

**Franklin Cultural District Committee  
Minutes of Meeting  
February 22, 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: Maxine Kinhart, Franklin Department of Planning and Community Development; Stephen Sherlock, Franklin Matters;

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

**Artsy Box Project, Call for Artists**

Vice Chair LoPresti started by briefing the Committee on the news that 10 submissions from artists had been received, several of which are in the Franklin area. He added that he and Ms. Adams are impressed with the artistic quality of the submissions, and he is excited about this overall. The Committee then began reviewing each of the submissions. Vice Chair LoPresti explained that direction was given to the artists to use a theme that would be colorful, look festive, and fit in with the Town overall.

The first submission was from Shilpa Udorhi, an artist who works and teaches in Franklin, which Ms. Trahan said was important that the artist has connections to Franklin. Ms. Adams mentioned the artist was heavily connected to the Indian community in Franklin, and that was important in the context of offering opportunities to diverse communities. Ms. Trahan said she believed the artwork was beautiful and could work really nicely.

Vice Chair LoPresti briefed the Committee on the second submission, which was submitted by two students of Franklin High School named Grayson Higgins and Bridge Powers. Ms. Adams brought up that high school students who are soon to graduate were allowed to submit art. Dr. Carlucci applauded the students for collaborating with each other to draft a submission, and Ms. Trahan commented that submissions are eye-catching and wanted to see more in them. Ms. Adams also explained that artists were asked to submit examples of there are along with the draft submittals to show that the simplified drafts on their submission forms could be depicted with more quality and detail when scaled up and applied to the boxes. Also, the artists would not have to be worried about spending too much time putting detail into a submission that is not picked, or having their work stolen/copied by someone else. Ms. Adams also said that they had wanted submissions that would be able to be consumed by multiple communities and universally enjoyed. Vice Chair LoPresti expressed excitement of being able to engage local students throughout the town and encourage growth and activity from them around Franklin.

The third submission was from Molly DEE, a Natick teacher who is also educated in the arts, as told by Ms. Adams. Dr. Carlucci remarked that she liked the bold colors, and the fact that travelling through the town from box to box would result in a variety of experiences from the diversity of the art.

The fourth submission was from a teacher named Jennifer Labollita, a teacher from Newton. Ms. Adams said that she and Vice Chair LoPresti liked that it would have a different element by having hummingbirds in its depiction as well as the use of metallic colors, thus helping it to be more distinct among the rest of the selected artwork than just being a purely floral design.

The fifth submission selected, as presented by Vice Chair LoPresti, was from Julie Dwinell and depicted a puzzle-based design of flowers. Ms. Adams said that the design was originally more muted in color, but lightened up at hers and Vice Chair LoPresti's suggestion.

The sixth submission was from a student of Dean College named Ren Schultz, who Ms. Trahan said she was thrilled to see had submitted a design. Dr. Carlucci commented that she was glad that Ren Schultz had taken inspiration in her design from something in Franklin, specifically in this case Ben Franklin's books in the Public Library. Vice Chair LoPresti said the box that this art would be applied to would be the one situated by Dean College and the Franklin Public Library, making the design all the more fitting. Ms. Adams reiterated that the Committee was excited to be able to support the students and make them feel welcome to try and pursue what it is they are seeking to do with their art.

With the submissions reviewed, Vice Chair LoPresti then explained that the next steps for the Committee would be to bring the designs before Town Administrator Jamie Hellen for his endorsement of them, and then move ahead with the contract process. They would then work with Director of Planning and Community Development Bryan Taberner on securing the funding and supplies for the artists, etc. Ms. Trahan asked Ms. Adams about whether or not the artists might have felt constrained by what they could design, to which Ms. Adams answered that artists consider preservation of an outdoor item, and painting on an electrical box might appear be viewed as a downscale by them. As such, Ms. Adams, it was more a case of artists simply not applying rather than applying and being rejected. Vice Chair LoPresti added that the project timeline and schedule might have made artists decide not to submit designs for the project.

Ms. Botelho asked if Ms. Adams and Vice Chair LoPresti had made a decision for which designs would go on the large boxes and which would go on the small boxes. Ms. Adams answered by first reiterating that Ren Schultz's library book design would be on the small electrical box near Dean College and the Library. She then continued by saying that the second submission, the one by Grayson Higgins and Bridge Powers, would be on a larger box because having two people working on it would reduce their workload and costs that they have to be more considerate of as students. The puzzle-piece design from Julie Dwinell would be on the other smaller box. The first design by Shilpa Udorhi, the third design by Molly DEE, and the fourth design by Jennifer Labolitta would be on the remaining large boxes.

Dr. Carlucci made note that the artists would include representation from the Franklin Art Association, Franklin High School, and teachers from multiple towns, and thanked Ms. Adams and Vice Chair LoPresti for making it clear that they had put in the time to understand what goes into painting on a canvas versus painting outside on a piece of infrastructure. Ms. Trahan remarked that she hoped the artwork would not cost the artists more than they are paid in the end, and the money they have approved should be sufficient. Ms. Adams reiterated that the money would cover the artists' supplies and the artists would keep whatever remaining funds they had. Ms. Adams added, however, that they make sure the artists are paid well before they start so that they do have time to purchase their supplies. Dr. Carlucci emphasized that all

artists should know they can reach out to the Committee if they have any issues, and the Committee does not want the artists to feel overwhelmed by the process. Vice Chair LoPresti concluded that he and Ms. Adams would proceed, and they would listen for Mr. Taberner to get back to them on any updates with the priming. Once everything is finalized, they will let the Committee know and update them at the next meeting.

#### **Next Cultural District Meeting Dates**

April 6, 2023 7:00 PM

#### **Additional Comments**

Ms. Trahan reiterated that this meeting had happened in place of a meeting originally planned for March, but if an emergency meeting has to be scheduled then members should reach out. Vice Chair LoPresti told Ms. Trahan and Dr. Carlucci that they should let him know if they need any help with the preparatory work they have been doing for the MetroWest Arts and Culture Symposium. Ms. Trahan thanked Vice Chair LoPresti and said that she and Dr. Carlucci would contact him later about help.

#### **Adjourn**

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

***Meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM***

Respectfully submitted,

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Tyler Paslaski  
Administrative Assistant