

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
November 9, 2023
Held as a Virtual Meeting
via Remote Access Zoom Platform**

This meeting was held at the Franklin Senior Center at 10 Daniel McCahill Street. Citizens were allowed to attend in person, and also 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, Clerk Katherine Botelho, Sue Cass, Patrick Conlan, Dr. Pandora Carlucci,

Members not present: Vice Chair Amy Adams, Roberta Trahan

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Planning and Community Development Director; Danielle Hopkins, Director of the Franklin Senior Center; 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 7:01 PM

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

There was a motion to approve the October 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

Fall River Cultural Tourism Conference Highlights

Chair LoPresti briefed the Committee on the Conference he attended in October. He shared his key takeaways from it, with the first being Community Engagement and visiting Partners to foster their interest in attending future meetings. Chair LoPresti shared his next takeaway that was understanding where Partner interests align and working to help them connect with each other. He encouraged Committee Members to have an elevator pitch in mind for how they would describe the Cultural District in passing to anyone curious about it, and remarked that it was most valuable to be able to meet other Cultural Districts at the Conference.

Franklin Senior Center, Arts & Culture

Senior Center Director Danielle Hopkins thanked the Committee for hosting their meeting at the Senior Center before then presented information and figures on the day-to-day workings of Franklin's Senior Center. She mentioned that Franklin's Senior Center averages about 150-200 visitors per day, which is much more than most local senior centers see, but they do not limit who is allowed in to just Franklin residents. Director Hopkins also mentioned the upcoming holiday festivities, and said that the Committee would be welcome to decorate a tree for the Winter Wonderland event. She then mentioned that the Senior Center has recently received a technology grant and is planning to start teaching technology literacy programs. Clerk Botelho asked who runs the programs, to which Director Hopkins answered that most are volunteer-based while the fitness programs are instructed by hired contractors. Ms. Cass asked if there was much demand for any particular program, which Director Hopkins responded to by saying that a fitness class that started off strong now had less people and the Senior Center needs to consider that funds used to pay for instructors are well spent. Mr. Conlyn asked how the Senior

Center raises awareness that the Senior Center is available to people. Director Hopkins answered that they use social media to promote the Senior Center, as well as flyers around Town and word of mouth, and added that the Newsletter has been very helpful. Dr. Carlucci mentioned that the Newsletter has covered the events of the Senior Center for the past four years, but if there are certain programs that Director Hopkins would like to be more noticeably highlighted, then she can let them know. Chair LoPresti thanked Director Hopkins for presenting.

Cultural District Local Marketing

Dr. Carlucci explained to the Committee how she was thinking they could take out an ad in the playbills like those at the Black Box, as she has noticed when she is at performances that theater-goers read it thoroughly. It could show the map of the Cultural District, as well as congratulate and thank everyone who is involved with it, and have a link to the Cultural District website. Ms. Cass agreed that people read the playbills a lot and it would be a good idea, as did Mr. Conlyn and Chair LoPresti.

Dr. Carlucci motioned to approve \$175 for two one-page ads in the December 2023 Performance playbills at the Franklin Performing Arts Company. Seconded by Clerk Botelho. Ms. Cass voted Yes. Mr. Conlyn voted Yes. Clerk Botelho voted Yes. Chair LoPresti voted Yes. Dr. Carlucci voted Yes. Motion passed 5-0-0.

Chair LoPresti discussed with Mr. Arentsen about doing something similar for Dean College's playbills and marketing for the School of Performing Arts.

MCC CDI 2024 Grant

Chair LoPresti recapped that Clerk Botelho had sent notices to the Partners to make them aware of the newly available Grant funds that they should apply for prior to December 14. Requests should be sent to Mr. Taberner and he will relay them to the Committee. Partners are also welcome to attend the December 14 meeting to talk about what they would like to do with grant funds.

PorchFest Franklin

Chair LoPresti described Porch Fest events as involving bands playing on porches throughout an area. A Proposal for a Porch Fest event to happen in Franklin was then presented. A dedicated Subcommittee consisting of Karilyn Hammer, Karen Kearns, and Jamie Barrett will coordinate preparation of it. The proposed dates are May 4 or June 1, 2024, both Saturdays. The locations would be around the Cultural District, the Town Commons, and possibly also municipal buildings. Neither the 15-20 bands nor the property owners of venues that bands would play at are being paid. While Chair LoPresti has heard support from the property owners of some of the properties they would like to involve in the Porch Fest, they are waiting until after the event receives approval to approach the other property owners and see if they are interested. A grant request is being prepared by the Subcommittee to be submitted to the Committee.

Ms. Cass weighed in to mention that she remembered the High School having a talented Jazz Band that she thinks would be interested in participating. Chair LoPresti responded that one of the Subcommittee members had also been interested in involving the High School, so they would be looking into that. Director Hopkins asked if event-goers would be standing in front of houses where bands are playing, or if there would be chairs allowed, to which Chair LoPresti answered that they were planning for people to be allowed to bring their own chairs.

Member Roundtable

Mr. Arentsen spoke about upcoming shows at Dean College, as well as showcases and a Faculty Dance Works Concert Series. He added that there would be a panel discussion about the shows and their creative processes happening the Friday Night after one of the performances of *Rent*.

Mr. Conlyn told Chair LoPresti that he had spoken with Rockland Trust in the Downtown Area about using their brick façade as part of their art/mural project, and Rockland Trust said they could do so, as long as they coordinate with the Bank in doing so. Chair LoPresti responded by saying he had talked with Mr. Taberner and Town Planner Amy Love and been told the Downtown Partnership is working with Rockland Trust on place murals on the southern wall.

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

December 14, 2023 7:00 PM at Franklin TV Studios

January 11, 2024 7:00 PM at Franklin Public Library

Additional Comments

Mr. Taberner and Chair LoPresti discussed a future meeting being planned to take place at Dean College, with President Kenneth Elmore planning to attend the meeting.

Mr. Taberner updated the Committee on the status of other utility boxes that could be available to become new Artsy Boxes, saying that around 10 or so potential boxes have been found.

Chair LoPresti said that he and Vice Chair Adams would look into them to see whether or not each of them could in fact become an Artsy Box.

Adjourn

Chair LoPresti motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Conlyn. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:44 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant