

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
September 7, 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: Chair John LoPresti, Vice Chair Amy Adams, Clerk Katherine Botelho, Sue Cass, Patrick Conlan, Dr. Pandora Carlucci

Members not present: Roberta Trahan

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Planning and Community Development Director; Stephen Sherlock, Franklin Matters; Peg Munson, Franklin Art Association; Marc Arentsen, Dean College School of Dance & School of the Arts

Upon achieving quorum with the required minimum of members present, Chair LoPresti opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

Committee Membership Update

New members Sue Cass and Patrick Conlan introduced themselves to the rest of the Committee, who in turn introduced themselves to the new members. Chair LoPresti gave a rundown of recent and current activities that the Committee has been involved with, and explained how the Cultural District Committee is not an events-based committee but rather one that fosters the cultural assets throughout Franklin. Mr. Taberner introduced himself and the role he has in assisting the Cultural District Committee.

CDC Annual Town of Franklin Annual Report

Mr. Taberner explained to everyone what Franklin's Annual Report is, and how it explains for the Town what the Committee has done in the previous fiscal year.

MCC Annual Report Submission

Mr. Taberner briefed the Committee on the MCC Annual Report as a condition of receiving a grant. He added that it needs to contain what the Committee has done in the past year as well as what they plan to do in the following year, and that it is not just a grant report, as the Committee needs to file them regardless of whether or not their grant applications result in grant awards. Mr. Taberner also informed the Committee that every five years they must reapply for a designation as a Cultural District, and that deadline for Franklin is coming up soon. Dr. Carlucci interjected to say that she had learned that the period of times has been extended from five years to ten, meaning Franklin has more time before needing to renew. Mr. Taberner then described what a report should contain, adding that data figures and attendance of Cultural District events would be important to report on and make sure that they are keeping track of it. Chair LoPresti asked what the deadline would be, which Mr. Taberner answered would be the end of June 2024.

Dr. Carlucci weighed in to say that there are a lot of organizations who put on events that the Committee could reach out to and ask what their estimations of attendance numbers were, especially for remote and online events, and proposed keeping in touch with organizations and Partners who put on events to find out how many people end up going to them, and then assist Mr. Taberner in gathering and keeping track of the data as the fiscal year proceeds. Chair LoPresti agreed with the idea and suggested that Clerk Botelho could help keep a record of who is tracking what organizations and data collection, but later appoint people to keep correspondence with her on reporting data. That way, annual reports will be easier to put together from year to year. Mr. Taberner said that there was previously a system set up for regular data reporting for organizations to use, but it did not work out as most organizations don't have enough people who can be dedicated to track data such as attendance at events. He added that, hopefully, they will be able to try harder this year and come up with more accurate numbers than in the past.

Peg Munson of the Franklin Art Association weighed in to say that she would try to find out who in the FAA is keeping track of attendance at their events and send that to the Committee.

Vice Chair Adams joined the meeting and introduced herself to the new Cultural District Committee members.

Chair LoPresti then explained to the new members how the meeting agenda items are addressed at each meeting as well as how the Committee Members can see about adding items to it.

Newsletter Update

Dr. Carlucci explained to the new members about what she is doing for the Newsletter as well as what data she collects from it to report to the Committee. She added that it would be nice if someone would take over the Committee's Facebook page or start an Instagram account for the Committee. Chair LoPresti asked if either Ms. Cass or Mr. Conlan would be interested in taking on the responsibility of one of the Committee's social media platforms.

Ms. Trahan joined the meeting.

Mr. Conlan said he would be happy to try to help with the Facebook account. Chair LoPresti thanked Mr. Conlan for taking on that responsibility. Ms. Trahan introduced herself to the new members of the Committee. Dr. Carlucci reiterated for the new members that if there is any events or news they want to share for the Newsletter, they are free to send it to her to be posted.

FCD Events & Activities

Chair LoPresti briefed the Committee on how the Committee attends and helps out at events, and the Harvest Festival on September 30 would be an event they are involved in with a booth for promoting awareness of the Cultural District. There was then discussion about members attending and covering the booth for timeslots during the day, from setup around noon to the end of the event at 5:00pm. Ms. Cass said she would be able to help with the setup period; Ms. Botelho said she could be there from 2:30 to 4:00pm; Ms. Trahan said she would be nearby helping the Downtown Partnership throughout the event. Dr. Carlucci said she would not be available to attend the event. Ms. Botelho asked Chair LoPresti for some materials to be able to record the number of people who visit the booth for the annual reports. Vice Chair Adams said she would not be able to attend the Harvest Festival unless it was delayed to the rain date. Chair LoPresti said he would cover from 1:00 to 2:30pm. Mr. Conlan said he could also help with setting up, and tentatively help later in the day.

New Business

MCC CDI Grant: Mr. Taberner briefed the Committee on this fiscal year's grant award process, saying that an application is due in a few weeks and he is working on filling it out. Mr. Taberner then asked the Committee members to start thinking about projects they would like to have take place that could benefit from the funds, or if there are any Partners who would have projects that could benefit from grant funds. Ms. Trahan remarked that the ideas they hear from their Partners are heartwarming, and told the new members of the Committee that the funding usually ends up being spent quickly, thus she thinks it is a good idea to send out requests for ideas to the Partners early in the fiscal year. Chair LoPresti also reminded everyone that the Artsy Boxes project had taken a large allocation of the grant funds in the previous year, and will possibly require additional costs in the future as they maintain and possibly expand the number of boxes that are painted.

Chair LoPresti also commented that he was interested in the idea of a "porch-fest" that has been done by other towns as a way to promote musicians throughout the Town. Chair LoPresti added that a goal for sponsoring events is for those events to be free to the residents of Franklin. Ms. Trahan said that Mr. Jamie Barrett had performed his own private porch-fest earlier in the year and might be willing to help run the event with the Committee. Ms. Cass asked for details of the process of preparing and covering expenses for a porch-fest, which Chair LoPresti explained, using Natick's model as a template. Vice Chair Adams proposed that an art-in-the-park event could be entertaining and bring out artists, adding that it could be on the same day as another nearby event to draw additional people to both, which Ms. Trahan also agreed would be a good event.

Mr. Conlan weighed in to say that President Elmore of Dean College may be interested in letting the Dean Campus be a setting for any such event, which Ms. Trahan and Chair LoPresti agreed with after having heard recent comments from President Elmore about his intent to have Dean be more involved in Franklin activities.

Outreach to Partners/In Person Meetings: Chair LoPresti told the Committee that there needed to be a focus this year on reaching out to Partners, and is looking for ideas on how to do that going forward. He proposed that one way to foster more Partner engagement could be to restart in-person meetings which have not happened since the Covid pandemic. Dr. Carlucci responded that it might be helpful to have the meeting in the Cultural District and also broadcast it on Zoom. She added that each member could try to reach out to at least one Partner to invite them to attend the meeting. The Committee agreed that meeting at the Franklin Public Library would be a good idea, and Mr. Taberner said he would coordinate reserving a spot at the Library for them. Chair LoPresti commented that he would like to have all meetings become in-person going forward, and possible change which building in the Cultural District they attend each meeting at going forward. Peg Munson recommended that Franklin TV would be a good location for a meeting. Dr. Carlucci said she could look into it. Chair LoPresti said he would prefer using the Library as a venue for the first in-person meeting as they need to be sure that the locations they meet at are set up for public access and Zoom capabilities. Mr. Taberner said that past meetings at the Library have worked so long as the Committee meeting there locks up the building at the end of the night. Mr. Taberner added that he would send materials to the new members to get them up to speed on the Partners and other matter which the Cultural District Committee is involved in.

Future CDC Meetings

Ms. Trahan briefed the Committee on an award made to the Franklin Performing Arts Company to put on a scavenger hunt in June 2023, but FPAC was unable to set up the event due to

issues with the season. The Committee had given them an extension to have the scavenger hunt begin this fall, but now there has been a development at the end of FPAC's Electric Youth Tour that has left them no choice but to shift the timetable of the scavenger hunt from Fall 2023 to Spring 2024. Alternatively, the Committee could reallocate the award money to something else FPAC is working on where they can more easily spend the award. The Committee agreed to discuss the matter at its next meeting. Dr. Carlucci weighed in to say that the Franklin Food Pantry had mentioned to her that they would be hoping to receive a certain amount of funding for translation services.

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

September 21, 2023 7:00 PM

Additional Comments

Peg Munson told the Committee that the FAA would be changing how it participates in the Harvest Festival to have their display up for two weeks instead of only the time of the Festival. Chair LoPresti told the new members that the key to the Committee is that they are all passionate about it and care about the Town, and can make a difference and succeed going forward.

Adjourn

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant