

Watertown Public Arts and Culture Committee

Meeting February 26, 2024, 6 pm

Attending: Swati Biswas, Barbara Epstein, Matt Hanna, Liz Helfer, Archy LaSalle, Roberta Miller, Dawn Scaltreto, Erin Webb, Sally Young, WCA-TV

Call to Order 6:08 pm

1. Opening Inspiration (Archy) – Archy has been doing the Opening for about 2 years now. He thinks it would be nice to change the format a bit to provide committee members an opportunity to share. He just returned from a visit to the desert southwest. He was blown away by the diversity in people, youth, older folks, people from different countries. He thinks that the opening would be richer with hearing different voices. The next meeting is March 25, and Erin Webb volunteered to lead for the next Opening Inspiration. Erin asks what are the guidelines? Roberta answers "something inspirational, that feeds us and informs us going forward. She went on to tell a story about a concert she recently attended at Roadrunner in Allston. Last Thursday, *Portugal. The Man* played a show, with *Snacktime* as the opening R&B band, and after that they did someone from Alaska spoke up and did an inspiring Land Acknowledgement. Then they brought out someone from New England who did a Land Acknowledgement in the form of a song. When *Portugal. The Man* came on the performer stayed on stage and all performed together including members of *Snacktime*, giving everyone a voice. It was very inspiring! (Dawn has follow-up research. The Alaskan native performer presenting the Land Acknowledgement was Lakota Harden, and the musical performance was by members of the North American Indian Center of Boston. *Portugal. The Man* brings this opening to each of their performances, more detail may be read here: <https://oregoncf.org/ways-to-give/donor-stories/rock-group-portugal-the-man-elevates-indigenous-voices-with-ocf/>)
2. Approval of the January Minutes – Erin makes a motion to approve, Archy Seconds, by a Roll Call vote, all in favor, the Minutes are approved with amendments made by Barbara and Liz.
3. Open Meeting Law / Conflict of Interest / Public Records Request Training. (Liz) -
 - a. We will change our procedures and will schedule all subcommittee and project team meetings at this monthly meeting to assist with compliance.
4. Projects and Partnerships Overview (Roberta) –
 - a. Liz presented a Watertown Cultural Organizations Venn Diagram. Some of the organizations are funding organizations, which include The Marshall Home Fund, The Watertown Community Foundation and the Watertown Cultural Council. In FY 2025, the Watertown Cultural Council will have matching funds from the town. Their current allocation from the State is about \$15,000, so the new pool will be about \$30,000 annually.
 - b. Project Overview with Projected Dates (Liz) The definition of a partnership is anything that we are supporting, showing up at, some we are not directly running but that we partner on the events and programs. The partnerships we have established have served to expand our reach and base.
 - c. Project Calendar (Liz) – presets a timeline with key date and indicates blocks of time for ongoing projects. Barbara inquired about the Faire on the Square which is 25 years old this year if there is a way to make it a more artful event. Roberta mentions that as it is a long, ongoing event, patterns have been established which are often resistant to change. We have some time to think about it.

5. Subcommittee and Project Team Reports

a. Outreach (Erin and Matt)

- i. Monthly PACC Arts Bulletin has gone out, and one bid for the Edible Watertown auction has already come in as a result of the 800 people who have signed up for our list. We now have an email address so that people can submit their events.
- ii. The next Subcommittee Meeting will be Monday, March 18 from 6 – 7 pm, and April 15 is the next 3rd Monday meeting. All members of PACC may attend and be a part of it as Outreach is now a committee of the whole.

b. Governance and Funding (Roberta)

- i. Erin and Roberta are up for renewal of their terms, and both have requested to continue. Both have met our new member who is awaiting confirmation by the City Council. He is Jay Wilson, and we will have a full compliment of members once he comes on board. Each and every City Council member received a personal Thank You note from Roberta for supporting our activities, which they now vote on for allocation of funds.
- ii. Watertown Cultural Council meeting on February 14 was attended by Liz and Roberta. They gave a demonstration with the Venn diagram, our activities and calendar. They were very interested in everything, and they agreed that a better integration of our vision and positive ways to go forth. We will no longer be able to apply for funding from them because Liz is now their staff liaison, but we will be able to partner with them on projects. Liz will be meeting with them regularly, and also integrating their stand-alone website with the city website. Archy asked if individuals on the PACC committee who are NOT on the Watertown Cultural Council may apply for funding. Even WCC members may apply, but there is a little more work, recusing yourself from voting, full disclosure of your connection to the committee and so forth.
- iii. Financial Report – 2024 grant cycles (Liz) – The summary is that we have spent 47% of this year's allocation, rolling over \$10,000 from last year. There was \$30,000 that was this year's allocation. There is a \$19,800 reimbursement from MAPC which will come in September, plus \$3,000 from the Community Foundation and \$409 from the WCC. We expect to have about \$10,000 in surplus going forward. We have \$2,500 from the Festivals and Programs Grant which will go toward Edible Watertown. Dawn asks if some of the surplus be allocated toward adding another sculpture to the walk? The answer is maybe yes, but not this year. We will need that surplus to carry us through times when grants have not come in, and there is more spending on Edible Watertown projects to come.
- iv. The next Governance and Funding subcommittee meeting on Monday, March 18 at 4 pm, and our new member, Jay Wilson, will be invited. We are cancelling the New Projects meeting that Monday at 4 pm on the 18th. The Outreach meeting will be at 6 pm that evening.

c. Murals (Barbara)

- i. Gorky Mural
 - i. The NEFA Grant Notification will be in late February. There is a "Plan B" if we do not receive the funding from NEFA.
 - ii. Vote to launch Call for Artists in March

d. Community Sculpture Walk (Liz)

- i. Finalizing Grant Agreements – Liz reports two of four artists have signed agreements
- ii. Finalizing locations with artists and Watertown Public Works is happening
- iii. Opening Reception May 10, 5 – 6 pm. We will start at "Power Plant" sculpture to go to the end of the trail. Archy, Erin, Sally and Liz will get together to plan the reception
- iv. The Project Team Meeting will be on Tuesday, March 5 at 12:30 pm. Third Floor Hallway at Town Hall.

e. Edible Watertown (Sally)

- i. The Reception and Auction will be on March 9 - try to come early to help with all aspects of the event, including pack-up of sold artwork.
- ii. There is a Lecture Series starting with Jennifer Ann Tucker on April 18, followed by Peter Del Tredici on April 24th at Watertown Savings Bank room at the Watertown

Free Public Library from 7 to 8:30. On May 7th, Russ Cohen is giving a talk on foraging, and will have a future foraging walk, and Rebecca McMacklin and Eric T. Fleischer will provide a presentation on Soils in Home Gardening, Building Up and Restoration at a date TBD. There will be a flier coming out with all the dates. We will be partnering with people from the Community Gardens.

- iii. Summer Garden Call for Interns kicks off March 1, and after MCAS Testing there will be a program with 5th graders that Sally and Liz will kick off to do botanical drawings.
 - iv. There will be an Edible Watertown Project Team meeting Monday March 4th at 10 am in person 3rd floor at Town Hall.
6. Old Business
- a. Yard Art (Barbara) - Yard Art is Happening! Banners are hung, there will be a "Yard Art Demo Day" at HATCH on March 9, 1 – 6 pm. The Walking Tour is scheduled for April 18, 1 – 2 pm, meeting at City Hall. A Bike Tour is being scheduled, date, time and meeting location to be announced.
 - b. Porchfest (Matt and Dawn) – Porchfest is also happening! The ad-hoc committee has asked for \$1600 for the web guy to create the interactive website. Barbara moves to approve, Erin seconds. Swati brings up that we can invite dancers who would like to do dance performances as part of the event. There is a Roll Call vote to allocate \$1600 for Porchfest, unanimous approval. Yay!
 - c. Call for Bike Rack Design (Liz) – Bike Rack Design and Fabrication to launch on February 27, we must vote to approve going forward with this as a project sponsored by our PACC committee. There is a motion by Sally, second by Barbara. The Roll Call vote gives unanimous approval! Yay, again!
 - d. River of Light Presentation (Roberta) – Gowri Savor is the artist/creator of this art project that has been done in other towns, who each make the event their own. Shedes teacher training workshop for 20 teachers and community workshops, and two-day workshops for creation of lanterns. The whole program costs about \$10,000. She provides all the materials necessary. Barbara and Liz are having conversations with community partners including Arsenal Yards. Swati recommends making this part of a Diwali event. Diwali is a celebration that is a "Festival of Light", which is usually around October. The parade might be in January. There will be no vote tonight, just a gauge of interest. There seems to be a lot of support on our committee!
7. New Business
- a. The "Art Loaner" Program (Liz) – This would provide Watertown artists an opportunity to showcase their art at the new City Hall Parker School Annex. The departments themselves will put up the money to fund the artists for \$200 or similar amount for the loan of the artwork for two years. It will be similar to the Sculpture Walk, art may be on loan for a period of time and might be renewed. This is a project still in development.
8. Visitor Input – No Visitors tonight. Matt announces he is hosting an art walk on March 21, 1 pm meetup at Filippello Park at the Grove Street entrance. The group will be walking to Till/Wave Gallery on Arlington Street to view the "Looking Up, Looking Down" exhibition.
9. Vote to adjourn at 8:04 pm, unanimous vote to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dawn Evans Scaltreto
March 15, 2024