

Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
July 22, 2019
Meeting held at Franklin Municipal Building, Room 205
355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA

TOWN OF FRANKLIN
TOWN CLERK

2019 AUG 20 P 2:30

Members present: Nancy Schoen, John LoPresti, Tyler Warren, Pandora Carlucci

Members not present: Roberta Trahan, Jamie Barrett.

Also in attendance: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator.

RECEIVED

Commencement

Chair Schoen opened the meeting at 7:03 PM. She stated a new Committee member, Jamie Barrett, had been approved by the Town Council. She reviewed his background in teaching and performing. She noted Mr. Barrett would be unable to attend tonight's meeting. Ms. Carlucci stated Mr. Barrett would be performing for Concerts on the Common in August.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

- June 17, 2019, 7:00 PM Meeting. **Motion by Mr. Warren to approve the June 17, 2019, Committee meeting minutes. Seconded by Ms. Carlucci; voted and approved unanimously.**

Roles and Structure of Subcommittees

Chair Schoen stated there have been many changes with the Committee. She reviewed the members of each subcommittee.

Partners Subcommittee: Chair Schoen, Ms. Carlucci.

Marketing Subcommittee: Mr. LoPresti.

Goals Subcommittee: Mr. Warren, Ms. Trahan.

Chair Schoen stated with the current vacancy on the Committee, maybe they can find someone with a strong marketing background to also work on the Marketing Subcommittee. She said the person who attended the last Committee meeting did not formally apply to be a Committee member. She noted Ms. Trahan was taking the lead on the Goals Subcommittee and Mr. Warren was going to take over the website and social media aspect.

Mr. Hellen reviewed the member application process. He stated there is an open application on the Town website and names of previous applicants are kept. He does not think there are any folks remaining as applicants. He stated one thought he had was that the staff member starting with the town who is going to do marketing might be able to find some other people with marketing background. He is hoping the person will begin on August 12. He stated she has accepted the position and is technically going to be part of the school. He explained that Superintendent of Schools Sara Ahern wanted a part-time person as a public information officer. He was also hiring someone in the Town office part time. So, they worked together and the hired person will be working full time. Possibly, she may be working a little more with the School District to start, but then move into a 50/50 split for the position. Mr. LoPresti stated a lot of the marketing work for the Committee was to get ready for the rollout. He said waiting until October for additional marketing support would be okay. Mr. Hellen said the individual who will be doing the marketing will also be able to help with the website and social media aspect. He stated that between Chrissy Whelton, who did the whole website, the marketing coordinator, and the new administrative assistant who has great website skills, there will be resources available to do some of the Cultural District website work. Mr. Warren said trying to maintain the website and social media is somewhat difficult, specifically getting the content. Mr. LoPresti explained the calendar was part of the website design and it will not cost more money.

Mr. Hellen said there is marketing money of about \$10,000 in the budget that can be used; it is there to augment things. So, there will be a little money in the budget to use for marking purposes for this

Committee. Chair Schoen said they were going to investigate some grants and such. Ms. Carlucci mentioned they were working with Raul Gonzalez of MAPC on the marketing positioning study. She said Mr. Gonzalez was surprised when he saw downtown Franklin. They met him as he got off the train. As they walked along and got halfway through Dean, he stopped and said this is not what he was expecting. He asked, why do you need me? She stated the study will be a good tool to advance our marketing and vision and who we are as well as to advance the Cultural District. Both Chair Schoen and Ms. Carlucci noted Mr. Gonzalez asked good questions.

Partners Subcommittee Update

- Upcoming Partners Meeting.

Ms. Schoen said she and Ms. Carlucci have met a few times to discuss different ways to engage the partners. They also discussed the schedule for the Partners Meetings and noted the last Partners Meeting did not have much attendance. They also discussed that August is a difficult time to have a meeting; maybe more partners would be available in September. Committee members discussed possible meeting dates. After discussion, the Committee agreed on Wednesday, September 18, 2019, at 7:00 PM, at the Senior Center for the next Partners Meeting. Additional quarterly Partners Meetings were scheduled for Thursday, November 21, 2019; Tuesday, February 11, 2020; and Wednesday, May 13, 2020, all at 7:00 PM with locations TBD. Chair Schoen suggested these meeting dates be posted on each Partners Meeting agenda. Ms. Carlucci suggested all Committee members check various calendars of partners, businesses, school, library, etc., to make sure there are no conflicts with the above scheduled meeting dates.

Chair Schoen said she is working to better engage the partners and get them to attend the Partners Meetings. She suggested possibly polling partners about what times and dates work best for them using a paper poll or an online Survey Monkey to get their feedback. Mr. Warren said the Committee should think about what we can offer the partners that is different than what they are already getting from the Downtown Partnership. Chair Schoen said the Committee keeps promising the partners the calendar, but it is not ready yet. She suggested a static calendar that could be put on the website. Mr. Warren said he previously mentioned making the calendars their own so that the Committee had control over them. He explained that Steve Sherlock has a specific way of doing things regarding the calendars. He mentioned he has used calendars on other websites that are much easier to use. He thinks the Committee needs to work on finding a different system. He said there is no place for the smaller entities to get involved and get their calendar information entered. Mr. LoPresti said for anyone who does not have a feed to supply their calendar, they can fill out the form on the website to get their event information entered. He noted it is a limitation of CivicPlus. Chair Schoen asked if a month-at-a-glance calendar would be feasible to provide on the website. Mr. Warren said he was not sure. Ms. Carlucci discussed what the difference between the Downtown Partnership and the Cultural District is. She explained the Downtown Partnership is about economic development and they use the cultural aspect for this purpose. The Cultural District's primary lens is cultural, arts, and humanities. She said there should be a way for the Committee to help the partners more. Mr. LoPresti said the website calendar already has a monthly view that scrolls which he demonstrated. Committee members discussed the website calendar and how it works. Mr. LoPresti said the design of the calendar is color-coded; the legend will be forthcoming. He discussed the plans for CivicPlus to build a calendar. Chair Schoen said it would be great if the new color-coded calendar would be ready for the September Partners Meeting. Ms. Carlucci mentioned the calendar is the one thing the partners keep talking about; they really want the calendar. Chair Schoen said if they have the calendar, they have a resource to go to. Mr. LoPresti said the system is somewhat restrictive and there are some limitations on what CivicPlus could build.

Chair Schoen said Ms. Carlucci had an idea about coffee mugs with the names of all the businesses on the mugs; this may be something that brings the partners together as a whole. Ms. Carlucci said people come together through common interest or common need; our group needs visibility. She said if you were a business, you could serve coffee in the mug, put pens in it, or use it as a thank you gift.

She asked, what can we do that represents all of them? Chair Schoen said each of the partners could purchase some mugs and use them as giveaways or thank you gifts. She said they will share this idea with the partners.

Chair Schoen said there are no formally designated partners. Partners were supposed to sign an agreement. However, only three businesses signed the agreement: The Drummers' Studio, Feet in Motion, and Encore Music Academy. She said the irony is that those three are barely involved. Committee members discussed how one becomes a partner. Mr. Warren said we need at least 10 to sign on for the goals' information. Mr. LoPresti said he does not agree the businesses would be insulted to be asked for their commitment to the District and to provide access to their data and statistics. Ms. Carlucci asked who our partners are. Do some people think they are our partners through other organizations? Chair Schoen said maybe the Committee could work on getting people to sign up. She stated the Committee has to report initial District information to the State; Mr. Bryan Taberner provided the form and Ms. Carlucci has been filling it in. Committee members discussed information required on the form. Mr. Hellen noted the board downstairs will be available for the Committee to use. Mr. LoPresti discussed the possibility of banners with the partners logos. Mr. Hellen said that would not be possible as it would be advertising the businesses. Chair Schoen said all partners are on the website, but it would be nice to formalize the partners.

Ms. Carlucci discussed the reporting required by the State; it is a lot of information. She noted that since the establishment of the Cultural District on May 10, 2019, it has only been about seven weeks. She said one of the difficult questions on the State form regarded indicating three events for the coming year. She stated attendance can be measured for the Harvest Festival and Strawberry Stroll. She suggested the holiday productions and performances at The Black Box, High School, Horace Mann, Patti Eisenhower Dance Center, Feet in Motion, and Dean College from November 1, 2019, through January 2020 could be used for the number of events and attendance data. Mr. Warren said this seems like a good way to get the data. He noted the data is needed for the goals, as well. Chair Schoen said these events represent many different partners. Mr. Hellen discussed the breweries and tasting rooms that may be opening. Mr. LoPresti asked about ArtWeek. Ms. Carlucci said she had thought about using either the Strawberry Stroll which would provide an estimate of attendance or ArtWeek which is actual tickets sold. She mentioned the Strawberry Stroll would probably have about the same attendance as the Harvest Festival. Committee members discussed the events and agreed to put in ArtWeek as a goal. Mr. Warren said it is difficult to get numbers from the businesses.

Ms. Carlucci asked if the MAPC study would be included in the year that just ended or for this year. She asked if the Dean College student survey that took place in the spring could be used for next year as the results were just received and the State form is due on August 2, 2019. Chair Schoen said there is not enough time to process the survey results so it will have to be used later. Committee members thanked Ms. Carlucci for putting together the information required by the State. Ms. Carlucci asked if they have a management plan. Mr. Hellen said they did not. Ms. Carlucci said there are still some questions left for Mr. Taberner. Mr. LoPresti discussed the Dean College survey. He said he sent a note with questions to Dave Drucker about the survey results. He suggested this information would be helpful for the partners to get some activities going between the partners.

Marketing Subcommittee Update

- MWTVB Grant Summary. Mr. LoPresti said the 10,000 rack cards at a cost of about \$350 have been received. This did not get into the grant. He suggested that maybe Mr. Hellen's budget could cover this. Chair Schoen said maybe the rack cards, rack holders, and window clings could be offered to the partners at the meeting. She suggested working with the partners to get their opinion of the map that was created.

Goals Subcommittee Update

- MCC Grant Summary & Annual Reporting. Mr. Warren said he was going to go through the list of what was needed; most of it has already been discussed at tonight's meeting.
- Annual Reporting Due to State August 2, 2019. Chair Schoen said this item has already been discussed at tonight's meeting.

Roles and Structure of Subcommittees (continued)

Mr. Hellen stated the reason he attended tonight's meeting was to discuss the management plan. He mentioned this may be a good time for the Committee to take a step back. He asked the Committee members a few questions. Who is your audience and what is your audience looking for? He said he is looking to get economic data for the community. He said the data will be all kinds of information. He noted he has watched the metamorphosis of this Committee; he is a big proponent of this Committee. There is a lot of opportunity with this Committee. He asked what differentiates this Committee from the Downtown Partnership. He stated he has recently asked each Town department to prepare a five-year vision. Some departments do surveys. He goes to meetings and hears incredible ideas. He would like this Committee to do the same. He questioned the Committee and asked do we know what people are looking for and what they want. He stated he is trying to engage the Committee; he said there is desire and passion here. He stated he thinks the look and feel of the website is awesome. Do the businesses want this? Do the people want this? Do we know what the people will come out for? Do they want fireworks, food trucks, or both? He said he thinks it is important to know to some degree what the people want before we throw money out at tourist guides, etc. He remarked this is a new group with a good website, etc., and with limited time and limited money. He noted there are new members and a new chair and vice chair. What are we really investing our time and energy in doing? He said that what really matters is are we filling the seats at the venues? Are you bringing people out? Are they feeling the buzz? It is either there or not. This might be an opportunity to spend some time thinking about the five-year vision. How do we really engage more businesses to get involved? There is an audience out there that has a lot of input about what they want. Are we really doing what we need to do to get people to feel that arts are part of the community? He suggested the Committee spend some time figuring out those kinds of things. Mr. LoPresti said a mission statement and goals statement would be important. Mr. Hellen asked what is The Black Box looking for? Another calendar? Free promotion? Visibility? Mr. LoPresti said he thinks the partners are looking for the Cultural District Committee to promote their businesses. Chair Schoen said anyone who participates in an event can be considered a partner. Committee members discussed the lack of buzz. Mr. Warren said he wants to help encourage new businesses in town. Ms. Carlucci said we need to go one step beyond the partners. We need to go to the people and find out what people are looking for and then those businesses that offer such services can do that to bring in the people. Chair Schoen said it would be interesting to engage people living in downtown to see what they would be interested in. Mr. Hellen discussed how the Committee has grown and the assets to build off of. He said for marketing, you have to know your audience. Do we really have a subjective view of what people are looking for? He stated Library Director Felicia Oti has done an amazing job of marketing; they know exactly what their audience wants. Her surveying and strategic planning is very good. He stated to get more people in the fold, you have to listen and also think about going out and collecting quantitative input. He thinks this is something worth thinking about. He noted the Committee has some State mandates to meet. He suggested they take time to harvest the partners and engage them more. He mentioned one of the things the marketing coordinator will be doing is looking at how we brand the town. He stated the Committee got some of the big stuff done. Now there is a chance to look at the structure of the Committee such as who is doing what. He reiterated the Committee now has some staff resources at their disposal. He asked the Committee to consider if the people really want a central calendar. This might help trim some of the work the Committee is doing and allow focus on some things the partners and audience do want. He suggested the Committee consider taking some time to structure the group and determine how the Committee can get all the businesses involved and buy in. What do you need to accomplish this? What are the people looking for? Spend

the time it takes to know that. Mr. Warren summarized the bottom line is that this should be an economic driver for the town. Mr. LoPresti asked about a town survey with questions from a cultural standpoint. Chair Schoen said the survey could come out in segments. She said the Committee has been focusing on the partners, but who are the partners customers. Committee members and Mr. Hellen discussed specific businesses and who their target customers are. He suggested the need to talk to the people we don't know. Mr. LoPresti suggested focus groups in addition to surveys. Mr. Hellen said that might be something MAPC could help with to frame the questions correctly on a survey. He suggested it might be a good idea to think about a five-year vision and where the Committee wants to be in 2025. Committee members discussed businesses and the downtown streetscape project. Mr. Hellen asked when we invest money, is it going to a good purpose? He stated we want to bring people into Franklin to enjoy these things. He said this group is a big part of the package and everything going on, but we need to tie it all together. Mr. Warren said the current goals are a good starting point. Ms. Carlucci said this topic should be added to the next meeting agenda as all the members will be present and they can be updated. Committee members discussed some of the reporting requirements for the State. They discussed that there are many businesses not technically in the District but are active in the District. Ms. Carlucci said that hopefully, in one year, we can say who our audience is and what they want. Mr. LoPresti mentioned having a signature event unique to Franklin; this would unite the partners.

Next Meetings

- Regular Meeting. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 15, 2019, at 7:00 PM, at Franklin Town Hall, Room 205.
- Partners Meeting. The next Partners Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 18, 2019, at 7:00 PM, at the Senior Center. Additional quarterly Partners Meetings are scheduled for Thursday, November 21, 2019; Tuesday, February 11, 2020; and Wednesday, May 13, 2020, all at 7:00 PM with locations TBD.

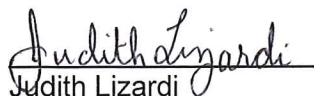
Other

None.

Adjourn

With no further discussion, a motion was made by Chair Schoen to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. LoPresti; voted and approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary