

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
February 8, 2024
Held as a Virtual Meeting
via Remote Access Zoom Platform**

This meeting was held in the Campanella Boardroom at the Dean College Campus Center. Citizens were allowed to attend in person, and also able to dial into the meeting using the provided phone number or participate by using the Zoom link provided on the agenda.

Members present: Chair John LoPresti, Vice Chair Amy Adams, Clerk Katherine Botelho, Sue Cass, Dr. Pandora Carlucci, Roberta Trahan,

Members not present: Patrick Conlan,

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Planning and Community Development Director; Marc Arentsen, Dean College School of Dance & School of the Arts; Amy Frigulietti, Deputy Town Administrator; Peg Munson, Franklin Art Association; John Ristaino, Franklin Cultural Council

Upon achieving quorum with the required minimum of members present, Chair LoPresti opened the meeting at 7:01 PM

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Trahan motioned to approve the January 25, 2024 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Chair LoPresti. Motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

Dean College Engagement in Arts, Culture, and the Local Creative Economy

Mr. Marc Arentsen discussed his background in arts and culture has been at the local, state, and national levels, as well as his work at Dean College and the value of its mission in promoting arts and culture. He also provided figures and data on what people spend and what Dean contributes to the economy. The average local resident spends \$38 when they buy a ticket to a Dean performance, with the figures on the number of tickets available per show multiplied by the number of shows in a year resulting in a potential total of about half a million dollars that are being contributed to the community. Mr. Arentsen added that they have found that people travel less but spend more in post-Covid, so they keep their ticket prices low and advertise widely to adapt to that. Dean programs that are scheduled for the future, such as Artist Residencies, musicals, and dance works, were also mentioned. Chair LoPresti remarked that there was a lot about Dean that he had not known about, and as they are in the center of the Cultural District it is important that they work together and he enjoys doing so. He added that there might be an idea for the Committee to support an initiative for the Town.

Discussion of Knitting Revival

Ms. Cass discussed how knitting has been an art that has gone through cycles of being popular and unpopular. Now, with knitting becoming a popular trend again, there is a group of people who enjoy knitting that is looking for new places for its members to gather and practice. Currently the Library is where they meet usually, but they are looking to try new locations each time, including at outdoor areas. The Committee discussed options and ideas such as the Sculpture Park being used by the knitting group for meeting up at. Mr. John Ristaino weighed in

to say that Franklin Cultural Council had funded a grant in the past year for crocheting, and they would be willing to meet with Ms. Cass and discuss places where the group could be hosted.

FCD Advertising, FPAC Playbill

Chair LoPresti then invited Mr. Ristaino to discuss the Cultural Council's process of deciding what programming to fund and support in a new year. It was explained by Mr. Ristaino that the Council has an idea for an event wherein the recipients of grants—grantees—are celebrated for their work and the work of the Town along with the culture and diversity of Franklin, and Mr. Ristaino thinks it would be good to collaborate with the Cultural District Committee on the event and connect leaders of the arts community with the administrative side. The event would possibly be at Dean College or the Franklin Public Library on either April 4 or April 11. Mr. Ristaino mentioned that the Cultural Council is not pursuing a Franklin Cultural Festival in the coming year, so they are eager to put more focus on organizing this event. Mr. Arentsen said that there are other places on the Dean Campus that might be more suitable for hosting such an event. Deputy Town Administrator Frigulietti said that the Town Administration may be able to attend the event on either date in April. She added that a new Director of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy is being brought on to work alongside them.

Dr. Carlucci remarked that she would like to highlight the Cultural Council grants in the Cultural District Newsletter, and that she is excited to see textile arts growing and thanked Ms. Cass for presenting on them. Dr. Carlucci then provided a brief update on the Playbill ad in FPAC's performances of the Nutcracker and Humbug over the holiday season, adding that she would like to see if the Committee would have the funds to purchase another ad in the Playbill for the upcoming Tarzan performance. Chair LoPresti said he is supportive of promoting the Cultural District with another advertisement, especially during a cultural event, but added that he would like to try to convey the type of support and collaboration that the Committee and District provide in the next ad. Dr. Carlucci said she could draft an ad with those recommendations.

Chair LoPresti motioned to approve the funding of \$150 for another Playbill ad advertising the Cultural District to be shown in the FPAC Tarzan performance. Seconded by Mrs. Trahan. The Committee Members voted unanimously to approve the funding.

Committee Reports – Artsy Box Project Part 2

Vice Chair Adams updated to say that they are ready to kick off the next iteration of the project, with no real changes in carrying out the project when compared to the first time. They are hoping to schedule the process to have submissions sent in sooner though, so that there will be more time to review applications from artists who want to put their designs on the boxes. The link to the application and event have been posted to the Newsletter, which is also being circulated on social media platforms to promote it.

Committee Reports – PorchFest Franklin

Chair LoPresti told everyone that the Committee set up specifically for PorchFest has met a couple times, and they will be meeting next February 13 at the house of one of the participants volunteering their porch to be used. The participant, Beth Wierling, may be a helpful advocate in getting other neighbors around the Town Common area to be interested in also hosting bands on their porches. Dr. Carlucci asked about the point of contact for information that she can put into the Newsletter for helping promote the event, which Chair LoPresti answered that Karilyn Hammer would be the point person from the event Committee. Dr. Carlucci emphasized wanting to make readers aware of the date of the event, June 1 (rain date June 2), sooner rather than later so they can plan for it.

After concluding discussion of PorchFest, Chair LoPresti provided an update on the grant to Jon Mitchell for him to organize a performance of *Mary Anning: Fossil Hunter*, saying that Mr. Mitchell has found a venue to host the performance, and the Committee is excited to see his project continue coming together.

Committee Reports – Public Art at Rockland Trust

Chair LoPresti provided Mr. Conlan's update that the Committee will plan to meet with Rockland Trust and express their willingness to help coordinate with funding and implementation of the artwork.

Member Roundtable

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

March 7, 2024 7:00 PM at Dean College

April 11, 2024 7:00 PM

Additional Comments

Adjourn

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant