



Arlington Commission for Arts & Culture

Date: Thursday, Jan 5, 2023

Time: 7:00-8:30p

Location: Zoom 1

<https://town-arlington-ma-us.zoom.us/j/82936646576>

Passcode: 351395

Cristin, Steve, Stewart, Lidia, Brian McMurray, Nicole Cuff, Beth Locke, Christine, Tom F

Guests: Ed Blundell, Terry Holt, Anna Litten

Agenda

1. For Approval: [November & December minutes](#) 7:00p-7:05p

Move to approve Nov mins - 5 approve, 2 abstain (Cristin and Christine) - approved

Move to approve Dec mins - 4 approve, 3 abstain (Cristin and Christine) - approved

2. Updates: Secretary 7:05p-7:15p

Need a new secretary. Any volunteers? There were none. Going to take it month by month, Stewart and Steve will appoint someone.

3. Updates: Community Engagement 7:15p-7:25p

Youth banners - Sarah Gurney coordinating, theme of Connections. Jurying this month. Sarah will go in front of SB in Feb to get approval. Do we want to join Sarah and do an ACAC update? Meetings are still hybrid through March right now. Great idea - Steve and Stewart will touch base with SB about getting on the agenda.

Mural project - community advisory planning process has begun. 40 volunteers in group. Consultant Amanda Hill led a meeting to provide feedback on philosophy and values for project. Laurie and Cecily said it was a diverse group of participants, with a lot of good perspective shared. Online questionnaire to provide feedback. Link going out to ArtLinks. Have done 2 of

planned 6 meetings (1 remote, 1 in person). Tom F said it was a great meeting, people were excited to participate, really generative conversation. Library will boost survey link as well.

Event for Climate Futures was great - warm and enthusiastic and demographically diverse. About 200 people. HS honors orchestra played. People left as well-informed advocates for the project. Tom Starr spoke. Having Kari's work featured was great. People took posters as souvenirs. [Was filmed by ACMI](#). SB members, School Committee members, superintendent and ACAC's new Black Joy project lead all attended, and the Interns were honored with Commendations by State Rep. Sean Garballey.

Next CE meeting is 1/23 and it will be a volunteer engagement meeting on Zoom.

Funding for Youth Banners will end after this year. How should we tackle that? Should discuss with the Fundraising Committee first for that perspective before taking to CE.

4. Annual Report & FinComm 7:25p-7:30p

Used photo sheet for brag sheet with annual report. Working on this now - please add stuff if there's anything missing. Not sure when Fin Comm will call us but probably soon. Great opportunity for us to show off our accomplishments. Collect testimonials in advance.

5. Updates: Fundraising 7:30p-7:35p

Will know more about gifts from year end appeal soon (need info from Town). Submitted MCC Festivals and Projects grant app for Heights spring festival - \$2,500, will get notification in Feb.

6. Discussion: Cultural District Projects & Future 7:35-8:15p

Just received 5yr renewal of CD designation. Got notice of a \$15K grant from MCC as well.

High school is such a cultural asset for town, would love to redraw map to include it, as well as the pollinators mural and Japanese School.

Previous CD reps were all commissioners, not ideal. We've basically absorbed management of it into commission, ACAC is the core managing partnership now. Anna Litten is the liaison.

Infrastructure fell apart during COVID.

What is the Cultural District from here? Better ways to engage former managing partners? Take a load off of some commissioners? How do we use these annual funds from MCC? Big signature projects? How do we promote?

Anna: There's a lot more we can be doing to support the arts in town and really serve as an anchor for some CD activities. Aside from providing space, boosting things that are happening,

not sure what else we could do? Hosting event for new poet laureate, excited about that. Really want to think about this. What is our role going to look like now? What are you looking for from an anchor? What other kind of support would be helpful? Who should be attending these meetings from the library? The structure seems great but we're not clear yet on our end who makes the most sense. Maybe future new programming librarian.

Beth: Re-engaging previous managing partners - was a large group of people, who don't necessarily engage with the arts or with ACAC. Beth knows a lot of them, they're important people to have in this discussion. Dallin Museum, Regent Theatre, etc. But what is the exact role for them? Don't know. Need to think about that. PR and marketing of things we have done and do have is one thing we could do right off the bat. Just making people aware of what it is. Have been talking to folks from TED Comm - they manage visitor's center. It's underutilized. Low hanging fruit. Want to hang plexiglass mailbox on that to put magazine in. That's good marketing real estate. Hanging banner with map of cultural district and calling out key locations with QR code for tour. Utilizing the bike path is also being discussed, brings so many people through our town. VC isn't staffed so it's not that useful.

