

**Franklin Cultural District
Partners Meeting
Minutes of Meeting
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: Vice Chair John LoPresti, Pandora Carlucci, Roberta Trahan, Jamie Barrett.

Members not present: Nancy Schoen, Chair; Amy Adams

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Director of Planning & Community Development; Tyler Paslaski, Administrative Assistant for Planning & Community Development; Alan Earls, Franklin Observer; Cobi Frongillo, Town Councilor; Stephen Sherlock; Christine Sousa from Expressions Enrichment; Franklin Marketing & Communications Specialist Lily Rivera; David Burnham; Sara Ahern, School Superintendent

Welcome

Chair LoPresti opened the meeting at 7:05 PM

Introduction of Lily Rivera, Marketing and Communications Specialist for the Town of Franklin

Vice Chair LoPresti introduced Lily Rivera, Franklin's new Marketing and Communications Specialist, to the Partnership. Lily shared her background with everyone, including experience relevant to planning and participating in cultural events in other towns, and expressed her enthusiasm for being able to help Franklin with its own events. Vice Chair LoPresti said to Lily that he is hoping she will be able to help with the Cultural District website and bringing the arts and culture to the forefront for everyone in and around Franklin. The Cultural District website has not had a lot of attention or focus from the Partnership in the past few years, but they are looking to change that. Any recommendations or input from Lily will be welcome. Christine Sousa from Expressions Enrichment asked that Expressions be added under learning, as that is the focus of their business. Vice Chair LoPresti asked that Christine email him and Chair Schoen about the matter and they will help.

Franklin Cultural District Newsletter Update

Carlucci shared news with everyone that the monthly newsletter has been increasing in readership, more so in the past few months. The August newsletter had a 72% opening rate and a 14% click-through rate, along with 150 expressions from its posting on the Facebook page. The most recent newsletter currently has a 52% opening rate, but most people who open it do not do so immediately after its posting. 78% read it on a desktop, while 22% read it on a phone. The Newsletter is helping to show readers just how large the Cultural District is and where it goes. Chair Carlucci stated that the Partners made a significant difference in the matter and helped bring it such a large number of new readers. The more information that the

Partners provide and share on social media, the more people will be brought to the newsletter. Vice Chair LoPresti reiterated that sharing is crucial to raising awareness of the newsletter, so anyone who is planning events/activities should make sure to tag the Cultural District Partnership and the newsletter.

Marketing the Partners and the District

Vice Chair LoPresti explained that getting the website up and running is the main focus of the Partnership at the moment, and having it as a promotional platform is central for the District. At the Cultural Council Festival on September 12, there was a booth for the Partnership to promote itself, and that booth will be at future festivals. It won't sell anything, but it will have a map of the district to show passersby. Vice Chair LoPresti added that it is helpful for everyone to help generate energy and enthusiasm for the district. Stephen Sherlock added that the calendar is key for raising awareness of what is going on around town. In previous meetings, there has been discussions regarding competing performances getting scheduled on the same day or time because they were not posted to the calendar. The performances take away attention from each other, but are all trying to accomplish the same goal of promoting the district.

Massachusetts Cultural Council Grant Opportunity

Vice Chair LoPresti added that becoming a designated district allows the Cultural District to apply for state grants that can be shared with partners to promote the arts and culture in Franklin. Carlucci then spoke about Luis Cotto, the point person for the MCC, providing information to the Cultural Districts, particularly about grants. Just a couple of weeks ago, the MCC shared information about \$7500 grants would be coming out soon and can be won from challenges. They have not been posted yet, but applications are due by October 13. Last year, a \$7500 grant was very helpful in allowing the partners in Franklin to be able to promote ArtWALK. The Mass Cultural Council is also promoting two \$1500 festivals grants, one for Fall and Winter (for events from September to February), and one for Spring and Summer (for events from March through end of fiscal year). Receiving one of those festivals grants would place the town lower down on a list if it were to apply for the other festivals grant, so one should be chosen carefully. When there is more information, Carlucci will make sure to share it.

Grant Ideas & Partnership Brainstorming

Vice Chair LoPresti asked the room for any ideas, from a partner perspective, that might be eligible for a grant that the town can apply for. The town will re-grant it to a partner who brings a proposal to them that seems suitable for the grant. Carlucci weighed in to say that the \$7500 grant from the previous spring had required a lot of thought and planning as to how to be able to use all of it to promote the district with events, while a \$1500 festivals grant would let individual partners more easily come up with ideas for smaller scale events by themselves. Vice Chair LoPresti added that partners should think about whether or not there were any other partners they would want to work with to set up an event when considering what they could do with a grant. Vice Chair LoPresti reiterated that partners have time to think about ideas for how to use grants, and they can then send them to the Committee members.

Grant Details

Vice Chair LoPresti opened the floor to any comment from the partners. There was no comment from any partners.

Carlucci reminded everyone that details of the grants would be posted as soon as they are provided by Luis from the MCC. Roberta Trahan said that emails may be sent to the partners who could not attend the meeting so that they could also start brainstorming ideas.

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Next Cultural District Partner Meeting Date

Monday, January 20, 2022 at 7:00 PM

Adjourn

Vice Chair LoPresti motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Trahan and approved with a role call vote 3-0-0

Meeting Adjourned at 7:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant