

**Franklin Cultural District Committee
Minutes of Meeting
October 12, 2023
Held as a Virtual Meeting
via Remote Access Zoom Platform**

This meeting was held at the Franklin Historical Museum at 80 West Central 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, Vice Chair Amy Adams, Clerk Katherine Botelho, Sue Cass, Patrick Conlan, Dr. Pandora Carlucci, Roberta Trahan

Members not present:

Also in attendance: Bryan Taberner, Planning and Community Development Director; Stephen Sherlock, Franklin Matters; Peg Munson, Franklin Art Association; Tina Powderly, Franklin Food Pantry; Alan Earls, Franklin Observer; Mary Olsson, Franklin Historical Commission; 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 7:09 PM

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Dr. Carlucci motioned to approve the June 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Ms. Trahan. Motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

Ms. Trahan motioned to approve the July 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Dr. Carlucci. Motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

Ms. Trahan motioned to approve the September 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Dr. Carlucci. Motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

Franklin Downtown Partnership 2023 Harvest Festival

Chair LoPresti recapped the attendance that the Committee's booth had seen at the Festival, saying that around 75 people stopping by the booth to ask questions and talk with the Members. Ms. Botelho remarked that a lot of the people who came by seemed to identify the Cultural District by knowing about the Artsy Boxes.

Franklin Food Pantry

Ms. Tina Powderly of the Franklin Food Pantry presented an infographic of the Food Pantry's activities and current needs. She mentioned that the need for the Food Pantry is at its highest they have seen in the history of their organization. The rise was anticipated, however, and was a motivating factor for the Food Pantry relocating to its new building.

Chair LoPresti asked if the Pantry had benefitted in attracting visitors by having its building be updated with new paint and signage, which Ms. Powderly answered that she believed it had. Ms. Mary Olsson asked Ms. Powderly if they get enough volunteers, to which Ms. Powderly responded that they were able to find and retain plenty of volunteers and have a standard training program for them. However, a challenge they face is getting the most out of every dollar of funding they receive through donations and partnerships. Ms. Olsson also asked what the Food Pantry's biggest need is, to which Ms. Powderly answered it is sustainable funding

along with not taking in too much food that they are unable to distribute that then goes to waste. Chair LoPresti discussed ideas with Ms. Powderly on how they could connect with the Committee to help the Food Pantry. Ms. Powderly added that they are seeing a greater diversity of people coming into the Food Pantry and have acquired translation software to help communicate with people who speak different languages.

At Ms. Powderly's request for suggestions, Dr. Carlucci weighed in to recommend that news and presentations that the Food pantry may want to advertise could be published in the Cultural District Committee Newsletter. Ms. Trahan and Chair LoPresti discussed other needs and plans that the Food Pantry building may need.

MCC CDI 2023 Grant

Ms. Trahan briefed everyone present on the situation with the FPAC scavenger hunt being delayed indefinitely and thus prompting a reevaluation of how to use the \$1,450 in funds that had been allocated to sponsor the event.

Chair LoPresti motioned to reallocate the funding granted to FPAC to one of the current performances that is currently happening. Seconded by Ms. Cass. Ms. Cass voted Yes. Ms. Botelho voted Yes. Vice Chair Adams voted Yes. Mr. Conlan voted yes. Dr. Carlucci voted Yes. Ms. Trahan voted Yes. Motion passed 6-0-0

Mr. Taberner said that a check for the funds had already been sent to FPAC, thus it would be good for FPAC to send back an invoice showing where they ended up spending the funds.

MCC CDI 2024 Grant

Chair LoPresti briefed the Committee on the funding that would be available in the 2024 fiscal year. The amount would once again be \$15,000 and the Committee would be deciding how to allocate the funds to Partners. Chair LoPresti also mentioned an event he had seen in other towns called a Porch-Fest wherein bands play on front porches at set times which people who are interested can follow along with using a schedule. Ms. Trahan and Chair LoPresti discussed possibly asking for help from Jamie Barrett for such an event. Mr. Conlan said that President Ken Elmore at Dean College would likely be interested in having the school play a part in a porch-fest. Vice Chair Adams discussed her interest in an Art in the Park event and what she believed artists and people who attend would want to see based on her experience at past similar events.

The Committee invited Partners to discuss their own ideas for events. Dr. Carlucci told everyone it was important to understand that the Cultural District Committee is not meant to be doing events by itself, and it needs someone else to step up and actually organize events for promoting the visual and performing arts. Discussion on what to do for the next Partners Meeting was also held.

Alan Earls made suggestions about having art displayed at festivities as a potential means of drawing more people to attend.

Ms. Olsson commented that the Town's birthday is celebrated every year in March by the Historical Museum, but if the celebration was supported to become a larger event than it currently is, it could be an opportunity to educate people on Franklin's history and foster collaboration between the Museum, Cultural District and Partners.

Mr. Marc Arentsen Commented that having an educational aspect to learning how to apply for grant funds on the Cultural District website would be helpful, as might having a requirement to participate in an informational meeting. Chair LoPresti responded that a workshop style meeting could possibly be considered. Mr. Taberner weighed in to mention that the Committee meeting on November 9 would be at the Senior Center and the meeting on January 11 would be

at the Franklin Public Library, so they may be able to fit some of these programs into those meeting sessions.

Ms. Peg Munson provided an update on the Franklin Art Association by mentioning that 300 people had come into Escape Into Fiction and viewed the art during the Harvest Festival. She added that she will be temporarily stepping back from an official role in the Art Association in the coming months, but may try to help them in other ways.

Mr. Taberner asked the Committee to keep in mind that they do not know yet how much they will have to give out, but the sooner that a notice is sent out to Partners to prepare their projects that may benefit from grant funding.

Mr. Conlan commented that he believed it would be good to expand the Artsy Box project for decorating other types of objects throughout the Cultural District. The Committee discussed other boxes that could be painted, as well as where and how they have to be prepared for painting. Mr. Taberner asked how many more boxes the Committee thinks it can afford to have painted when considering the costs of priming them, paying artists, and upkeep. Chair LoPresti estimated that 3 more artsy boxes could be painted at the cost of approximately \$4,000. Vice Chair Adams remarked that the Committee should vote on what programs it would allocate funding to before allocating funds to Partners.

Chair LoPresti motioned to allocate \$4,000.00 from the MCC grant for to the Artsy Box Project part 2. Ms. Trahan seconded. Ms. Cass voted Yes. Ms. Botelho voted Yes. Vice Chair Adams voted Yes. Chair LoPresti voted Yes. Mr. Conlan voted Yes. Ms. Trahan voted Yes. Dr. Carlucci voted Yes. Motion passed 7-0-0.

Subcommittee Reports and Member Roundtable

Mr. Arentsen updated the Committee on activities of the Dean College School of Dance and School of the Arts, saying that they now have an Artist in Residence in addition to other programs. Mr. Taberner asked if a meeting could be held at Dean College for the Committee around February or March, which Marc answered that it could be looked into. Ms. Olsson briefed the Committee on the events the Historical Commission has been hosting, including speaker sessions. She continued by saying the foot traffic to the Museum has been great, but they are hoping to have more events where the Museum is the destination rather than a stop along a trip or tour.

Mr. Taberner said he would be happy to work with the Committee on trying to find other sources of funding if any of the members should see a program that they think would really work with enough funds, including helping fill out applications for grant funding.

Dr. Carlucci remarked at how much literary arts have grown in Franklin over the past 4 years, adding that businesses around Franklin have been hosting readings and art studios in the past few years, and the Cultural District Committee Newsletter has grown from a small post every month to a large one every week that shares where all of these events are happening.

Next Cultural District Meeting Dates

November 9, 2023 7:00 PM

December 14, 2023 7:00 PM

Additional Comments

Chair LoPresti and the Committee thanked Ms. Olsson for hosting the Cultural District Committee's meeting.

Adjourn

***Chair LoPresti motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Trahan. Motion passed unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 8:44 PM***

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant