

**Franklin Cultural District Committee**  
**Partners Meeting**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**February 1, 2021**  
**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 will be conducted as a Remote/Virtual Cultural District Committee Partners 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.***

**Cultural District Committee Members Present:** Nancy Schoen, John LoPresti, Pandora Carlucci, Roberta Trahan, Jamie Barrett, Evan Chelman, Amy Adams.

**Culture District Committee Members Absent:** None.

**Town of Franklin Staff Present:** Bryan Taberner, Director of Planning and Community Development; Anne Marie Tracey, Marketing and Communication Specialist; Judith Lizardi, Recording Secretary.

**Business and Other Attendees:** Marc Arentsen, Dean College; David Burnham, LiveArts Franklin; Olivier Edouard, 67 Degrees Brewing; Kaye Kelly, Franklin Cultural Council; Dale Kurtz, Veterans' Services; Raye Lynn Mercer, Franklin School for the Performing Arts and THE BLACK BOX; Margaret Munson, Franklin Art Association; Mary Olsson, Franklin Historical Museum; Lisa Piana, Franklin Downtown Partnership; Diane Plouffe, Director of Performing Arts Franklin Public Schools; Erin Rogers, Director of the Franklin Senior Center; Sue Sheridan, Franklin Art Association; Steve Sherlock, Franklin Matters; Bob Vozzella, La Cantina Winery; Pam Warren, Franklin Art Association; Chris Toubeau, Franklin Art Association.

**Welcome**

Chair Schoen opened the meeting at 7:04 PM and welcomed everyone. She stated that it continues to be a challenging time. The Franklin community has worked hard for the Franklin residents; she hopes everyone will continue to work collaboratively for the community. She stated that throughout the pandemic, arts have helped to support and comfort people. She thanked everyone for all they have done throughout the Cultural District. She reviewed the Franklin Cultural District mission statement.

**Massachusetts Cultural Council & Franklin Cultural District Grant Opportunity & Grant Details**

Chair Schoen reviewed that the focus of this meeting will be the Recovery and Rebuilding Grant for Massachusetts Cultural Districts. This grant is a wonderful opportunity for Franklin's Cultural District (FCD) partners to work together to encourage interest and engagement in culture and the arts as well as economic development in the FCD. The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) budget included the allocation of \$7,500 for each cultural district in Massachusetts. She reviewed that the intent of the MCC grant is to rebuild and draw people into the cultural districts; collaboration is a big element of the grant. She explained that the grant has a short timeline, and there are stipulations for the grant. The application is due by February 19<sup>th</sup>, the money must be spent by June 30<sup>th</sup>, and the final report to the MCC is due by July 12<sup>th</sup>. She noted that the Franklin Downtown Partnership ladybug project did not line up with the grant timeline.

**Franklin Downtown Partnership Presentation - Lisa Piana, Executive Director**

Ms. Piana reviewed the ladybug project. She stated that the Franklin Downtown Partnership has been working on the Ladybug Trail, but they put the project on hold for the last nine months. The vision is to connect the Downtown Center culturally through murals, paintings, sculptures, historical sites, and other aspects. The trail would start at the Town Common and proceed to the Franklin Library, Ben Franklin statue, Dean College, Downtown area, streets around the Downtown area, Historical Museum, and end at the Horace Mann statue. This includes about 25 stops that will get people walking through downtown and eating and shopping in the downtown area. Due to COVID, the project may not be ready by June, but they would like to be ready by fall to unveil the trail. She encouraged anyone to reach out to her if they would like more specifics.

Chair Schoen explained that as the ladybug project did not meet the required timeline for the grant, another grant idea was the Franklin Cultural District Celebration/ArtWalk on June 11<sup>th</sup>. The date works with the Farmers Market. She explained the idea of having a trail through the downtown area with events happening throughout the weekend along with performances throughout the following week. The event would include exhibits, visual art displays in storefronts, and using the Rockland Board Room.

### **Grant Ideas & Partnership Brainstorming & Questions**

Chair Schoen encouraged members to brainstorm and discuss event ideas, COVID compliance, event timeline, and event rain dates.

Ms. Adams suggested events with the aspects of cultural and historical working together. Chair Schoen suggested La Cantina Winery and 67 Degrees Brewing having events during this time. Ms. Carlucci pointed out that Franklin has many resource strengths including the Franklin Art Association, the Historical Museum, and a regional theater downtown that brings New York quality performances. She asked how can we come together to support one another in a way that is safe and socially distant. Discussion commenced with suggestions including to use the outside area of the Historical Museum and to have some businesses allocate storefront window space to an artist. Ms. Piana said she would help connect people and noted that possibly there could be some grant money for the artist to create the display.

Ms. Keating suggested that this would tie in with one of the upcoming library programs. She explained that they are in the process of developing this year's summer reading program with the theme of Tails and Tales. She discussed ideas around building your own zoo and having a scavenger hunt for animals. She suggested they could work with local artists to create the animals in an artistic form for the scavenger hunt and suggested the Franklin Art Association could partner with this. Mr. Sherlock suggested contacting land owners of empty downtown spaces to see if they would be interested in displaying artwork in the storefront windows.

Ms. Plouffe explained that the Franklin School's art department wanted to show students' art in the spring but not in the schools. She discussed having students' art displayed in storefront windows downtown. She noted that the June 11<sup>th</sup> date is almost at the end of the school year.

Ms. Mercer discussed events they hope to have at The Black Box under the tent. Similar to the fall, they will have the tent put up in the parking lot for one month to take advantage of the outside weather and the allowed outdoor gathering numbers. She has some activities planned for April 15<sup>th</sup> through May 10<sup>th</sup> including culinary cabaret and several concert events. She noted that this may not line up with the proposed June 11<sup>th</sup> date, but possibly the concept of using a tent would be something to think about.

Chair Schoen stated that the name for the proposed grant event needs to be determined. She would like to have an art celebration and performances. She stated that she likes Ms. Keating's idea for the summer library program kickoff; it would be good for young families. Ms. Piana said she likes the words celebrate/celebration in the event name.

Ms. Trahan said the tent would be a good space to have everyone gather. She suggested Ms. Olsson could have a speaker under the tent as due to COVID guidelines not many people are allowed in the museum. If the tent were up for a month or so, it would allow events at different times; she noted the art displays would remain up. Chair Schoen said she likes the idea of art being displayed and having some performances. She reiterated the requirement of COVID compliance. Discussion commenced regarding that art can be displayed in business storefronts with large windows; people can stroll down the sidewalks with artwork for people to see at all times. Chair Schoen asked Mr. Burnham how LiveArts could be involved.

Mr. Arentsen discussed that there are many walking paths through Dean College campus and many spots that could be utilized for musicians. He stated his willingness to work with Dean College about outside spaces that could be made available and what they can do to help this event.

Ms. Mercer recommended having a plan for both outside and inside scenarios and adjusting the plan if COVID regulations and compliance changes. Chair Schoen stated that was a great strategy.

Ms. Kelly agreed with Ms. Mercer about planning. She discussed the success of outdoor events at the Senior Center; they planned two shows so they could have more attendees. They utilized a tent, as well. She stated that she would like to be involved in an event associated with the grant.

Discussion commenced about how there may be many people who will be looking forward to attending events in the spring; therefore, they have to think about the number of participants as they plan events. They will have to spread out the locations of the events. Chair Schoen stated she would like to have events for seniors and families. Ms. Mercer agreed that different audiences will be drawn to different events. They should think about strategically dividing the people by interest so they do not all end up in the same place; it is important to get people circulating. Mr. Arentsen said people will be starved for cultural by this time frame, and we can really showcase what Franklin is made of as a community. Chair Schoen said these are great ideas. She wants to submit the application with performances, arts, events, etc. She would like to schedule the event for a weekend; however, maybe the art displays could be up for a month. She suggested to Mr. Arentsen that Dean College could get some students back to campus to have them do some performances. Ms. Sheridan asked if the library is or would be opened. Ms. Keating stated that she does not have any information about the opening of the library. Chair Schoen suggested approaching Rockland Bank to use their space and possibly using the empty spaces downtown.

Chair Schoen stated she would send the application to all partners tomorrow. The application is due back to the Committee by February 11<sup>th</sup>. The Committee will then send it to the State. She will get in touch with anyone who receives a grant. Ms. Trahan recommended that if someone has an idea that does not fit into the time frame, they should submit it anyway. Ms. Mercer stated that she likes the idea of celebrating the arts, but they need a better name. Chair Schoen asked that anyone who has an idea for the event name, please reach out and share it with her.

Chair Schoen talked about the monthly Cultural District Newsletter. She noted that subscriptions have increased 40 percent since it began in June. They are working on streamlining the articles. She asked that partners share one to two events per month that they would like highlighted in the newsletter and include a link to where the reader can find additional information. She recommended including a picture or logo, as well.

Ms. Warren suggested she would work with Ms. Keating regarding her idea about the summer reading program. Ms. Munson talked about artists who may be willing to participate in this event.

Ms. Adams suggested a Google Doc to allow artists to interact with businesses that are willing to display artwork; it would be helpful if a list of interested businesses could be provided. Ms. Piana said that she would help reach out to the businesses. She asked that Ms. Adams or another Committee member write it up and she would send the information to businesses in the next Downtown Partnership newsletter. She said that she would call the vacant storefronts; she thinks they will say they will have tenants in the spaces by June. She said she thinks there will be enough businesses that would be happy to have art in their windows. Chair Schoen asked about the former Acapulcos Restaurant space. Ms. Piana said she would reach out to the owner. It was suggested that some of the grant money may be needed to provide filters for the storefront windows to keep the sun off the artwork. Discussion commenced regarding if artwork should be visible from the outside of the business or from the inside to draw people into the business, the length of the exhibits, and setting up artwork in the Rockland Boardroom.

Chair Schoen said that many great ideas were shared tonight. She asked the partners to fill out the application and return it to the Committee so they can start planning. She reminded partners to send along event name ideas, as well. She thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

### **Adjourn**

***With no further discussion, a motion was made by Chair Schoen to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Trahan; voted and approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM.***

Respectfully submitted,

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Judith Lizardi  
Recording Secretary