

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
June 22, 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

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

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Trahan motioned to approve the April 13, 2023 meeting minutes. Seconded by Vice Chair LoPresti. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Trahan motioned to approve the May 11, 2023 meeting minutes. Seconded by Dr. Carlucci. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee Membership

Vice Chair LoPresti announced that there were people interested in possibly joining the Cultural District Committee. Mr. Taberner said that there would be two candidates going before the Town Council in July. Vice Chair LoPresti continued by adding that there were also individuals who would be great candidates for getting involved with the Committee in subcommittee or non-voting roles for the time being—such as marketing and social media—and said he would reach out to them later as they find out who else will be joining the Committee in voting roles. Ms. Trahan commented that having them be involved would provide them with exposure to the Committee to learn and be able to join the Committee in voting roles once terms expire. Ms. Trahan then brought the discussion to the election of Officers, who would take over in July. Vice Chair LoPresti confirmed he is running for Chair. Mr. Taberner explained the election process to the Committee, adding that whoever is elected Chair can take over the rest of the meeting at the moment they are elected.

Artsy Box Update

Ms. Trahan remarked that the Artsy Box projects had generated a lot of excitement and admiration from people she has heard from. Vice Chair LoPresti announced that all of the Artsy Box projects have been completed, and invoices have been submitted before the deadline and the Artists will be paid if they have not already. Ms. Adams added that she also had heard a lot of positive feedback from people and that they want to see more. Vice Chair LoPresti mentioned that the feedback he had heard had included mentions of the importance of local and public art.

Mr. Stephen Sherlock weighed in to mention that his coverage project of the Artsy Boxes has completed the photo stage, and he is working on finishing interviews while also determining the structure of the end project. Vice Chair LoPresti said he thought adding each full individual interview to the Newsletter in their entirety would be a good idea, and Mr. Sherlock's project will have trimmed/abridged versions of those interviews. Vice Chair LoPresti mentioned that he recognizes the project is as much an opportunity that the Artists want to use to promote themselves as it is an opportunity the Committee wants to use to promote the Cultural District in Franklin.

Dr. Carlucci commented that the Artsy Boxes had helped to tell people where the Cultural District is located and how far it reaches, but also gave definition to the space as being where art happens.

Mr. Taberner weighed in to say that the Artsy Boxes had been sealed up and should last a long time, but if something happens to the seal and they risk fading or deterioration, the Committee will really need to make sure it fixes that quick or it could give the project a bad legacy. With that noted, Mr. Taberner advised the Committee to avoid overstretching its resources to monitor and maintain its Artsy Boxes if it decides to expand this project further in the future. Vice Chair LoPresti responded that the plan has always been to rotate the art on a regular basis. Ms. Trahan said that they would have to do tours around to survey and monitor the Artsy Boxes. Vice Chair LoPresti asked Ms. Adams to remind the Committee of what the time expectancy of how long the Artsy Boxes should be able to last. Ms. Adams answered that one-to-two years is how she imagines they will be able to last due to the weather, but also stated that they might be able to last longer if they are properly sealed. Ms. Adams continued by explaining that changing out the art of the boxes would be done seasonally and not all at once, but rather they would replace or restore the artwork on a portion of the Artsy Boxes at a time. That way it would also be more manageable for a yearly budget to have funds to maintain a portion of the boxes. Mr. Taberner said he thought the Committee might be able to handle maintenance of 10-12 total Artsy Boxes if it keeps rotating around the art on them seasonally.

Update on MCC CDI Grant

Mr. Taberner presented a budget balance sheet to the Committee to view funds and expenditures for the 2023 fiscal year. He noted that there were encumbrances on funds granted to the Franklin Farmers Market and the Franklin Performing Arts Company that could be paid in FY2024, to which Ms. Trahan mentioned she had attended the MCC Check-In on June 20 and understood more about encumbrances that carried over to another fiscal year. Mr. Taberner then continued and explained that he does need at least some documentation to show where money that has been allocated to Partners went.

Upcoming FCD Events and Opportunities

Ms. Trahan discussed the Strawberry Stroll and thanked Ms. Botelho and the FCC for their work at the event. Ms. Botelho mentioned how talking to people who came to their booth about the Artsy Box project had been a good way of communicating what the Cultural District is and what it does, because of how popular the Artsy Boxes had become by then.

Dr. Carlucci then talked to the Committee about how each member should pay attention to what they see out in the District and be sure to share information with each other as well at the Partners, so that way they can find ways to help Partners with their work and business when opportunities come around. She added that the Farmers Market is a great option for communicating and learning of such opportunities with people.

Mr. Sherlock mentioned how he had an opportunity to participate in the Metrowest Visitors Bureau annual meeting as a media representative, where he learned of itineraries being developed to promote tourism in the region. They would like Cultural Districts in the Metrowest region to create itineraries that include specific locations and/or Partners in the Cultural District,

depending on the theme of each itinerary. Mr. Sherlock concluded by saying he thinks it would be a good opportunity for the Committee to fulfill part of its Charter as well as bring Partners onboard to something that can directly benefit them. Mr. Sherlock also said he would share his notes and materials, including examples of itineraries provided by the Visitors Bureau, with members of the Committee.

Dr. Carlucci commented that creating itineraries would double as a worthwhile exercise in looking within Franklin to see what is important and foundational to the history of the Town, citing Ben Franklin's books in the Library as well as the contents of the Historical Museum. Mr. Sherlock added that they need to contact Partners and other organizations and explain how the State is trying to draw international tourism, and thus the calendar may not be a sufficient means of drawing those visitors to the Cultural District.

Ms. Trahan agreed with Mr. Sherlock's point and then mentioned that she heard news that an international group from Montreal, Canada working on the same thing with grants. Ms. Trahan also said she would discuss some of what she learned at the FCC meeting she attended with Carolyn Cole at a later date. Dr. Carlucci agreed with Mr. Sherlock on having events appear on the calendars farther out from when they will happen, but added that it is not easy to get information from Partners that plots out what events they are planning more than a month in advance.

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

July 13, 2023 7:00 PM

August 10, 2023 7:00 PM

Additional Comments

Vice Chair LoPresti asked if the Committee could meet in person starting in the Fall season, which Mr. Taberner answered yes but added that the meeting should be hybrid/remote for the sake of accessibility. The members discussed available locations with Mr. Sherlock, which included the Senior Center Conference Room as well as the Town Hall Third Floor Training Room.

After Ms. Trahan read off the dates of future meetings, Vice Chair LoPresti proposed not holding the August 10 meeting, but the Committee decided to make a final decision at the July 13 meeting.

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