

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
October 26, 2020
Held as a Virtual Meeting
via Remote Access Zoom Platform**

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

Members present: Nancy Schoen, John LoPresti, Pandora Carlucci, Roberta Trahan, Jamie Barrett, Evan Chelman, Amy Adams.

Members not present: None.

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Planning & Community Development Director; Judith Lizardi, Recording Secretary; Stephen Sherlock, Franklin Matters.

Welcome

Chair Schoen opened the meeting at 7:04 PM.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2020, 6:30 PM CDC Meeting and September 14, 2020, 7:00 PM CDC Partners Meeting. Motion by Ms. Trahan to approve the September 14, 2020, CDC meeting minutes and the September 14, 2020, CDC Partners meeting minutes. Seconded by Mr. LoPresti; voted and approved unanimously.

Chair's Update: FCD Newsletter Details, Current Sends 152 up from 117 in June, Open rate 63.2%, Click Rate 10.4%, Total Open 96 up from 70 in June. Pandora resend GREAT idea.

Chair Schoen reviewed the statistics from Constant Contact, the email marketing software used to distribute the district newsletter. She discussed Ms. Carlucci's idea that the newsletter be re-sent to anyone who had not opened it which is a feature of Constant Contact. This would give people who overlooked the email a second chance to read the newsletter. Mr. LoPresti asked why all the Town's email addresses are not being leveraged for this newsletter. Chair Schoen said they have not gotten to a place where this has happened. She is going to ask Ms. Anne Marie Tracey to include a link for the Cultural District Committee's newsletter in the Town's newsletter. Ms. Carlucci stated that she talked to Ms. Tracey about this. She noted that the district newsletter is on the Cultural District Committee's website, so people who view the newsletter from this location are not counted in the Constant Contact statistics. Mr. Chelman agreed and noted people are taking different avenues to the website. Mr. Sherlock noted that in the social media world, the numbers cannot be trusted because it slices in so many ways; as long as the number continues to increase, it is good. He stated that the marketing list cannot just be taken from the Town's newsletter if those people did not sign up for the district newsletter. Mr. LoPresti suggested the Constant Contact statistics be monitored to see if there is an increase after Ms. Carlucci sends out the newsletter email a second time. Mr. Chelman asked if Ms. Tracey could determine if there is a connection between sending out information and an upward tick in the amount of engagement on the website. Chair Schoen asked if there is a way to determine how many people have accessed the website. Mr. Sherlock stated he thinks Ms. Tracey should be able to get some of those statistics.

Chair Schoen reviewed the FCD goals for fiscal year 2021 and requested comments from Committee members.

- Goal 1: Pandora suggested they need to continue to support existing businesses and not just seek to attract new businesses; however, this is not reflected in the current wording of this goal. Committee members discussed and agreed to edit the wording to include existing and new businesses.
- Goal 2: Committee members agreed on this goal as is.
- Goal 3: Ms. Carlucci discussed that during the meetings sponsored by the Mass Cultural Council, the Franklin Cultural District Committee members are the only group of volunteers who attend; all attendees from the other 15 communities are town staff members. Chair Schoen confirmed this goal is complete as is.
- Goal 4: Chair Schoen discussed that the data piece has been a challenge and noted that she thinks all districts are struggling with this item during these times. The newsletter should help with visibility at this time. Ms. Trahan said that she thinks this goal is good the way it is listed. Mr. LoPresti asked if there is an opportunity to provide incentives to the businesses when they provide their data such as being highlighted in the newsletter or provided with something in return for the data. Chair Schoen suggested being creative and thinking about this. Ms. Trahan stated that it is important to remember that the businesses are asking themselves, “what’s in it for me?” It might be nice to offer them something; she said she will talk to Mr. Taberner about this. Discussion commenced on what to offer as an incentive. Chair Schoen said that besides the newsletter, she and Ms. Carlucci reach out to the partners to request their information. Ms. Adams mentioned that using the website would be an incentive to feature the business. She suggested that this has to be a tough love situation; if they do not send their information, they will not get featured. Chair Schoen stated the Rome Restaurant said they were very happy that they were featured in the newsletter. Mr. LoPresti asked if a featured business would be willing to offer a percent-off discount if a patron mentions that they saw the feature in the newsletter. Chair Schoen said she would hesitate to ask anyone to discount their products during COVID; she will look into some of the ideas.

Motion by Ms. Carlucci to adopt the FCD goals for fiscal year 2021 as amended at today’s Franklin Cultural District Committee meeting on October 26, 2020. Seconded by Ms. Trahan; voted and approved unanimously.

Chair Schoen noted she will discuss with Ms. Tracey how to put these goals on the website. Mr. Sherlock said he would put the goals on Franklin Matters. Ms. Carlucci suggested featuring the goals in the next newsletter. Chair Schoen noted that she would like to feature the goals and the website in the next newsletter.

Cultural District 2020 – 2021 Data Collection: New forms developed for Franklin Cultural District Partners (Roberta and Bryan)

Mr. Taberner showed the updated forms on the shared screen: Dining and Drinking form, Retail and Personal Service form, Events and Performances form, and Education form. Ms. Trahan said the task is for the partners to fill out the forms online to provide the data that the Cultural District Committee needs to provide to the State. She reviewed the information required on each form and discussed the frequency that the information would be needed. Mr. Taberner explained the data requirement that must be obtained and reported to the State. Ms. Trahan reiterated that this data must be collected; therefore, at some point the partners are going to have to fill out the forms.

Chair Schoen said that businesses may have this data, but questioned if they want to share the data; it may be a very sensitive topic during this time. Mr. Taberner stated a big issue may be the number of people being attracted to an event. Mr. Sherlock said the number of events and types of events should be able to be obtained from the calendar. Mr. Taberner said that estimates may be needed for events such as the 2019 Harvest Festival. In the ideal situation, the number of participants will increase each year. Ms. Trahan said the numbers are not good this year because of the pandemic. It will be a year from now that reflective data will be obtained. Ms. Carlucci stated the numbers demonstrate the struggle and loss of economic support this year; this shows the need to support the arts and culture. Chair Schoen said that the numbers will tell the story.

Mr. Taberner said he would like a few restaurants to provide feedback on the Dining and Drinking form and how they report information. Discussion commenced on what information restaurants actually track. Ms. Adams suggested take-out and dine-in numbers be reflected on the forms. Ms. Trahan stated she would like to collect data from June 2019 to June 2020; however, she is not sure if everyone would still have this information. Chair Schoen asked if there should be a disclaimer on the form. Ms. Trahan said she will create a cover letter to go with the forms. Mr. LoPresti asked if partners could be asked to collect the zip codes of the people who buy tickets or go to the business in order to track where participants are from. Mr. Taberner said this would be an important part of the data. Ms. Trahan stated they are off to a good start.

Franklin Cultural Council Grant Opportunity (Pandora)

Ms. Carlucci stated she had three ideas to generate conversation about the grant opportunity.

1. Music events on the Town Common on Friday afternoons. For instance, applying for two \$1,000 grants for two Friday afternoons to complete Concerts on the Common.
2. Support the Fourth of July with entertainment. For instance, apply for a grant of \$1,000 for all programming for one night, possibly theatrical.
3. If still in remote/virtual stage in COVID, have Facebook Live cooking classes, art shows, etc.

Ms. Trahan said she likes the idea of supporting music the Common on Friday afternoons, possibly building on the Farmers' Market event. Ms. Adams that regarding Fourth of July, there are many people from middle school to adult who are artists and people of color; it would be amazing to have middle schoolers and high schoolers chip away at this with poetry, music, art, etc. Ms. Trahan said they could be the ones performing on the Town Common or at the Fourth of July events. This would be inclusive of the entire community. Chair Schoen said she would like this for the Fourth of July as it would be a highlight and a focus. Her fear is that we may not be out of the pandemic by July; therefore, the Friday afternoon idea may work because things may be better by August or later, and the Farmers' Market commenced during the pandemic this year. She explained that one grant can be applied for; the application deadline is November 16, 2020. She suggested Ms. Adams speak to Ms. Caleigh Keating, Youth Services Librarian, about collaboration for her Fourth of July ideas. Ms. Carlucci noted that where, when, and who is going to be partnered with must be in the grant application. She asked if there would be enough students interested to do two events on the Common on Fridays. Ms. Trahan suggested that students may be able to do the Farmers' Markets in the early summer and alternative performances could be done in July and August. Chair Schoen said they should start with two events for \$500 each. Ms. Carlucci said if she is going to complete the grant, she would like Ms. Adams' input. Ms. Adams noted that there are students in the community who could do the event and showcase their art.

Motion by Ms. Trahan to develop a grant to the Franklin Cultural District Committee for two Friday events at the Farmers' Market next summer which opens the first Friday in June featuring artists and musicians in the community. Seconded by Ms. Adams; voted and approved unanimously.

CommUNITY Event at 67 Degrees Brewing (Amy)

Ms. Adams said it was an empowering event for the artist community in Franklin. Artists of color were featured at this event and the establishment was recognized. It was great to see everyone comfortable with having their artwork on display. She thinks it was a good way to let students know they can display their artwork and be showcased. She noted the event was recorded.

Franklin Cultural District Social Media Update (Evan)

Mr. Chelman requested everyone hit the share button. He stated it is remarkable that just one share can drive things up. He reviewed the Facebook statistics: 66 page views up 56 percent, 36 likes in the past 28 days which is up 50 percent, and 403 people reached in 28 days. He noted this is just one platform. The number of follows has increased with engagement up 167 percent in the past 28 days. Regarding the website, engagement, and number of clicks, this is positive and heading in the right direction. He reviewed the importance of shared posts. He questioned who are the partners and what are the Committee's responsibilities. Chair Schoen thanked Mr. Chelman for getting information out timely, and she encouraged everyone to share information on the Franklin Cultural District Facebook page.

Franklin Cultural District Website Update (Anne Marie)

Chair Schoen stated that Ms. Tracey could not attend tonight's meeting. She stated the website is changing. Ms. Tracey has added new photos, updated the calendar from Mr. Sherlock, embedded the newsletter, updated the featured events, and the dining, drinks and story maps are categorized by location, type of beverage, type of food, etc. There are good visuals that go along with each. She thinks if people go to the website, they will return as it is visually engaging. There is also a new online brochure. She noted there is still a lot of work to do, but it is a nice difference.

Franklin Cultural District Calendar

Chair Schoen stated this is a reintroduction of the calendar as the calendar has always been there. There is a community calendar and a cultural calendar. Mr. Sherlock stated that on the Cultural District page, cultural partner events can be seen. He stated that it is key that he knows who the cultural partners are. For instance, 67 Degrees Brewing is not a partner because they are not located in the district; they could be considered a collaborator. This will make a difference in which calendar they appear on. He discussed what qualifies someone as a partner who may be outside the district. He discussed that the Committee needs to determine who are the Cultural District partners and who are the collaborators, as partners will appear on the cultural calendar and others will appear on the Franklin Matters Community calendar page. He pointed out that the Library has many events. Their cultural events will be on the cultural calendar page; all other library events will be on the library calendar. Chair Schoen said they need to define who are the partners and the collaborators and the criteria for this. Mr. Sherlock said if all cultural events are on the calendar, that information could be pulled for the required event data. He noted that this Committee was focused on cultural events. He stated that Franklin Matters has all the events including community and cultural events. Ms. Carlucci said the Committee is in a confusing time. She discussed that 67 Degrees Brewing has been participating in events. She stated that more flexibility is needed to give them pathways to become a partner who is not physically in the district but shares in the events. Mr. LoPresti said the partners are clearly defined by the District which was sent to the State. He stated that we

want to be inclusive, but the District cannot be the entire town. If we want to include people outside the district, we have to define the rules to make it allowable. Mr. Sherlock reviewed the initial rules for being a district partner which included being in the district. Chair Schoen said it involves a cultural piece and performances, not just being a business in the district. Mr. Taberner clarified that in the application process the boundaries of the district are set based on the partners who want to create the district. For instance, Circle of Friends is outside the district, so they partner with people in the district. Cultural District partners are the district. The Committee is managing and assisting the partners who created the district and the district itself. If you are a new organization within the district and have anything to do with arts and cultural, you are welcome. He thinks a business has to clarify what kind of business they are and if they qualify under arts and culture. For instance, a brewery on Grove Street is not in the district, but are they doing anything in the Cultural District? If not, they are really not a partner. If they do, they would be considered a partner. The partners are the organizations that the district is all about; that is how the State looks at it. Cultural District partners are the Cultural District. If they have nothing to do with arts and culture, it is a stretch to make them a partner. He stated that there is a list of the partners on the original application, and a few more have been added since then. Mr. Sherlock said the Committee should be bringing the partners together to do the events, and the Committee should support them, not run events; the Committee should market the cultural events and give out grant money for partners to run events. If this Committee says that it is going to put on events, that is not really the scope of the Committee. Chair Schoen said they should review the criteria to be a partner and review the list of partners. Mr. Sherlock stated that the calendar is up and running. Chair Schoen said that the changes to the website and calendar should be highlighted in the newsletter.

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

Thursday, November 19, 2020, 7:00 PM.

Monday, December 14, 2020, 7:00 PM

Next Cultural District Partners Meeting Date

Monday, January 11, 2021, 7:00 PM.

Adjourn

Motion by Chair Schoen to adjourn the Cultural District Meeting. Seconded by Ms. Trahan; voted and approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary