

Franklin Cultural District Committee

PARTNERS MEETING

Minutes of Meeting

February 11, 2019

Meeting held at Franklin Senior Center, Multi-Purpose Room

10 Daniel McCahill Street, Franklin, MA

TOWN OF FRANKLIN
TOWN CLERK

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Members present: Philip Regan, Christopher Brady, John LoPresti, Nancy Schoen.

Members not present: Stacey David, Tyler Warren.

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Planning & Community Development Director; Pandora Carlucci, FCD Sub-committee; Mary Olsson, Franklin Historical Commission; Christopher Nayler, Director of Lifelong Learning, Franklin Public Schools; Caleigh Keating, Youth Services Librarian, Franklin Library; Diane Plouffe, Music Department Director, Franklin Public Schools; Ken Norman, Franklin TV; Peter Fasciano, Franklin TV; Lisa Piana, Franklin Downtown Partnership; Roberta Trahan, Franklin Downtown Partnership; Steve Sherlock, Franklin Matters; Raye Lynn Mercer, Franklin School for the Performing Arts; Alan Mercer, Franklin Performing Arts Company; Marc Arentsen, Dean College; David Rowell, Dean College; Phil Hall, LiveArts.

Commencement. Chairman Regan opened the meeting at 7:06 PM. He thanked everyone for coming and introduced himself. He requested meeting attendees introduced themselves as well.

Franklin Cultural District Update. Regan announced Franklin's Cultural District designation. He stated the MCC said it was one of the best applications and presentations they had seen. He reviewed the agenda for tonight's meeting and began the slideshow presentation.

Launch Event. LoPresti discussed promoting the District designation, the launch party, and partner promotions of the District designation. The Committee will have a press release of the official designation by the state. They would like to have partner tables at the launch event that may be held during ArtWeek which begins April 26. The launch date is not confirmed. They would like partners' stores to have District designation signage in store fronts and on websites.

Grant. Regan stated the MCC has made a \$5,000 grant available. Grant funds are being considered to be used for the following efforts: creating partner promotion opportunities, developing FCD marketing materials, and creating co-marketing programs and campaigns. He noted that the signs at the Strawberry Stroll and Harvest Festival booths are out of date; they need to be updated. The FCD Committee wants to hear what everyone has to say. If anyone has any ideas or concerns, please let him know. He noted that there are also mini grants available from the MCC.

Website. Regan stated that they are in process of building a new website; it will be built by CivicPlus, the Town's current website partner. The website is to promote the District and the Town. He reviewed the site map for the Franklin Cultural District website. He stated that he is looking for information from the partners about what they would like to see in the website. He noted that it is a six to eight-week build for the website. Ideally, they would like to have the website done for ArtWeek. The hard part in terms of the funding is already done. He stated it would be FranklinCulturalDistrict.org. He said that the Google calendar that exists today will be taken and migrated as a whole. He discussed that the website Steve Sherlock made for the Town will become the Town's website. He said that Sherlock made a very valuable website and

they want to build upon what has already been built. Alan Mercer asked how the content be captured from the partners' sites to this website. Will they reach out to the partners or will the content be captured from their sites? Regan said there will be a form that is already on the current site. They will work with CivicPlus to have feeds import directly into the calendars, such as from The Black Box and other partners. He stated that they are also looking to have someone in the Town help with the effort; people could email that staff person who would add the information to the calendar. Caleigh Keating asked if the library information will be captured automatically. Regan said they are working on that. Sherlock mentioned that the Library has two places to get content from. Lisa Piana asked how people will access the site and add to the calendar. LoPresti talked about other content for the website. There will be an opportunity for all the partners to create the content and have it linked back to their own websites.

Marketing Initiative. LoPresti discussed the social media efforts and branding strategy, the "Did you know" campaign, collateral such as window stickers, brochures, and posters, and the PR campaign.

Story Maps. Taberner discussed the Franklin Cultural District Interactive Map. He reviewed the information he would like the partners to provide. He showed examples of the Story Map (interactive map) and reviewed the content that could be clicked on. There is a picture or pictures with graphics, a small write up, and links to the resource's website. There will be about 50 story maps by the time it is done. He asked that if partners had not yet sent in their information, please send it in.

Economic Development Study. Taberner discussed the "Foundational Market Analysis and Market Position Summary for Franklin Center and Surrounding Neighborhoods" study. They are focusing on various areas of the Town. The project will give the Town and its Partners an understanding of the market potential of the Town's older commercial districts. Consulting assistance will be from MAPC Technical Assistance program. They are gathering data on businesses, activities, and events. Some of the data will be used for the Cultural District as a baseline. In coming years, the state will want to know what has increased and what the Town has gotten out of the District.

Partner Activities: Schoen thanked everyone for the work done to attain the Cultural District designation. She noted that the MCC board members were quite impressed with the cultural events and activities in Franklin. She said the FCD will unify cultural partners creating an appealing, attractive and vibrant designation for the town residents and tourists, and in turn, drive economic activity to all partners. She said they would like the partners to collaborate with each other. There are many of these things in the works already. She would like that the FCD support partners' events and the partners support all other partners' events; she encouraged participation in joint marketing efforts with other FCD partners. She stated that they would like to get logo stickers to heighten District success. She hoped some of the partners would volunteer on FCD sub-committees. She thanked everyone for their help and support.

Current Partner Activities and Partners Brainstorming. LoPresti discussed current partner/Committee initiatives. He stated that Stacey David worked with Dave Drucker of Dean College on a survey to be given to Dean students about what they would like. When the survey results are available, the Committee will give the information to the partners. He discussed the Partner Tool Kit. He noted that David wants to encourage collaboration for ArtWeek. LoPresti then began a brainstorming session and asked partners for any cross-promotional activities they thought may work. He encouraged a discussion of opportunities, ideas and anything current that the partners are doing. Raye Lynn Mercer stated she was partnering with a Franklin High

School event and the jazz program. This is a first step for them to collaborate with the public schools. She said she has two interns from Dean College; they are working at the theater. She said they have tried to collaborate a few times and thinks this effort and Committee will help get some conversations going. Alan Mercer said he will continue to do Culinary Cabaret and explained the collaborative event; it is a fundraiser for Electric Youth. Ms. Mercer said they are working on a restaurant guide; it is on their website. She explained that the restaurants show up on the website when someone buys a ticket. She discussed how many people travelled to Franklin from out of town in order to see Newsies. They cannot do it alone anymore; they need the community involved to sustain it. Roberta Trahan said there is an educational piece; people don't understand how lucky they are to be able to have all this in town. Without the arts, who are we? Getting the Cultural District status is great. Ms. Mercer stated that some people in Franklin don't even know what is here. Lisa Piana agreed that many people don't know what is here; many people don't read the newspaper anymore. Marc Arentsen explained why people see arts events; it is all about buzz and interacting. He said that as a group they could be vocal advocates for each other. Steve Sherlock stated collaboration will be good between partners. Ms. Trahan said this takes time. Ms. Piana said that most people in the room participate in the Strawberry Stroll and Harvest Festival events. She welcomes all partners to participate. She said that thousands of people come to the events. Ms. Mercer said they wanted to have a larger Harvest Festival event this year. Their event is Oktoberfest. LoPresti said another way to promote is that at one event, partners talk about the next event coming up. Ms. Trahan said that in the short term the FCD should have a booth at each event so they can spread the word and people will get to know they are here. LoPresti said they want to use some of Franklin TV's material. Diane Plouffe said she has events that bring in large audiences. How do they get those audiences to the restaurants? How do they help promote other partners? LoPresti said the website will help with this promotion. He would like to have the events connected. They have to work with the restaurants in town. Ms. Piana said she will help with that because she has contacts with all the restaurants. She explained what they do at the church where LiveArts is. Many people attend and the Downtown Partnership gives them menus; there are also Partnership discounts. She said she could work with Ms. Plouffe on this. Steve Sherlock said that he liked the idea of working with the schools and collaborating. He said the calendar is the key piece of the website. Ms. Mercer explained that as they do not know everyone's schedule, they could end up doing the same events within days of one another; the calendar will be helpful. She noted that the public schools, Dean College, and The Black Box should not all be doing the same shows. Mr. Sherlock suggested spreading out the road races and not doing them all in one month; the calendars will drive everything. Ms. Mercer said they could drop in place holders and dates; the calendar is the way to go. LoPresti said these are great discussions. He asked about the school events. Ms. Plouffe said that for some events they reserve tickets online; she discussed how they sell their tickets. Mary Olsson said that even if a person has a ticket, when they walk in, there should be brochures for restaurants, Dean, etc. She said there is so much going on at Dean, that Dean should promote everyone else. Taberner noted that Dean College, the high school, and Franklin TV all have radio stations. Why don't we use that to get the word out and run these on a regular basis? He said he was thinking about the kick-off event coming up. Basically, it is a three-part event. It will start with a more formal presentation from the State with the legislators speaking. He is thinking the Museum would be a good location for that. Next, will be the sign unveiling down the street. Hopefully, Franklin TV and the three radio stations will let everyone know this is happening and there will be a lot of people asking questions. The third part of the event would be a social event/celebration. He is hoping The Black Box would be able to accommodate this. He stated that they have not worked anything out yet, not even a date. Ms. Mercer said there is not much open during ArtWeek. Taberner said his thought was to have some sort of entertainment at The Black Box. It would be a good opportunity for the public school, Dean College, or LiveArts at

The Black Box. That type of collaboration will bring new people into The Black Box. Ms. Olsson asked about the proposed kick-off event during ArtWeek. Is there any way that there could be a town party at the Town Common with everyone having a booth? This would generate more traffic for both events. Taberner said having MCC come out on April 27 was probably not going to work, but any day during the work week would work. Ms. Olsson said if you want to get the whole town involved, you need to utilize what is already being done. Ms. Plouffe said the central district concert is on April 27; students start coming for rehearsals at 9:30 AM. Traffic may be heavy for this. She asked if they should promote the food trucks. LoPresti said that would be good. Ms. Keating reviewed the many events she was doing with the schools and the library. She said they have also done a few events with the Recreation Department. This summer they are expanding their Farmers Market involvement with fun activities based on literacy. LoPresti asked if she could link books to the upcoming productions. He said he appreciates everyone's feedback and this will become a regular part of the quarterly partners meetings.

Goals and Metrics. Brady reviewed some strategies to measure goals and metrics for the District. He asked questions such as: how do you measure fostering partnerships? How do you measure people coming to events? How do you encourage business development and stimulate economic activity? If anyone has any ideas on tracking this, please let him know. He stated that any data collected would be aggregate. He wants to help people report their social media data. Mr. Sherlock mentioned keeping the data confidential and private. Peter Fasciano said that other districts track this data; how do they do it? Ms. Piana said she does not know how to measure the thousands of people who come to an event. They ask the police every year and get numbers and average it out. Mr. Arentsen said that if one person buys 10 tickets to an event, we know nothing about those other nine people who attend. Brady said they are going to try to make it easy to capture the data. Ms. Piana suggested to work with Dean College on this to help with the data collection and metric tasks. Ms. Trahan suggested taking aerial pictures with drones to get participant numbers. Ms. Piana noted that people move around an event and people are coming and going throughout an event. Pandora Carlucci suggested counting how many apples or pumpkins that were given away or how many cookies were decorated to capture attendance numbers. Brady asked that partners be in touch with him with ideas.

Franklin Cultural District Partners Schedule. Schoen said the next quarterly Partners Meeting is on Wednesday, May 15, 2019, at the Franklin Public Library, Ben Franklin Meeting Room. The meeting after that is scheduled for Tuesday, August 20, 2019.

Questions. Steve Sherlock asked if there will still be a fundraising arm of this. Regan said the most successful districts have some type of revenue coming in on a regular basis. He said they are open to suggestions, but they just have not started this part yet. Taberner said if a non-profit was established, it would be one of the partners. The Committee was formed to keep the organization together; it is not a fundraising organization.

Adjourn. Regan thanked everyone for attending and sharing their ideas. He stated that we are here for you; let us know your thoughts and suggestions. With no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary