

Watertown Square Cultural District Partnership Minutes

Thursday, October 10, 2024, 4:00 pm

Remote Zoom link: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/83683744923> Meeting ID: 836 8374
4923 Call in: +16465588656

Present (12): Jack Dargon, Samantha Dudley, Jamie Gordon, Kristen Hansen, Liz Helfer, Leah Kotok, Doug Orifice (Vice-Chair), Lois Pond (Co-Secretary), Darren Farrington, Jeannette Belcher-Schepis (Co-Secretary), Erika Oliver Jerram, Steve Magoon, and Kim Charlson.

Absent: Perrin McCormick, Susan Jones, Anastasia O'Melveny, Seth Deitch, Arto Vaun, David Knoerr, Stephan Chiloyan, Joyce Kelly, Rick Saunders, Kim Hewett, Jason Sohigian, Andrea Santarpio, Yasmin Daikh, Nicole Gardner, Roberta Miller, and Stephanie Venizelos.

1. Welcome - Doug Orifice

2. Acceptance of Minutes

Motion to accept September Minutes: Samantha Dudley

Second Motion: Lois Pond

All members in favor / None abstained or opposed

3. Partnership Outreach

a. *Faire on the Square* (9/21) – Update (Jack)

In spite of the unanticipated rain, Jack reported that he and Susan ran a successful table for the event from noon - 3:30pm. There were two main take-a-ways.

1. Many young families were in attendance stopping by the table for some “quick bites of info” on arts and culture activities citywide. Jack noted that there was some previous discussion on creating packets of District-wide Arts info for realtors to distribute to folks who are new to Watertown.
2. Gore Place is interested in offering some exhibition space for art during the winter months. Doug suggested that this opportunity might be ideal for continuing “yard art” displays.

b. A *draft elevator pitch* was presented including the following points:

- i. A Cultural District designation positions Watertown Square, and Watertown as a whole, as an arts and culture destination.
- ii. The Cultural District will be key to the re-energizing of Watertown Square by supporting artistic expression across the city.
- iii. The Cultural District is and will continue to evolve as a community hub for the arts and related events throughout Watertown.

The group agreed that parts **ii & iii** are good, but the first part (i) requires revision. Lois will work on modifications for review at the November meeting.

c. **Logo contest update:**

Liz shared that Maria met with the folks at Watertown Public Library and they are very interested in hosting/coordinating the Cultural District Partnership Logo Contest. It is a very good opportunity to promote/ talk-up the Cultural District Partnership. Kristen did not attend the meeting, but summarized from Staff Discussion that they are happy to be the coordinating partner for the initiative and will advertise / broadcast the logo contest via newsletter outreach. Timing for the library works best after the first of the year since the deadline for Dec Newsletter is fast approaching (10/18).

Lois noted that the Watertown Cultural Council has had some recent discussions about updating its logo as well and they are aiming to partner with Watertown for a Logo Contest with timing likely after the beginning of next year / spring 2025.

The group agreed that holding the Logo Contest after the first of the year is a reasonable plan in terms of timing and partnering with the WPL. The CDP committee will set contest rules and make the final logo selection.

4. **Community Engagement Specialist**

a. **Job Description Review:**

Liz noted that the job description was currently undergoing a review with the city attorney/HR, and we should know the results of the review at the November meeting to finalize with a vote.

5. **Website Proposal Discussion a. Artsopolis vs. 3ThoughtCreative**

Sam provided a side by side comparison for a final committee review of the proposed website work by the two vendors. There are several similarities, however, some key differences offered by **Artsopolis** including training opportunities and desired accessibility features as well as providing more robust hands-on services and website traffic analytics post-launch. The maintenance items featured as part of the overall proposal will be particularly beneficial to the *Community Engagement Specialist* new hire. After review and careful consideration Samantha recommended Artsopolis for design of the Cultural District Partnership website.

Kim was particularly enthusiastic about the inclusion of various accessibility factors within the scope of the website design by Artsopolis.

Jack asked about future funding for annual website work; Liz confirmed that future funding (post ARPA award) should be covered by MCC's annual Cultural District funding (\$15,000).

Doug entertained a motion to engage Artsopolis as the Watertown Cultural District website design project.

Motion to approve **Artsopolis** as the Website Design Team: Lois

Second motion: Jeannette

The roll call vote to accept **Artsopolis** was unanimous None abstained or opposed

6. YardArt

a. Recruitment for committee roles:

Doug announced that they had recruited Darren Farrington, former Executive Director of Mosesian Center for the Arts (MCA) as Yard Art Chair. They have already received interest from new folks as well as a couple that have been involved with Yard Art in the past. An official sub-committee meeting will be posted and if anyone from the group is interested in joining the Yard Art Team they can join.

7. Next meeting on Monday, November 4th at 4pm

(moved up one week due to Veterans Day)

8. Meeting Adjourned at 4:59

Respectfully submitted – Jeannette Belcher-Schepis, Co-Secretary