist of. Ms. Botelho weighed in to say that she has not seen the FY22 annual report yet, to which Vice Chair LoPresti said he would meet with her at some point to explain what she could do specifically for the next report. Mr. Taberner reminded the Committee that they want to keep their annual reports limited to about 2-3 pages in length. However, Committee members can still put together paragraphs and pictures for anything that others might find interesting, because in addition to the annual report with the Town of Franklin, there is also Mass Cultural Council reporting that must be done. The MCC report will need more substantial material than what is needed for the Town's report. Mr. Taberner added that any good quality photos taken by Committee members should be posted to the Cultural District Committee website, as it is good to keep the website fresh by rotating in new material and updates. Ms. Trahan suggested to Ms. Adams that, if Ms. Adams ever plans an event or activity throughout the year, then she should let the Committee know and they can help by posting news and pictures of it to their website and social media.

Monthly Meetings

Ms. Trahan briefed the Committee on the desire to establish a set date and time for each month's Committee meeting so that people can mark meetings on their calendars and be prepared for them. However, for September and October of 2022 need to be scheduled for the third Thursday of each month, but the remaining months would all have Committee meetings on the second Thursday only. After asking the rest of the Committee for their opinions on this plans, there was general agreement, with the exception of Ms. Adams saying that she may have trouble being able to attend the fall meetings. Ms. Trahan then scheduled the next two meetings to be for September 15 and October 20, both at 7:00pm and both virtual.

FCD Partners Meetings

Ms. Trahan asked Dr. Carlucci and Mr. Taberner to report on reaching out to Ms. Carolyn Cole, to which Mr. Taberner confirmed he had emailed her but had not had a face-to-face discussion with her yet. Mr. Taberner emphasized that, while Ms. Cole is in charge of the region's Cultural program; the Franklin Cultural District Committee does in fact have its own representative that it can contact. Ms. Cole will be coming as head of the regional Cultural District initiative along with the representative to Franklin, Guelmi Espinal. Mr. Taberner added that the MCC delegation would prefer the middle of the day rather than the evening, so 1:30pm to 3:30-4:00 would be the planned time for either a group meeting of Partners or a door-to-door tour of the Cultural District to meet Partners one at a time. Mr. Taberner suggested that THE BLACK BOX, the Downtown core, the Library and the Museum be shown as they are close by to one another as well as Dean College in addition to showing what the Cultural District has to offer. Mr. Taberner recommended that the Committee reach out to the Partners and provide them with a timeline on when the MCC visit would be.

Ms. Trahan reminded the Committee of who Ms. Cole is from previous meetings where the MCC was discussed. Ms. Trahan suggested that the Committee does need to put together a list of times when locations and people will be available. Ms. Trahan said she could also reach out to Alan and Raye Lynn Mercer to see if they would host a Partner gathering, and said she agreed that a tour visiting the Partner businesses that Mr. Taberner had mentioned would be a great way to spend the two or so hours of the meeting with MCC. Mr. Taberner added that Partners could use their time with MCC to present their art, talents, or other things that they want to share. Ms. Trahan suggested that everyone could meet at the Town Common or Library before starting the tour Downtown, but concluded that they would need more time to work the details out, so she would send out separate notices to each member of the Committee to ask for input on setting up the tour.

Ms. Adams asked Mr. Taberner about having MCC tour the Cultural District on the same day as the October 20 monthly Committee meeting, because the tour would be in the middle of the day while the Committee meeting is planned for the night. Ms. Trahan answered that the Committee meeting would happen at its usual time, meanwhile the tour would be classified as a Partners meeting in her mind. Mr. Taberner said that the Partners are likely thinking that the meeting will end and they will be leaving after 3:30 pm, to which Ms. Trahan adjusted her plan so that 3:00 pm - 3:30 pm would be used to have a reception. Ms. Trahan reiterated contacting Raye Lynn to reserve a spot to meet at, but now for just 3:00pm-3:30pm.

Dr. Carlucci said that she thought it would be good to have whichever Partners who want to attend be able to do so. She then shared her experience of how the Committee had struggled with connecting to the Partners in the past, but there was a program called Cultural Connections that would meet once a month for Cultural Districts across Massachusetts to share their ideas, activities, and struggles with each other and brainstorm, and the program had provided Dr. Carlucci with a lot of good information when she was able to attend. Dr. Carlucci concluded that it would be great for the Partners as well as the Committee to meet the MCC representatives in person and help the partners understand how they help make the Cultural District whole, as the MCC representatives may be able to help similar sources of information resulting from their time with other Cultural Districts in the region. The partners would only need to take 15 minutes of their day to attend and see what the MCC is and how they can fit in as a part of the whole. Ms. Trahan then suggested to Ms. Botelho that they take the list of partners they had been assembling in their Subcommittee and reach out to them to schedule where the tour will visit and who will be going along on it, then let the Partners know about the reception at 3:00pm.

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

September 15, 2022 7:00 PM

October 20, 2022 7:00 PM

Cultural District Partners Meeting

October 20, 2022 3:00 PM

Additional Comments

Dr. Carlucci told the Committee that she had received a message from Expressions Enrichment telling her that they had applied for a grant from the MCC, and she was asking Dr. Carlucci if she would write a letter of support on her behalf. Dr. Carlucci wanted to know if the rest of the Committee would be okay with Dr. Carlucci writing that letter. Ms. Trahan approved of the idea, as did Vice Chair LoPresti, Ms. Botelho, and Ms. Adams.

Adjourn

Ms. Trahan Motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Vice Chair LoPresti. Dr. Carlucci voted yes. Ms. Adams voted yes. Ms. Botelho voted yes. Motion to adjourn passed 5-0-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant