

Cultural District Partnership
January 8, 2024

3rd Floor Conference Room
149 Main Street, Watertown, MA 02472

Present in-person: Doug Orifice, Sam Dudley, Andrea Santopietro, Jason Sohigian, Yasmin Daikh, Jamie Poulin, Stephanie Venizelos, Matthew Stephens, Nicole Gardner, Liz Helfer

Present via Teams: Jeannette Belcher-Schepis, Maria Hendricks, Aaron Caine

Technical difficulties with Teams, couldn't log in but emailed: Jack Dargon, Anastasia O'Melveny

Visitors: Roberta Miller, Matt Hanna, Olivia Gillham, Steve Magoon

Minutes

1. Liz welcomed everyone and tried to sort out Teams
2. Introductions
 - a. Confirm name and contact for each partner representative
 - i. Everyone in the room and online introduced themselves and clarified if they were the primary representative for their organization or representing themselves – some will go back to their organization to determine
3. Meeting Schedule
 - a. 2nd Mondays of the month at 4pm
 - i. Discussion of moving to virtual – WCA-TV has set up a recurring Zoom link for future meetings, consensus to move to virtual
 1. Next meeting on 2/12/24 at 4pm via Zoom
 - a. Liz will send link
4. Overview of MA Open Meeting Law – quick look at mass.gov website to see resources for learning more about Open Meeting Law
 - a. A Quorum dilemma: Partners and Associate Partners
 - i. 23 partners means that a majority/quorum of 12 people need to be present to have a meeting and vote on issues
 - ii. 23 is a large number and Liz and Roberta Miller from the Public Arts & Culture Committee recommend splitting voting responsibility into a smaller group of core “Partners” and a non-voting group of “Associate Partners”, limiting the core group to 9 or 11 with a quorum of 5 or 6, respectively
 1. Jamie, Doug, and Nicole made the case for substitutes, allowing non-voting partners to substitute for voting members when a quorum of the voting members wasn't present
 - a. Most in attendance were supportive of this idea
 - b. Developing and posting agendas
 - i. Liz currently develops agendas for the CDP, looking forward to working with a new Chair and Vice Chair for future agenda-setting
 1. Send agenda items to Liz (pac@watertown-ma.gov or ehelfer@waterown-ma.gov) a week in advance of meetings to include them on the agenda
 2. Liz will publicly post CDP agendas and minutes through the city's CivicClerk system

- a. Agendas must be posted at least 48 hours in advance of meetings
 - c. Subcommittee and project team meetings
 - i. Meetings of working groups that constitute a quorum must be publicly accessible and also post an agenda at least 48 hours in advance
 - ii. Roberta talked about the need for transparency vs the need to meet quickly and move projects forward
 - 1. Clarification was made that this applies to a quorum of voting partners and does not preclude non-voting partners or other volunteers from participating
5. Governance
 - a. Review draft handbook – Liz created a base draft to act as guidelines or bylaws for the CDP
 - i. Brainstorm on unfinished portions (highlighted) – to do between meetings
 - 1. This will also include revisions that outline the quorum solution when the CDP agrees upon a solution
 - ~~ii. Vote to adopt with revisions or table until February – not ready~~
6. Funding
 - a. ARPA allocation: \$10000
 - i. Many thanks to Steve Magoon for representing the application to City Council and to the City Council for funding the request
 - b. MA Cultural Council grant: \$15000
 - i. Will apply to the MCC as soon as designation occurs in August 2024
7. Timeline
 - a. Timeline to designation
 - i. Amendment to Resolution to Create a Cultural District – increase to a ten year commitment from five – City Council memo 1/9/2024
 - ii. Partnership elections – Looking to April
 - iii. Site visit (March or April)
 - 1. Think about how you or your organization would like to participate
 - a. We want to wow the MCC representatives that come to assess
8. Partnership Elections
 - a. Need to determine voting process during February and March meetings (before April)
 - b. Nominees for executive committee:
 - i. _____, Chair – no nominees yet
 - ii. Doug Orifice, Vice Chair – other nominees welcome
 - iii. _____, Secretary – no nominees yet
 - 1. Jeannette asked if co-chairs or co-secretaries, etc. would be considered
 - a. Yes!
 - c. Appointments to the Partnership
 - i. Liz Helfer, City Liaison
 - ii. Rick Saunders, Watertown Schools
 - iii. Doug Orifice, Watertown Business Coalition
9. Next Steps (for next meetings)
 - i. Nominees for Chair
 - 1. Think about all nominations
 - ii. Review 2-year plan in the adopted [WSCD proposal \(pg 21\)](#)
 - 1. Think about which goals are a priority for you and your organization

- a. Set achievable deadlines for each from August 2024-July 2026
- iii. Brainstorm projects and initiatives that meet WSCD goals
 - 1. We can 'hit the ground running' upon designation in August due to ARPA allocation
- iv. Brainstorm additional funding strategies
 - 1. We know our local funding sources but how can we not compete for the same piece of pie as the rest of our arts initiatives in Watertown?

10. Adjourn