

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
February 9, 2023
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 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 participate by using the Zoom link provided on the agenda.

Members present: Co-Chairs Roberta Trahan and Dr. Pandora Carlucci, Vice Chair John LoPresti, Clerk Katherine Botelho, and Amy Adams

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Planning and Community Development Director; Stephen Sherlock, Franklin Matters; Patricia Gay

Upon achieving quorum with the required minimum of members present, Ms. Trahan opened the meeting at 7:02 PM

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Botelho motioned to approve the Cultural District Committee meeting minutes from January 12, 2023. Dr. Carlucci seconded. Ms. Adams voted yes; Ms. Botelho voted yes; Dr. Carlucci voted yes; Vice Chair LoPresti voted yes; Ms. Trahan voted yes. Motion to accept passed 5-0-0.

ArtWalk

Dr. Carlucci asked to reconfirm with the Committee that, although they agreed to table the trolley ride event to another year, the event had been the intended use of the ArtWalk grant, as such Dr. Carlucci would go back to the Franklin Cultural Council and discuss what could be done with the grant funding instead. The Council might be able to reallocate it to other programs, or they may return it back to the Committee, or possibly be able to make a recommendation on how they would like to see it used.

Ms. Adams responded that they could say they want to use the grant to give back to the people who participated in ArtWalk, which they have done in the past, and so the Council would likely be okay with it. Ms. Trahan and Dr. Carlucci agreed that they should make it clear to the Council that they are not spending the grant on the Trolley Tour, but are going to use the grant supporting artists, creators, businesses and other institutions in various ways.

MetroWest Symposium

Ms. Trahan and Dr. Carlucci provided an update that a poster has been drafted, and an invite will be sent out sometime over the next few days. The MetroWest Arts and Culture Symposium will be on Thursday, March 30 from 6:30pm-9:00pm (doors open at 6:00pm) at the Ghidri Center at Dean College. Instead of a keynote speaker, there will be a Featured Speaker, MCC Executive Director Michael Bobbitt, and instead of breakout sessions there will be Panelists, with Kaye Kelly being the moderator. Ms. Trahan said that they would not be charged for using the space, through the graciousness of Greg Chalk, Chancellor Augustus, and President

Elmore. She added that entry to the Symposium will be free, and then let the Committee know that if any of them had a question that they wanted to be considered by the Panelists at the event, they should email Dr. Carlucci or Ms. Trahan and they will review them when they are organizing the questions for the panel.

Artsy Box Project, Call for Artists

Vice Chair LoPresti updated that Committee that, with the aid of the Partnerships and great people in Franklin, he and Ms. Adams have been successful in publicizing the route that the boxes are located along. At least 20 places have mentioned the project, and multiple artists have either inquired about the project or expressed intent to submit designs for an electrical box. Ms. Adams and Vice Chair LoPresti will evaluate where they are by February 15, and extend their deadline if need be to allow more time for artists to considering submitting a design. Secondly, when they have collected all of the submissions from interested artists, Vice Chair LoPresti and Ms. Adams will review them and determine who they want to recommend. They will then hold an impromptu meeting with the rest of the Committee and Mr. Taberner before March 9 to present their recommendations to them.

Ms. Trahan said she agreed with the plan, and proposed scheduling the meeting now rather than having it be impromptu. After considering the availability of Committee members, the Committee decided to hold a meeting on February 23 at 7:00pm where designs would be reviewed and a recommendation would be decided upon. Mr. Taberner weighed in to advise the Committee that the designs they intend to approve should be shown to Town Administrator Jamie Hellen before the Committee reaches out to that artist to let them know their design was selected. The Committee agreed that they would follow Mr. Taberner's advice and have any design go before Town Administration after the Committee has reviewed and come to an agreement on a design they want to recommend.

Ms. Trahan asked Mr. Taberner about priming the boxes, to which Mr. Taberner answered that there was some difficulty with the Department of Public Works in making sure there is a time and opportunity in March to prime the boxes without being hampered by winter weather too far ahead of time. However, the Department of Public Works recommended someone who Mr. Taberner could hire to prime the boxes, so he would plan to discuss the job with that person and update the Committee at the February 23 meeting. Ms. Trahan thanked Mr. Taberner for his help.

CDI Grant, Funding Requests

Ms. Trahan briefly reviewed the total amount of funding from multiple requests received by the Committee, finding that it totaled up to \$44,157. The Committee had originally \$15,000 to allocate, of which \$7,000 was already set aside for the Artsy Box Project, leaving \$8,000 to be used. Thirteen formal requests had been received in addition to informal messages requesting funding. Mr. Taberner spoke to let the Committee know that he had sent out a response to everyone who requested funding, telling them that everything could be funded and asking them to modify their proposals. He received some responses from some of the recipients to his notice to clarify or modify their requests.

The Committee then began reviewing the requests for funding. 1) Escape Into Fiction requested assistance to purchase a wheelchair ramp, chairs, and folding tables, totaling up to \$1,080. 2) The Franklin Art Association requested assistance to purchase a hanging system to display art, totaling \$985. 3) Franklin Farmers Market requested \$1500 for a series of four performances to happen during their Farmers Markets in June. 4) The Franklin Public Library requested funds to help purchase items for their Youth Services Department, the combined

price of all items totaling \$5,523. 5) Creative Corner Art Studio requested funds totaling up to \$8,000 for its Teen Youth Open Studios initiative. 6) Horace Mann Middle School requested \$4,300 to try to purchase a Vibraphone for their Music Program Enhancement. 7) Kennedy School asked for up to \$1,180 for a Night of the Arts program titled Grooversity. 8) Mrs. Vacca's Sewing School requested funds for several different kinds of accessories and pieces of equipment for classes at the Franklin Mill Store, totaled up altogether would be \$2,664. 9) Franklin Downtown Partnership requested \$2,500 for the materials and installation costs of their Mural Panel Public Art Project. 10) LiveArts requested up to \$3,000 for a String Quartet Concert at the Library or Museum, but in later email correspondence with Mr. Taberner, they said that \$1,000-\$1,500 would be sufficient for them hold a concert. 11) Lifelong Music Academy plans on having a Private Music Lesson Student Recital, and is requesting up to \$2,600 for private piano lesson instructors. 12) Franklin Performing Arts Company requested up to \$3,000 for a Scavenger Hunt for the Art event, with development of the Scavenger Hunt itself needing \$1,000. Dr. Carlucci praised the Scavenger Hunt plan for how it would bring people to many of the spots and locations that the Committee had thought to include in its Trolley Tour. 13) Lastly, Town Councilman Cobi Frongillo had made a request for \$825 for monthly movie nights to be held at the Black Box, the funds going to licensing, setup, and staffing of each of the three monthly movie nights.

Ms. Trahan reminded the Committee that the remaining \$8,000 in grant funding has to be used by June 30. Ms. Adams asked the rest of the Committee how they would feel about saying no to some of the requests, as some of the higher costing requests will be charging entry fees, so they are not directly giving back to the community. She continued by saying that the choices could be either saying no to some of the requests, or providing \$615 to each of the requests so as to distribute the grant funding evenly. Vice Chair LoPresti and Ms. Trahan agreed with Ms. Adams that they did not like the idea of evenly dividing up the funding, explaining that most of the Partners would not be getting any real value out of a \$615 distribution, and also some of the requests seem to be more for subsidizing business. Ms. Adams suggested removing a few of the requests that appear to be for just subsidizing business, and evenly dividing up the funding among the rest.

The Committee then discussed which requests they would be allocating funding to. For the request from Escape Into Fiction, the Committee agreed to allocate \$880 to pay for the wheelchair ramp, folding tables, and 20 of the 30 requested chairs, with members pointing out that Escape Into Fiction does a lot to support community artists, writers, etc., and the items they want to buy would further help in that. For the Franklin Art Association's funding request to be able to purchase an art hanging system, the Committee decided that further discussion would be needed later before any amount was to be allocated. For the Franklin Farmers Market performances, the Committee decided to allocate \$750. For the Franklin Public Library, the Committee decided to allocate \$279 to pay for a doll house for the Youth Services Department. For the Creative Corner Art Studio's request, the Committee decided not to allocate any funding. For Horace Mann Middle School's request to purchase a Vibraphone, the Committee decided further discussion would be needed later. For the Kennedy School's request for funding towards a Night of Arts Grooversity event, the Committee pointed out that the school is not in the Cultural District, and the performance is for only one school unlike in previous years, and tabled their discussion on whether or not to grant funding. For Mrs. Vacca's Sewing School class supplies, the Committee decided not to allocate any funding. For the Franklin Downtown Partnership Mural Panel Public Art Project, the Committee decided to allocate \$1,250, explaining that the full \$2,500 would be too large a portion of the grant funds left available. For the LiveArts request for funding of their Concert, Mr. Taberner reminded the Committee that