Cristin: Love that idea. Makes use of investment that's already been made. Expansion of the grant gives us a great opportunity to make that happen.

Stewart: Builds on original idea of having markers at every stop on tour - could deploy in more places.

Beth: New banners up on Mass Ave, Chamber project. Banner poles are another opportunity - could reserve 2 months and put up CD banners with pictures of locations. Current ones were \$1800 but doesn't include smaller ones in East Arlington. Some PR - talking with Boston Convention of Visitors Bureau - blog post or something. Free way to get the word out. No tourism office in town. Also have to put \$ into CD website page, it's currently useless. Should be real informational and interactive page.

Tom F: I like being one of a cohort of cultural destinations in a geographic area that's enlivened because of the arts. Should use geo to connect the dots. A first night style event or something that activates all cultural orgs in a particular area. Free Fridays or gallery tour or something. Street musicians, things that would bring people out to that area to encourage them to explore. We have to create activity.

Lidia: Should be part of community engagement. Points of attraction, at each point things are happening on an annual basis. Gallery Fridays or something. String of activities that happen throughout the year in different parts of district, also would engage merchants and orgs. Part of purpose of Live Arts when it started. Involve ArtLinks.

Ed: Existing info on CD is awesome, getting more branding up on VC would be great. Signposts too. People seem to not totally understand it. Use funds for more marketing.

Beth: It's hard to plan events and run them, we already have a significant number of things we're not promoting as CD things. Maybe do more with what we already have?

Cristin: Thinking about LA for spring, pulling back on number of events and focusing on a first Friday kind of idea but put more investment in infrastructure (calendar, coordinator) or support broader busking. That will bring even more vibrant activity to CD this summer. Works well alongside marketing campaign. Up to about 30 people from LA RFP process. Chamber and Library will be doing summer concerts as well. Cross promotion opportunities. CD permanent signage? Need new? May want to come up with our own solution.

Steve: Wonder if instead of a banner, could we commission an artist to paint a map on the VC? Make it fun? Would cost more but would underscore mural projects around town.

Beth: Maybe do a banner for this spring and then have mural in the works. Side of building isn't flat so that would have to be dealt with.

Anna: Would love to do walking tours from the library of the CD. There's a walking group at the Fox, would love one for Robbins. How to build into that.

Beth: Dallin Museum is already doing that - but could be expanded. Within CD, talking about Dallin's sculptures and add in cultural assets, board member does it. Could collaborate with them on that.

Stewart: Visitors Center could do tours if we invested in it? Rev250 project? Build a mini bandshell with a mural? Etc. MCC money as capacity building?

Cristin: Reminder that some CD funds have already been spoken for. Think of this as 7500 for this year as opposed to net new 15.

Beth: Would like to see funds in future really earmarked for promoting CD specifically.

Brian: Cultural Facilities Fund? Steve: Not available to a municipal entities unless they own cultural buildings.

Stewart: Could we have one annual or semiannual meeting that was dedicated to CD? Invite in some of those managing partners?

Cristin: What's the purpose?

Stewart: Engagement, that's why the low volume. Advisory capacity.

Beth: I like it, would like to see it be called a brainstorming session. Find out what's going on with them, get some ideas.

Stewart: Like our nonprofit convenings.

Beth: Could see this being an interesting time to do it because of Rev250. Gets them jazzed up about it.

7. New Business

8:15-8:30p

Lidia: New poet laureate, Jean Flanagan. Four finalists, one was in 3rd grade. Do have strong committee now. Submitted to town, has to be sanctioned by SB. Not on slate for Jan meeting. Can't celebrate Jan 24. Lidia to call Len Diggins to ask his advice. Started getting feedback from people, many people said they didn't apply because it's not enough money. Should try to increase the budget in the next round. Lidia has data from the other towns, will send to Steve and Stewart.

Plein Air Festival funding? Planned for next year? Part of FY24 budget.

ArtLinks up to 299 members.

Business of the Year Award? ACA runs that.

Adjourned 8:39pm.

Next meeting will be Thursday, February 2 from 7:00-8:30p