

Watertown Public Arts and Culture Committee

Minutes, Monday, October 28, 2024

In Attendance: Swati Biswas (via Zoom), Matt Hannah, Liz Helfer, Roberta Miller, Dawn Scaltreto, Jay Wilson, Sally Young, WCATV

1. Opening Inspiration – Jay: Jay recently saw Stevie Wonder perform. Paraphrased, “He is a universally appreciated artist, and I got to see him in Philadelphia. He is a wonderful musician and everybody loves him. He played so many of his tunes, but even so there were some numbers he just did not have time for.”
2. Approval of September minutes. Jay moves to approve, Matt seconds, all approve
3. Subcommittee and Project Team Reports
 - a. Outreach
 - i. Matt on the Monthly PACC Arts Bulletin, the numbers include over 900 subscribers, some new ones came in today. Nicole Gardiner shares with her 900+ list, and WBCC and Charles River Chamber also picks up some of our output. We should seek to connect with other councilors who put out newsletters. Click rate is 10%, a little lower than normal.
 - ii. Cultural Leader’s Meeting on 10/17 – Roberta – It took place at Turtle Studios and they discussed their Artists in Residence. It was a, really good meeting, and people were really sharing the edge of what they were doing. Matt Stevens talked about Mount Auburn Cemetery, and they are growing and open to new ideas. Jay did not previously know about the Project SAVE Armenian photograph archive on Pleasant Street, and Dr. Arto Vaun, their director, is doing a lot of cool programs. PACC was well represented at the meeting. There is not one yet scheduled for January, Liz is seeking an interesting place
 - b. Governance and Funding
 - i. Art Selection and Art Accessioning Policies - Barbara and Liz are working on new policy. They are using the National Parks Service Accessioning Policy as a template. They will be developing policy that will be based on best practices, and it is starting to address the gaps not covered by the Public Arts Master Plan.
 - c. Community Sculpture Walk – Five applications, call closes November 10 we are hoping to close in on 40 applications like we had before. We are hoping for a good selection.
 - d. River of Light – Roberta
 - i. Several fabulous workshops were held last weekend. 10 teams making large-scale lanterns on Saturday and Sunday created a really a cool scene on the first floor. The teachers workshop was small, only 4 teachers while we had room for 20. A professional day was provided, but we did have 2 people from HATCH, and one High School administrator. 20 people were enrolled for both of the Monday community workshops. We were completely enrolled for everything except the teachers workshop. Gowri and Angelo trained people in three different types of lanterns. Dawn has scheduled two workshops through Watertown Community Education and one at the Watertown Senior Center. She

will talk to Tammy about doing one at the Commander's Mansion Holiday Mingle event. Dawn will work out a budget for each of her scheduled events.

- ii. Live River of Light event on January 18, 2025 - Liz has five different fire/light performers for about 45 minutes who will perform after the parade. Roberta suggests we go past the Commander's Mansion which will still be decked out for the holidays. We received a Festivals Grant from the MCC for \$25,000, and WCC will contribute after they complete their funding cycle. The Bookmobile will come over with lots of books on lights and festivals. We are trying to get a Honk band and Swati and Roberta will talk about an Indian dance component. Zachariah Hickman, The Tuba Guy, will be contacted to see if he can join us for the festivities.

e. Murals

- i. All finalists have been confirmed for the Arshile Gorky installation, and there is an additional \$25,000 anonymous donation. Brandon Marshall has already sent in his proposal because he is engaged on the night we give feedback and chose the artist/artists. Monday, November 18 will be a meet and greet from 6 – 7:30 in the 3rd floor conference room, and our scheduled PACC meeting will start at 7:30. We are encouraging the public to attend the selection of the finalists. A synopsis of the entire programming events surrounding 100 Years of Arshile Gorky is on our Arts and Culture page. The finalists are Tina Chakarian with Nicole Burmeister and Studio Fresh, Brandon Marshall and Kacy Jackson.

4. Edible Watertown

- a. Liz - We had a visit at the site from the MAPC, and showed off what we did and how we did it, lots of interested communities visited, Elizabeth Kaplan, Judy Fallows and others were there. Steve Magoon, the director of community planning, was there, and others from the city. Everyone thought everything was very compelling. Sally Young led everyone in botanical drawing. We have a few funds to spend down, so Liz is acquiring materials for next year's program. The Summer Garden Intern Program will not be able to continue as we have been doing it because it was funded with the grant, but they will be able to continue by reducing the program from 10 to 3 kids. The CFA will host an event at the Mosesian Center for the Arts on 12/4, 12 – 5 pm, all the project partners, artists, 5th and 6th graders, and summer gardeners will all be invited, there will be live music, and we will have an expert to come and do a talk. We are not ready to launch Edible Plants 2025 – 2026. Expert Pairings will be reviewed tonight.

- 5. Old Business - Watertown Cultural District will receive their designation from the State on November 18. Doug Oriface will be at Tarhill Botanical Gardens, and Kristen Kenny has accepted the Chair of the committee. We have the draft agreement to launch the \$10,000 ARPA money that must be spent by the end of the year, everything is ready to go. Having them manage the calendar is great. It is no longer the Watertown Square Cultural District, broadening our ability to serve the whole community.

6. New Business –

- a. Expert Pairings review begins. We will look at the teams first, then select from the scientists, then pair artists with them. If we accepted the highest scorers right now, we would have our total number. For the teams, Matt mentions that the highest scoring team featuring Leah Craig and Nicole Weber, they are in the wheelhouse,

have worked together as a team and feel that they will follow through in a very exciting way. Amber Siegel from CWRA was highest scorer, and everyone really loved her story map. Patrick Fairbairn got the next highest score. People liked his trees proposal. Jenny Yang was very well received. People liked her techie programming and Matt thought she would be well-paired with Jenn Houle, the artist who did the cool glow-in-the-dark stuff. The highest scoring artist was Jenn Houle, and people were really excited about her unique artwork. Swati asks how we are going to coordinate making an artist as a team. They will need to meet and make sure they are compatible as artists before they sign the contract in case there is some conflict. The applicants were aware when they applied that they were going to be paired with another. If someone does opt out, preference would be that the scientist to stay in because we do not have a lot to choose from. Sophy Tuttle was the next highest scoring artist and is a muralist who did the beautiful mural along the Charles River on Greenough Boulevard. Simone Nimes is the next highest scoring artist. We reviewed her work, but there was a consideration that we had a lot of mural artists and chose to look at other diverse artists. Dawn thought Ira Klein (the next highest artist scorer) was an extraordinarily talented musician and would add diversity to the project. Jay made a motion and Dawn seconded. The artists selected as pairs are:

- Jenn Houle with Patrick Fairbairn
- Sophy Tuttle with Amber Siegel (CRWA)
- Ira Klein with Jenny Yi Wang
- Leah Craig and Nicole Webber
- Simone Nimes is the artist alternate, and Julia Kaplan is the alternate scientist.

Roberta mentioned that it was a very imaginative process.

- b. Porchfest – The first meeting for 2025 was today. Some new people are involved. We are trying to get Matt paid for his generous use of time, so a WCC grant was applied for. We are hoping to ask the WCD to be the umbrella organization so Matt can be paid (which he would not have been eligible as a member of PACC if it is a PACC project initiative) Our date is Saturday, May 17, 2025 from 12 – 6 pm, with a rain date of Sunday, May 18.
7. No visitors tonight.
8. Jay moves to adjourn, Matt seconds, adjourn at 7:25

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Evans Scaltreto

November 17. 2024