LiveArts had told him they could still do a concert with \$1,000-\$1,500. Dr. Carlucci commented that usually the events have been more than just a concert performance, and this one would likely do the same. The Committee decided to allocate \$1500 to the LiveArts concert, with the possibility of being changed later. For the Lifelong Music Academy's Private Music Lesson Student Recital, the Committee discussion of granting funds would be discussed once the remaining request had been discussed and voted upon. For the Franklin Performing Arts Company, Ms. Trahan made note that the Committee should let the Cultural Council know that they wanted to reallocate the \$1,250 awarded to them over to the funding they are awarding to Partners, and that \$1,250 could be a good way to provide funding to the FPAC Scavenger Hunt. Vice Chair LoPresti pointed out how the Scavenger Hunt would accomplish what the Committee had originally intended for its Trolley Tour to do. The Committee settled upon allocating \$1,450 with the possibility of allocating additional funds after discussing with the Cultural Council. For Cobi Frongillo's Monthly Movie Nights at The Black Box, the Committee voted to allocate the full \$825, with agreement between the Members on it appearing to be a lot of benefit for the Community for how much was being requested. Mr. Taberner noted that the Committee does still have leftover funds from previous years, approximately \$2,500-\$3,000.

The Committee then went back and re-reviewed the requests that it had not yet decided on allocating funds for. For the Franklin Art Association's hanging art system, the Committee agreed to allocate \$500. For the Horace Mann School's request for funding to buy a Vibraphone, the Committee decided not to allocate any of the remaining funding. For the Kennedy School Night of the Arts Grooversity program, the Committee decided upon allocating \$566. For the Lifelong Music Academy's Private Music Lesson Student Recital, the Committee decided not to allocate any funding.

With all grant funds now allocated, Ms. Trahan commented the Committee had done a good job and carefully thought out how it allocated funding when there were many requests and not enough to fulfill every one. Vice Chair LoPresti remarked that they have now come up with a good filter/list of criteria to view requests through, those being: 1) How community-oriented it is; 2) How if it takes place within the Cultural District; and 3) How the requests server the entire town and their creativity. Dr. Carlucci thanked the Committee members for contributing their expertise to make sure the process of distributing grant funds went smoothly, and also thanked Mr. Taberner for providing a spreadsheet which made visualizing the breakdown of funding requests easier to manage.

Ms. Adams asked that, if the Committee is ever going to have an Artists in Residence program, that they set aside approximately \$5,000 to support it, as her experience in Natick led her to find that it is a worthwhile program but also one that requires a lot of work on the artist's behalf. Vice Chair LoPresti inquired about how Ms. Adams chose \$5,000 as a figure for such a program, to which Ms. Adams explained the amount would be enough to make whoever they hire feel incentivized to put in their full effort for the year. She added that the Committee would create the role they expect of an artist in residence before posting the job, then they would choose a candidate who can make connections work with the Franklin Cultural District. Their work would be done with a community-driven focus throughout the year they are hired. Ms. Adams added that part of the \$5,000 would be for some of the materials the artist needs to do their work, but not necessarily all of them. However, the Committee might provide additional support to them via grants, and then have the artist work to help with community events and programs. Dr. Carlucci remarked that the Committee should note this idea down for when they start a new fiscal year in July, and when a Cultural Check-In happens the Committee could ask other Committees how they managed their own Artist in Residence programs. Ms. Adams added that other towns sometimes offset some of the cost of hiring an artist by providing them with a

workspace, and once Dr. Carlucci starts asking other committees about their artists she will probably receive a lot of feedback and advice.

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

February 22, 2023 7:00 PM – to review the contracts for Artsy Box Painting and priming.

April 6, 2023 7:00 PM

The Committee agreed to cancel its March 9 meeting as there would not be enough members able to attend to achieve quorum.

Additional Comments

Adjourn

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant