

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, September 13, 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, the meeting was conducted as a Remote/Virtual Cultural District Committee meeting. In an effort to ensure citizen engagement and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens were able to dial into the meeting using the provided phone number, or citizens could participate by using the Zoom link provided on the agenda.

Members present: John Lopresti, Vice Chair; Pandora Carlucci, Clerk; Members: Roberta Trahan, Amy Adams and James Barrett
Members not present: Nancy Schoen, Chair
Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner

Vice Chair John Lopresti opened the meeting at 6:21 PM

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Trahan noted after the August 16th meeting adjourned, it was agreed to start this meeting at 6pm. They acknowledged as a result, tonight is starting a bit late and the start time of 6 pm will be in tonight's minutes.

August 16, 2021, Franklin Cultural District Meeting Minutes Motion by Ms. Roberta Trahan to approve August 16, 2021, Franklin Cultural District meeting minutes. Seconded by Vice Chair John Lopresti and accepted with a roll call vote of _5_-0_-0_.

Potential Candidate for FCD Committee, Candace Narsasian-Healey

Lopresti asked if anyone knew Candace. Carlucci said Chair Nancy Schoen does and we were all sent Candace's resume. Candace was supposed to join the call, but with the meeting start time changed from 6:30 pm to 6 pm there might be confusion.

Artists and the FCD

Carlucci said last spring when we received some different grants from MA cultural council and the local cultural council, there was a conflict about having members of our board receive any payment for performances, etc. when we re-granted Grants. Bothered us all summer. Reached out to Luis Cotto (Mass Cultural Council) and asked other groups must be facing this, how do they do this? We have a wonderful artist and creative on our team. How do we acknowledge their ability to participate because they are contributing their knowledge, guidance, talent and insight? Luis responded (Carlucci then said she we will read the response so we will have his direct words) and said, "I think the roadblock might be the result of the committee being an official committee within a municipal structure. He writes I know that even in local cultural councils artists are able to apply for and receive grants. He said, the obvious thing those members have to recuse themselves from voting and discussions when those applications are seen. He writes, I see a similar policy can be established with your committee

which would allow the body to have the benefit of artist voices within the body and not exclude them from working possibilities.”

Carlucci, I told Nancy (Schoen) I wanted to bring that up to the committee and essentially what that means is that as we go in and begin to discuss the Mass Cultural Council Grants, the local Cultural Council Grants any member of our committee who is an artist or a creative or a performer in some way; which essentially really is Amy or Jamie. They would need to recuse themselves from the entire discussion and the vote and everything. It would be as if they were not on the committee. And I think we have all seen this town council. Where town councilor gets up and she or he recuses themselves from the discussion and the vote. Because I think and we all think that the knowledge and insight of our artists and creatives on the committee is so important. And equally important is the respect of the work of the artists and creatives. We wanted to know how people feel about this and that we can move forward. We are also going to meet with Jamie Hellen and review this policy with him. That was proposed by Luis. How does everybody feel about that? Questions?

LoPresti said he would like to hear from Jamie and Amy.

Barrett: right from the get go, 2 years ago when I first joined the committee, I often would turn to Kim after the meetings and say Kim I feel really uncomfortable. I feel like this is a very tricky...I felt as a performer and I'm on this committee there would be talk of like if I was playing the Harvest Festival or one of the festivals, especially if any money was discussed or payment. I always just felt very uncomfortable. It felt like a conflict of interest. This is something I felt for 2 years and I don't know if I shared it with the whole committee but I know maybe I've had Evan's or Nancy's ear at one point and just said I feel very uncomfortable sometimes about this.

Ms. Trahan: But if we had a policy that would make it clear you would be ok with being compensated for your artistic talent. Correct?

Barrett: Right. Yeah.

Trahan: Ok. And you should.

Vice Chair John LoPresti: In exchange for being recused from any of those. That is a key point.

Trahan and Jamie B: Right, yes. That is key.

Trahan: So in other words you couldn't vote to say, "Yes we want Jamie to perform", but we could. You would recuse yourself from the vote. We would then vote to do that.

Barrett: yup. I'd almost want to exit from the meeting at that point.

LoPresti: Agreed.

Trahan: yup

LoPresti: Amy, what are your thoughts?

Adams: Yes, if it were a discussion where we would participate in some way, then recuse ourselves makes absolute sense. I would even say that should be a separate so that we're not missing any portion of the meeting that would be important to be a part of. But again, really why I joined FCD was more about being able to bring art into Franklin more than being able to actually be the artist of Franklin if that makes sense. So when Nancy first approached me it was more about having the insight of an artist also maybe connections to other artists. Literally, just that, bringing more art into Franklin and I want to be able to do that. So I feel like we haven't been able to do that because any way we do it, it seems like we're benefiting ourselves even if we aren't if that make sense?

Barrett: Yes it does

Adams: so I wanted to be just legit and I wanted to be ok. That's pretty much it. I'm on board. I hate the idea, I will say of having to do art, as an artist in other towns only. I've been an art instructor for the Millis Senior Center. I'm doing artist in residence in Natick. I'm everywhere I

can be with art because the messages are important, especially now in these times. I feel like I can't do that in my own town and it is disabling. And as an artist it's very upsetting. So, I do appreciate the ability to be seen as an artist more than just a Franklin Cultural District member. Because right now that's a secret. That's not something that I share with anybody. So unless they look me up, they don't know that. So my main focus is definitely being an artist. So I appreciate the idea of being able to do that in our home town and being able to make an impact with the art in our own home town.

Ms. Trahan: Your talent shouldn't be thwarted. And as Pandora already pointed out on every board in town whether its town council, particularly the planning board you'll see that almost every meeting. They will recuse themselves from a vote and they bow out and then they come back in. And we should be able to give you the same ability to that. I really feel strongly you should be able to do that. And not feel uncomfortable about it. And not feel as though you're having a conflict of interest or whatever. That feeling is reasonable and I understand it, we should make that easier.

Amy: thank you. I definitely appreciate it. It would make it easier for other artists to join the FDC because they probably wouldn't join if they figured out or knew that meant they couldn't function as a regular artist in the place where they live. That would be easier, I think.

Pandora: That would be easier and more authentic in your practice of your art whatever it is. And I think to both of you, we all felt uncomfortable as well knowing you as individuals as people even if you were someone knew to us we'd have had a similar feeling that are we doing everything that we can. So we are for Luis' wisdom, guidance and leadership. He actually came out to yesterday's festival. I had sent him the cultural districts links so he could see. Took a picture of you, Jamie. We're going to follow this conversation up with a conversation with Jamie Hellen on the 21st of September. So that we can go that next step. This is not something that is just going to languish, it's moving forward.

Ms. Trahan: So, Pandora if we have this policy which Luis has provided for us, I know you want to go to Jamie Hellen first and explain it. But then as a committee would we not then have the ability to look at that policy and decide yes we want it and then vote it thru?

Vice Chair JL: I believe we do, we would Roberta. The non-artists would vote for it

Ms. Trahan: Right the "not artists"

Vice Chair: The not artists would vote for that. We'd have the four (4) of us. You and I, Pandora and Nancy would vote for that and that would make it official policy of our group.

Ms. Trahan: I'm not thinking that Jamie Hellen is going to in any way have an issue with it but

Vice Chair: I think it's a good process step to go thru. Just to run it by Jamie. You don't want to have any appearance of conflict of interest in a town committee. So I think it's very appropriate to do that.

Ms. Trahan: Absolutely.

Vice chair: So that's a great move by you, Pandora and Nancy. Excellent work.

Ms. Trahan: I agree.

Ms. Carlucci: the reason is, we are, you're kind of identified and vetted by the Town Administrator. You're voted on by the Town council and so you need to keep that circle of communication going. Probably you could do certain things, but do you want to? I think this is the respectful step to take.

Ms. Trahan: Always best to follow the chain of command.

LoPresti: anything else on this? Anything further, Pandora or Amy or Jamie? Any other questions from your end? Ok, so next item on the agenda.

Franklin Cultural District Committee Presence

LoPresti: Obviously a big part of our role as committee members is really how we represent the Town and how we promote the artists within the Town and the cultural aspects within the town. And that's really a main goal of our committee. And having a presence and acknowledging that and all the work that's done behind the scenes is important. We had a good presence in the booth for the Festival on Sunday. The next one is going to be the Harvest Festival on October 2nd. I know Nancy sent around the sign-up sheet if you haven't already please sign up because it is important to have that. It's funny, Jamie and I, we overlapped a little bit and we were going thru our speech. Jamie, I think at one point we actually got it down pretty good of how we described it. I think it's important that we try to have that queued up and really draw that interest. One of the things I was telling Nancy, was one of the things Jamie and I focused on was look at us, because they were confused The Franklin Cultural Council and The Franklin Cultural District. We were getting a lot of people congratulating us for a great Festival. I said, Thank you so much but here's what we really do. I talked about us being the marketing arm and the promotor for all the Cultural events and artists within Franklin. And that's what we do. And we do that thru our marketing efforts thru our website, our newsletters, our sponsorship of grants and so on thru out the year. So that's our primary focus all about trying to bring out and make aware of all the artists and events that are going on in Franklin. That resonated very well with the people that I spoke with. I think we all have to come up with our own elevator speech when that happens so that we can quickly so we can talk about that and explain what the difference was.

Trahan: We did the same thing. It's interesting to hear what you said, because we said pretty much the same thing along those lines.

Franklin Cultural Council Festival Sunday, September 12, 2021

Franklin Downtown Partnership Harvest Festival Saturday, October 2, 2021

LoPresti: Excellent. Next on the agenda:

MCC Grant

LoPresti: Pandora do have information on that? Or do we need to hold off until the next meeting?

Carlucci: I can speak to that John. After the beginning of the fiscal year we've been waiting to see what would happen with the Mass Cultural council budget for FY 22 and then in turn how that would roll over and impact the Cultural Districts. So we learned that they're going to repeat the \$7500 grant which we applied for and received last year. There's no match required. The regulations are supposed to come out sometime in the beginning of September. Luis had said we should hear from him sometime this week hopefully with the grant details. But the dead line to file for this grant is October the 15th. But we haven't even seen all of the rules and regulations, policy and procedures for this grant. But anyway this gives us a sum of money to look at and we're going to have to move quickly if the deadline stays at October 15th to apply. It's for the whole year. Last year it came out very late, around January. That's one grant. At the same time they announced the Festival Grant. Remember last year we received the Festival Grant. It was \$500. They are offering it this year, and they've tripled it, its \$1500. They have an online

application and information session on September the 20th. They will issue the grant challenge twice. They will offer it fall/winter session which goes September to the end of February. They will issue for the Spring/Summer session which goes from February to, I think the end of the fiscal year. If you apply for the \$1500 for the fall/winter you can still apply for the spring, but you are put to the bottom of the list, you're given a lower priority. So that is something the committee should discuss. Do we want this for a spring festival? Or are we going to take our \$7500 and use it in the winter? Or are we going to use it in the spring? Need to decide what we're going to do. Then at the Partners Meeting following this one, Kaye Kelly is going to talk about the local Franklin cultural council grant. Last year we applied for that we received a \$1000 grant. They offer it again in October. Usually around February they up rewarding them. So we have that \$7500, the \$1500 we need to think about that, talk about that are we going to do the same thing and re-grant it to many grantees? We have to talk to people and see what they want to do. But that was it. It's all come out in the last couple weeks and we don't have anything formal from Luis that we can distribute.

Trahan: So it sounds like we should all think about this and perhaps as John suggested the next meeting be prepared to speak to how we have ideas of how we might spend, which grants we should apply for.

Carlucci: Yes

Trahan: Given however that the deadline is the 15th

LoPresti: Our next meeting is the 14th of October.

Trahan: so that's not going to work.

Carlucci: Ok we're going to have to set up a separate meeting and decide what we're going to do. We would invite you and you would decide if you want to attend. And you're attending or not attending would be probably... I have to find out from Bryan how we actually do this.

Adams: ok that makes sense

Carlucci: I want to be sure we do it in the right way and use the correct wording.

LoPresti: It would almost be nice, and we'll need to figure out the rules Pandora. It would be nice to have Jamie and Amy participate in the discussion of the grant, get their thoughts from an artist's perspective and then the vote have them recuse themselves at that point.

Carlucci: I want to find out is there a point or tipping point and that's what I don't know what we should look for. I'll circle back to Luis again and see what that would be. Good point John.

LoPresti and Trahan: yes

Taberner joined the meeting

LoPresti: Let's talk about the department meeting's agenda. (Then shared his screen) with the Cultural District Partners Meeting Agenda. Bryan is Lily Rivera going to join the meeting?

Taberner: Yes, I spoke with her last week and she said she'll be going and planning on it.

LoPresti: Thank you. Next item, Pandora this would be you, Cultural District newsletter update. The Marketing the Partners and the District, I'll take that one. The next one, the Massachusetts Cultural Council Grant Opportunity, Pandora is this what you just spoke about in terms of grant availability?

Carlucci: Yes, to give the partners an idea of what's out there and developing the platform for discussion and participation.

LoPresti: Ok. Then Grant Ideas and Partnership Brainstorming. This is an opportunity to hear from the partners where they might want us to point the grants too potentially.

Carlucci: Yes. And in the previous one under the Mass Cultural Council Grant Opportunities, that's where if Kaye is on the call, we should ask her to speak to the Franklin Cultural Council Grant. She could do that either before or after we describe the CDI grant and the festival grant.

LoPresti: Ok. Next Grant Details. That might be the deadline or timing which might be covered in your earlier portion. Then we'll have Q & A and then next partner meeting and then we'll adjourn.

Carlucci: Yes

LoPresti: Is there anything else that we'll need to cover with the partners that anyone can recall?

Carlucci: I have met Lilly and she'll be taking Anne Marie's place.

LoPresti: Have Nancy send the invite with tracking to Partners so we know who accepted and who didn't.

Next Cultural District Meeting Date:

Thursday, October 14, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

Next Cultural District Partner Meeting Date

Adjourn

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

Meeting Adjourned at 6:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorie Hurst