

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
August 16, 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 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, Roberta Trahan, Jamie Barrett.

Members not present: Pandora Carlucci, Amy Adams

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Director of Planning & Community Development; Alan Earls, Franklin Observer; Cobi Frongillo

Chair Schoen opened the meeting at 7:05 PM

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

June 21, 2021 Franklin Cultural District Meeting Minutes. Motion by Ms. Trahan to approve June 21, 2021 Franklin Cultural District meeting minutes. Seconded by Mr. LoPresti and accepted with a roll call vote of 6-0-0. Amy voted yes. Mr. LoPresti voted yes. Ms. Trahan voted yes. Chair Schoen voted yes.

June ArtWALK Celebration Feedback

Chair Schoen stated that she has continued to get feedback, with the feedback being positive. All but one of the businesses involved got back to Chair Schoen after reaching out to thank them. The businesses would like to see the celebration happen again, and the CDC should talk about that when it starts discussions on the Cultural District Year Plan and committee vacancy. The event could probably be improved for the future and done in collaboration with the Downtown Partnership and the Strawberry Stroll. Funding for future ArtWALK events will have to be discussed.

Franklin Cultural District Newsletter

Pandora shared some notes with Chair Schoen about how the August Newsletter had a significant rise in people clicking to view it. It could be from people interested in the Cultural Council who came across the Cultural District Newsletter, but it represents record-breaking numbers. A notice will be sent out Thursday, August 19 to move the event up in September because of the Cultural Festival. People are also getting to the habit of sending the CDC information that they want posted on the Franklin Cultural District website without having to be reminded by email notices. Partners now see the value in it, which is probably prompting them to more actively send information to be posted. Pandora and Chair Schoen will meet with Bryan Taberner tomorrow, August 17, and later with Mr. Barrett to discuss ways to get the Newsletter out to everybody. Anne Marie used to have a spot on the newsletter she published that linked people to the Cultural District Committee Newsletter. Lily Rivera, who has been hired to take

Anne Marie's place, reached out to Chair Schoen today to discuss her coming to a CDC meeting to hear everyone's feedback on how she can support the Cultural District Committee.

Franklin Cultural District Year Plan and Committee Vacancy

Former Member Evan Chelman did not sign up after his term ended. Mr. Barrett has been picking up some of his responsibilities, and Chair Schoen and Pandora have been trying to post on Facebook, but the Cultural District Committee needs assistance with the website. The information is out of date on it, and newsletters have not been put up. Mr. Barrett Barret said he would be meeting with Evan later to get the social media information needed to edit Facebook Page. He would ask if Evan had the information to edit the website, but Chair Schoen said Anne Marie was the main person helping the CDC with that. Bryan stated he had asked Maxine Kihnart to learn how to work on the CDC website. Bryan will send out an email with Civic-Plus trainings for August to everybody in case they want to learn how to edit the website. In the meantime, Maxine will try to bring the CDC website up to date where it is most needed. Some outdated information has been taken down, but nothing new has yet been posted. Mr. LoPresti recommended finding someone who is already skilled in web design and social media to handle this, and said that he knew an educator named Allison Finley who has experience working in technology, but he would reach out to other people to see if there might be a better match somewhere.

Franklin Cultural District Committee Presence

Chair Schoen explained that, as the Cultural District Committee has been reflecting over the past year on its role and mission statement along with efforts to engage the partners, the ArtWALK reengaged a lot of businesses but only to display art and not provide food if they were restaurants or sell anything special if they were vendors. If the CDC wants to be able to engage them like this, it needs funding. The last festival cost about \$12,500 and was a conglomeration of the MCC and FCC grants along with CDC money. There is no guarantee that the MCC is going to be able to give the next festival another \$7500, and there may be an additional requirement of having matching funds or donations. There may be other grants the CDC can apply for, like one which Bryan would talk to the CDC later about. Hopefully, the Schools and Downtown Partnership may be interested in coming together with the CDC to write a grant that will enable a broader base for the CDC to use for the ArtWALK and some other events. The Grant's specifics are rather vague and general, but the CDC has a meeting next week with Rahul to talk about clarifying what the Grant expected from applicants. Then the CDC could tailor its ideas into a format that would be more in line with what the Grant wants to be used for.

Mr. LoPresti commented that the Committee needs to talk about its role and be sure that it is following what it was set up to do. It was not set up to be an events-based group, but the focus on the ArtWalk suggests it is trying to be reshaped into one and that requires a different skillset. Chair Schoen acknowledged that the messages have changed from what messages were initially received. She also added that most other committees or partnerships, which are also not events-based, still have their own events that they put on that make it part of the whole. It shows the collaboration and support from the partners, as well as their support of the economic development of the Cultural District. The organization is not trying to change to one that focuses on events as a whole, but if they help with the goals of fostering engagement and development, then the events are a good thing, and Chair Schoen thinks they are more in line with the CDC's mission than it might seem.

Ms. Trahan weighed in to say that she agreed with Mr. LoPresti's comments that it was in the original mission and roles not to be the sponsor of events, but from what Chair Schoen just said along with the messages from Jamie that the role has morphed into this event, which Ms. Trahan also thinks should still be only one year for the reasons Mr. LoPresti stated. In addition, the CDC does not have the consistent funding that other groups who put on events have, and it would be ideal for the partners to take on and contribute to the event. The message has to be clear and consistent as to the expectations of this Committee, because if there is a need for more people to join the Committee, then they are going to have to spend time finding them.

Mr. LoPresti proposed the idea of having a subcommittee to the CDC for focusing on this particular event, like the Cultural Council. That way the CDC can still focus on its purpose and also support events like the ArtWALK through one or more of its partners. Chair Schoen compared the idea to the Cultural Council who went through a similar change to focusing on events a few years ago, but that group cannot sustain their work with such a small body of volunteers, and as such they are trying to focus on a few small events like Art Advocacy Day which require less volunteers. Ideally, what the CDC wants to do is to just have people do events in the community. If every group has a couple of small events they help set up, then the community will have a lot of activity going on that is also not ending up burdening just one group. The CDC would do its one event, but the rest of the time it would support all of the other groups putting on their events by featuring them in the CDC Newsletter and doing what they can. Ms. Trahan agreed and said that most people in town know nothing about all of the events that groups set up, and they need to find ways to promote them more. Ms. Trahan also said to Chair Schoen that when she would go to speak with the Town Administrator Jamie Hellen that they need to do something about getting more food trucks around, because those trucks can really help with what the CDC is trying to accomplish. Chair Schoen replied acknowledging the benefits of the food trucks, but also mentioned the difficulties that those trucks have with getting permits and picking Franklin over other towns they already do business in. Bryan weighed in to say that the fee that food trucks have to pay is only a \$50 Board of Health fee, which is not expensive and only requires the Board of health to inspect those food trucks. Ms. Trahan asked for clarification on whether or not food trucks could come, to which Bryan explained that they can be at events at the Town Common, or at private properties. He also explained some of the rules with how food trucks cannot be within a certain distance of local food establishments that they might take business away from by offering the same food.

Bryan also talked about the competitive tourism grants, and read that state and local tourism promotion and marketing projects are only eligible under state tourism grants. Bryan thinks the state will set up a program, and the CDC will apply for the grant through them. More will be talked about this grant later. Going back to events, Bryan said the intent of the CDC was not to run events, but rather to support it with partners doing most of the work. The partners should all be promoting the Cultural District, because that is important to get people to know that the Cultural District exists and has events and newsletters. Discussing the Downtown Partnership Harvest Festival, a newspaper put out articles about it every year, so when they go to write about it this year, they should mention the Cultural District in their article. Mr. LoPresti agreed that having the newspaper and Partnership discuss and write consistently that the area is the Cultural District. The CDC already has promotional materials, but it has not had good opportunities to distribute them. Ms. Trahan added that part of the difficulty was due in part to the pandemic.

Franklin Cultural Festival Sunday, September 12, 2021 and Franklin Downtown Partnership Harvest Festival Sunday, October 2, 2021

Chair Schoen transitioned from the discussion about promotional materials to discuss the Cultural District Committee's presence at the upcoming festivals. Since the last CDC meeting, Mr. LoPresti researched and acquired promotional materials. Bryan then brought up a list of fees that the town has in order to show the mobile food vehicle fee, which is \$50 for a 14-day permit, or \$100 for a year-long one. The Cultural Festival will be Sunday, September 12 from 12pm to 5pm. The Franklin Downtown Partnership Harvest Festival will be Sunday October 2 also from 12 to 5. The Cultural District Committee wants to have a presence at both festivals and will have a tent at both of them. Mr. LoPresti then shared information on some of the promotional materials, including stickers, magnets, reusable bags, pens, and candy, which should be more than enough for both events. This will help show people where and what the Cultural District is. Chair Schoen said having maps to show people may help them visualize it and recognize what it is. Bryan said he would be willing to put a new map together showing the outline of it as well as major items/landmarks/sub-districts. He did not know if the CDC would want to do that with other partners or organizations, as that might result in some complication necessitating a redesign of such maps. Mr. LoPresti replied that, out of fairness, it would be better to mark Town properties on a map rather than individual partners. Ms. Trahan replied that she believed the map needs to include some of the partners, like the theater. Chair Schoen seconded Ms. Trahan, saying it is important to nurture collaboration with the partners and not overlook any of them. Mr. LoPresti said he understands their points, but once they add one partner to the map, they may have to add them all. Ms. Trahan replied that they may as well include all of the partners, which Chair Schoen agreed with and added that the more partners that people see are involved, the more likely they themselves may want to help out. Chair Schoen clarified that this would be a single large foam board at the event, rather than on papers to be handed out. Bryan said they had made a Cultural District map in the past that did not include restaurants because of their tendency to change or close suddenly and quickly, and having restaurants on the map clutters it, as such having only the basic map showing art/culture/businesses but not the restaurants. Having the Franklin Cultural District logo on the map would also be good for promotion.

There was then discussion on managing the booth at the Harvest Festival and putting together a sign-up sheet for times people could be there. A tent will have to be procured for use as the booth. Chair Schoen brought up advertising in the newsletter to the partners that they could have their own promotional material to be set up at the booth. The hours for people to volunteer at the booth will be from 11am setup to the 5-6pm cleanup.

Meeting Schedule

Chair Schoen emailed the rest of the Committee members the schedule for all meeting dates for the upcoming year. Chair Schoen said she has shaped it around Town Council, School Board, Planning Board and other group's meetings to avoid scheduling conflicts. September 13 is a Planning Board meeting, but Bryan says the CDC meeting does not need to be rescheduled as he will have someone run the Planning Board meeting if necessary. Everyone then agreed to keep the September 13 6:30pm CDC meeting on schedule. The Partners meeting will be that same night at 7pm. Mr. LoPresti asked Chair Schoen if in-person meetings would be reinstated any time soon. Chair Schoen said Governor Baker had pushed them out to April 2022. Bryan weighed in to state that the CDC could hold in-person meetings, but they will still have a Zoom component in case anyone wants to attend without meeting in-

person. Everyone agreed to keep meetings on Zoom for the time being. Chair Schoen asked if anyone had scheduling conflicts. Mr. Barrett said May 17 did not work for him, to which Chair Schoen proposed changing it to May 19. Ms. Trahan said that March 21 would pose a conflict for her. Chair Schoen proposed changing the March 21 meeting to March 23. Everyone agreed to the two meeting reschedules. Bryan said January 18 might not work for him, to which Chair Schoen proposed rescheduling it to January 20. Everybody agreed to reschedule January 18 CDC meeting to January 20.

January 18, 2022 rescheduled to January 20, 2022

March 21, 2022 rescheduled to March 23, 2022

May 17, 2022 rescheduled to May 19, 2022

Chair Schoen reiterated that Bryan would send the CDC the link to the training, a meeting with Lily Rivera would be arranged. Ms. Trahan will reach out to the Partners and try to get their help promoting the cultural district. Bryan will also work on creating a map and sending it to the CDC before it gets produced for the Festivals. Nancy thanked Alan Earls from the Franklin Observer for attending and asked if he had any input. Alan responding that he had no input, but it was a pleasure to sit in on the meeting. Nancy also thanked Cobi Frongillo for attending. Cobi clarified about Food Truck permits being \$100 for a full year and a 14-day permit being \$50. He stated it would be beneficial if more of them purchased the full-year permits and possibly drop the price to incentivize more trucks to buy permits.

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

Monday, September 13, 2021 at 6:30 PM

Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Next Cultural District Partner Meeting Date

Monday, September 13, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Adjourn

A motion was made by Chair Schoen to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Trahan; voted and approved unanimously (no roll call vote taken).

Meeting Adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant