

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
May 11, 2023
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: Co-Chairs Roberta Trahan and Dr. Pandora Carlucci, Vice Chair John LoPresti, Clerk Katherine Botelho, Amy Adams

Members not present:

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Planning and Community Development Director; Stephen Sherlock, Franklin Matters; Peg Munson, Treasurer of Franklin Art Association

Upon achieving quorum with the required minimum of members present, Ms. Trahan opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

FY2024 FCDC Goals

Ms. Trahan shared a list of the six goals from the Fiscal Year 2023 for the rest of the Committee to see, and opened up discussion to the other Committee members for opinions on extending the 2023 goals into FY2024.

Vice Chair LoPresti expressed the opinion that the 2023 Goals were still very much in alignment with the Committee's current goals, and so they should continue them into 2024. Dr. Carlucci agreed with Vice Chair LoPresti, as did Ms. Trahan and Ms. Adams. Ms. Trahan remarked that she hopes the Committee will be able to resume the 6th Goal of Working with the Town Administration on the Wayfinding Signage Project.

Dr. Carlucci motioned to move the FY 2023 Goals forward to also become the FY 2024 Goals. Seconded by Vice Chair LoPresti. Ms. Botelho voted Yes; Vice Chair LoPresti voted Yes; Ms. Adams voted Yes; Dr. Carlucci voted Yes; Ms. Trahan voted Yes. Motion passed 5-0-0.

Committee Membership

Mr. Trahan briefed the Committee that hers and Ms. Adams' terms would be up for renewal. In addition, there is also the matter of vacant positions. Ms. Adams said she has not yet made a decision on serving for another term, but is wondering if there are any new applicants. Vice Chair LoPresti answered that there are none yet. Ms. Trahan said that she could not commit to another 3-year term, but she did not want to leave the Committee before new members had first been brought in, and so she would like to know if serving an additional 1-year term would be possible instead of the 3. Mr. Taberner answered that there are currently 2 vacant Committee member positions right now, so if 1 of those terms is ending in the next year, then Ms. Trahan could fill that vacant spot and serve out the remainder of its term. Ms. Trahan responded that she would be willing to do that, but she does not want to leave the Committee in a position

where it cannot achieve a quorum. Mr. Taberner commented that he had been speaking with Town Administrator Jamie Hellen about how the Town is trying to fill many vacancies in various Committees and Boards, and the Town Administrator had found someone who might be interested in the Cultural District Committee. Vice Chair LoPresti confirmed his intention to take over the position of Chair starting in July, should he be selected through the voting process. The Committee confirmed with Mr. Taberner that all of the member terms are for 3 years, but the renewal dates are staggered by year. Vice chair LoPresti said he would be okay with Ms. Trahan accepting a 3-year term and still choosing to leave after a year, as the positions are voluntary and he understands that she has other tasks and responsibilities going on outside of the Committee. Ms. Trahan agreed that would be the best approach, having them accept to serve the terms, and then back out when the time is right. The Committee agreed to look into seeing how long the terms of the vacant seats had left, while planning to have any new members fill the seats to begin 3-year terms. Vice Chair LoPresti asked Mr. Taberner to follow up on getting the Town Administration to reach out to the person who is interested in joining the Committee, and hopefully the Committee can expedite bringing them in.

Dr. Carlucci weighed in talk about a recent meeting of the Finance Committee, wherein Felicia Oti from the Franklin Public Library was giving her update and spoke very highly of the Cultural District and the Cultural Council, and Dr. Carlucci believes that having colleagues like Felicia who will speak up on behalf is what will really help them. So, Dr. Carlucci is hoping that people who heard Felicia's words about what it is to be in the Cultural District, along with how the Cultural District is helping the Library with its mission, will help to attract attention and new members to the Committee.

Vice Chair LoPresti suggested having the Newsletter include a regular section about applying to be a part of the Committee, to which Dr. Carlucci agreed she could add it in along with a link.

Artsy Box Project Update

Vice Chair LoPresti updated the Committee with the news that all of the artists are fully engaged, and some of them are almost done completing their work. Vice Chair LoPresti and Ms. Adams are very pleased with their work, and expect that all of the work will be completed within the week, at which point they will inspect them and confirm they are up to scratch before sealcoating them. Ms. Adams commented that the artwork has been really well received by the community, and they are currently working around the student artists who have to prioritize their finals and education, which the Committee is okay with waiting on. Passersby have also been supportive of the art, which has helped motivate the artists to keep going with their work. Ms. Trahan asked how many boxes are in the Cultural District that had not been selected for artsy painting, to which it was answered that 6 of the 9 boxes had been selected for painting, leaving 3 boxes unpainted.

Vice Chair LoPresti then brought up the fact that one of the boxes—one located by the Town Common—that had not been selected had mistakenly still been primed, so they would like to know if the Committee would be interested in allowing one of the artists who had not been chosen for the initial paintings to put their artwork up on this extra box. The Committee has \$200 allocated funds remaining from the priming job, and if they set aside an approximate additional \$300 then that should be the funds needed for the artist, but Vice Chair LoPresti and Ms. Adams want to check with the Committee first. Ms. Trahan remarked that it would be money well spent, but wanted to confirm how the artist would be selected. Vice Chair LoPresti answered that they had like all of the artists and designs originally submitted, so they would first see who among the remaining artists would be available and interested before having the Committee vote on which artist they want to offer the opportunity to.

Dr. Carlucci motioned for the Community to utilize the \$200 remaining from the original Artsy Box Project funds plus \$300 from its other funds to proceed with selecting and funding the painting of Artsy Box #7. Seconded by Vice Chair LoPresti. Ms. Botelho voted Yes; Dr. Carlucci voted Yes; Vice Chair LoPresti voted Yes; Ms. Dams voted yes; Ms. Trahan voted Yes; Dr. Carlucci voted Yes. Motioned passed 5-0-0.

Dr. Carlucci took a moment to thank and applaud the efforts by Vice Chair LoPresti to highlight the Artsy Box artists through their posts to the Newsletter. The posts required a lot of research and time dedicated every single week to write about each artist. Vice Chair LoPresti thanked Dr. Carlucci and added that he and Ms. Adams take this project serious and it means a lot to them. They would also be sending one more post about an artist to Dr. Carlucci to be posted in the Newsletter sometime in the next week. Then, there will be one last article when everything is complete that covers a tour of all of them. Ms. Adams weighed in to suggest that the 7th Artwork could be presented as a surprise at the time of showing off the rest of the Artsy Boxes. Vice Chair LoPresti added that Stephen Sherlock has been interviewing the artists and documenting their progress, so they will have his work to be able to post to the Cultural District website and Newsletter in addition. Dr. Carlucci asked if Stephen Sherlock would possibly be including a map showing the locations of the Artsy Boxes in addition to information on the artists and their themes. Vice Chair LoPresti said he did not know if a map would be created, but Stephen Sherlock does know the artists' names, artworks, and the locations of their Artsy Boxes, so Vice Chair LoPresti will ask him if he might be able to include a map.

Update on MCC CDI Funding

Mr. Taberner brought up the expenditures and funds sheet for the Committee to see. After the funds allocated in the previous meeting, the Committee has \$999.56 remaining, which Mr. Taberner added can be rolled over to the next year. Dr. Carlucci asked if any reminders need to be sent to Partners or funding recipients to send their invoices to the Committee before the June 30 end of FY 2023. Mr. Taberner responded by showing which members needed to still send in their invoices.

Vice Chair LoPresti then spoke about Cobi Frongillo's Movie Night at the Black Box that he had gone to, remarking that it was nicely set up and hopefully will attract more guests for the following events. Vice Chair LoPresti continued by saying he had learned from Cobi that the projector screen from the Black Box had not been working, so Cobi had to purchase a new screen out of pocket. Thus, Cobi asked if the Committee had any additional funding to pay for the screen, which cost \$202, to which Vice Chair LoPresti said that he would bring it before the Committee. Cobi had added that the Committee would be able to keep the screen once he was done using it.

Ms. Trahan asked what else Cobi had said he needed. Vice Chair LoPresti answered that Cobi had also discussed buying a projector instead of borrowing one as he has done so far. Vice Chair LoPresti then explained that there had been additional unexpected overages to the cost of the Movie Night event, specifying that an extra \$150 had been spent each night for a total of \$450. Dr. Carlucci said she had reached out to Cobi because she had not heard confirmation that his Movie Night was still going through, and so she could only promote it so much in the Newsletter, but now she should be able to give it the amount of attention in the Newsletter that she originally wanted to. Vice Chair LoPresti added that he had been pretty impressed with Cobi's setup at the Black Box, and told Ms. Trahan that he had not seen any admission fees or suggested donations being solicited from attendees at the door. Ms. Trahan suggested the Committee wait and see what Cobi's final budget comes out to, adding that she would have no problem paying to buy the projector screen to keep after the event for the Cultural District to use.

later. Vice Chair LoPresti said he could get the invoice. Dr. Carlucci said she would feel badly if Cobi had to pay for the screen without being able to exchange it with the Committee for reimbursement. Mr. Taberner said that paying for and acquiring the screen for the Cultural District should be fine, provided the appropriate forms and documentation are filled out, and they should send him the invoice.

Ms. Botelho inquired about having seen LiveARTS under the list of projects requiring funding. Dr. Carlucci answered that LiveARTS is going to be performing on June 10, and had previously been looking for a venue to perform at. The required funding would have been to pay for custodians and other expenses of performing at an off-building, but it is no longer needed as they have been offered the Community Room at the Franklin Public Library by Felicia Oti. As such, LiveARTS no longer needs additional funds.

Upcoming Events

Dr. Carlucci talked about how she wanted the Committee Members to have an answer to how the Committee is supporting these events if asked like she had been. Dr. Carlucci had explained that the Cultural District Committee attends the events, helps set them up, makes telephone calls, promotes them on the website and Newsletter, and assists people in making connections who need to collaborate within the Cultural District. They also advise people of other happenings, so if they want to compliment or supplement that initiative they will do so. Dr. Carlucci asked the Committee members which upcoming events that on a list she brought up they would be able to help with.

Ms. Botelho said she planned on attending a May 19 Arts & Culture Listening Session at Escape Into Fiction. Dr. Carlucci asked anyone who could attend the May 24 Kennedy School Night of Arts to email herself and Ms. Trahan. Vice Chair LoPresti said he was planning to attend the May 30 Movie Night at The Black Box, and bring some of the Committee's signs to that event to show guests the Cultural District connects to it. Dr. Carlucci then continued through the list of events, mentioning that for the First Farmers Market happening on June 2, there will be a band, Moxie, as well as a food truck among other attractions, followed by a different set of attractions the following Friday on June 9, which will be the same day as the Strawberry Stroll. Dr. Carlucci then mentioned that on June 10 there would be a LiveARTS Performance, and then moved onto discussing the MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau Annual Meeting on June 20. Ms. Adams asked about seeing a \$250 registration fee to attend the meeting, to which there was discussion between Dr. Carlucci and Mr. Taberner about confirming whether that fee is still required. Dr. Carlucci added she would reach out to the Executive Director, Erin Lynch, to clarify if a registration fee or and other requirement is needed from Committee members who want to attend.

Ms. Trahan reminded the Committee that they would be helping to staff the FCCFCD Booth along with the Franklin Cultural Council at the Strawberry Stroll, so members should let them know if they can help attend and what times they are available.

Dr. Carlucci then discussed the last item on the list of upcoming events: the June 25 Celebration with Pride. Ms. Adams, Dr. Carlucci, and Vice Chair LoPresti said they would not be around to staff the booth, so the Committee decided that they would not have a booth at it. Dr. Carlucci suggested they send an email of support to Mary McMurray in place of not having the people needed to have a booth. The Committee agreed, and Dr. Carlucci said she would draft an email.

Mass Cultural Council Festivals Grant

Dr. Carlucci briefed the Committee to explain how this grant has been advertised multiple times before, but it is not something the Committee has applied for. However, they could reach out to the Partners to find out if any of them are having a large event that the grant could help with.

Dr. Carlucci said she was thinking the Committee could send out a link to the Cultural Council Festivals Grant to the Partners. Grant applications are not due until June 8. Mr. Taberner suggested the Committee could post links to it on their website, agendas, or anywhere else they think it could help get the word out on, as they are already receiving any emails Dr. Carlucci sends out to them. He added that he would speak with Lily Rivera about sending info about the Grant to the rest of the Town through other channels and means.

Further Update of MCC CDI Funding

Dr. Carlucci said there was one other issue that she had become aware of after the Committee had initially finished its discussion of the matter earlier in the meeting. She continued by explaining how the Committee had given an award to the Franklin Performing Arts Company for them to do a scavenger hunt in the Cultural District, but since being awarded, it has become difficult for them to actually be able to do the scavenger hunt event before June 30 with everything else they are doing. Dr. Carlucci is wondering if the Committee might consider reallocating its funding away from the scavenger hunt over to the FPAC production of *Violet* that will be performed in Cultural District theatres on June 8, 9, and 10. The amount they would need for the performance would be \$1450.

Vice Chair LoPresti said he would be okay with reallocating the funds as long as FPAC specifies where all of the funds are being spent on, whether it be performers, musicians, etc. but not be put into the FPAC general fund. Ms. Trahan said she would reach out to Raye Lynn and let her know of that condition. Ms. Adams recalled that the Committee had allocated grant funds with the idea that they were not really giving funds to anyone who was planning to make money off of their events. Ms. Adams continued by asking everyone to consider how would the grant funds be benefitting the community, since the scavenger hunt had planned on being free, while the production of *Violet* will have admission fees. Mr. Taberner suggested having FPAC provide the invoice before the end of June, and they can have the event in July or August and he will make sure it works into their budget.

Following up on Ms. Adams' comments, Vice Chair LoPresti agreed that the Committee had said when they were distributing grant funds that they would not be in favor of events which were collecting a fee. Vice Chair LoPresti would be in favor of staying with the scavenger hunt since it's free. Ms. Trahan said Ms. Adam's point was well-taken, but added that the FPAC shows are never completely paid for by ticket costs alone, and in this case the funding would be directly allocated to paying for the musicians. Mr. Taberner said that, in the past, the Cultural District Committee has at least partially funded Partner events, including at the Black Box, by specifying exactly where its funds would have to be spent. Vice Chair LoPresti responded that he understood how FPAC would need and use the funds, but continued by repeating that it had been a stated condition of the Committee allocating grant funds that they would only fund projects that were free to everyone. Thus, the Committee should remain consistent across the board. The Committee then discussed having FPAC maintain its commitment to holding the scavenger hunt event as the event would be free and had been what they intended the grant funds to be used in support of.

Vice Chair LoPresti motioned to require the Franklin Performing Arts Company to invoice for their scavenger hunt before the June 30, 2023 deadline, and will commit to holding the scavenger hunt, when feasible, in August once the funding is given to them in June.

Seconded by Dr. Carlucci. Ms. Botelho voted Yes; Vice Chair LoPresti voted Yes; Dr. Carlucci voted Yes; Ms. Adams voted Yes; Ms. Trahan voted No. Motion passed 4-1-0.

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

The Committee decided to push its June 2023 meeting to the third Thursday of the month, June 22.

June 22, 2023 7:00 PM

July 13, 2023 7:00 PM

Additional Comments

Peg Munson from the Franklin Art Association announced to the Committee that the small building next to Rockland Trust on Main Street, which had previously been lent out by Rockland Trust to be the FAA to display their art, would no longer be available as Rockland Trust is converting it into a call center. As such, the new exhibit will be up in the Escape Into Fiction Bookstore Gallery, and they will be having an artshow on a Saturday before the end of May.

Mr. Taberner spoke to follow up on the election of officers that was discussed earlier in the meeting. He explained that the election of officers usually happens at the first July meeting, so if there are any new Committee members coming in, they also have the opportunity to become officers. The Committee can choose in June to have Vice Chair LoPresti be Chair for the remainder of FY2023, but the Committee will still be voting in July for its officers. So, the Committee would have to vote Vice Chair LoPresti in as Chair a second time in 2 months if they voted him in during the June meeting. Mr. Taberner added that, if the Committee did not have a meeting in July and instead waited until August, then they would have Vice Chair LoPresti serve as Chair during the interim period. Vice Chair LoPresti said he was okay with waiting until July to hold a vote. The Committee members then agreed to have their July meeting take place on July 13.

Peg Munson made another announcement, confirming that the date for the next Gallery display to be hung would be May 20. Additionally, the grant that was awarded from the Committee to the Art Association for a new hanging system has been used and the system has been set up, and it is working great.

Adjourn

Ms. Trahan motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Vice Chair LoPresti. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant