

Watertown Public Arts and Culture Committee Meeting

Monday, September 23, 2024, 6 pm

In attendance: Swati Biswas (via Zoom), Barbara Epstein, Matt Hannah, Liz Helfer, Archy LaSalle, Roberta Miller, Dawn Scaltreto, Erin Webb, Jay Wilson, Sally Young, WCAC, Guest Ms. Dara Cheek

1. Opening Inspiration – (Archy) Archy has a few topics he wanted to discuss. Barbara is the main person who encouraged him to get involved. He has lived in Watertown for 20 years. When he came he saw Sally who he had a long relationship with through Fernald School. Once he met the whole group, he was excited to work with a dedicated and creative group. He is excited about the works we have done, especially the Sculpture Walk, and Edible Watertown. He has sent a letter to Roberta, informing her that he intends on stepping back from the committee, in part to focus on his own work, and also in dedication to “Where all the Black People At?” Project. He says the main thing he really and truly loves about Watertown is that it is not pretentious, we just roll up our sleeves and get the work done. Roberta says that Archy will be very missed, and that we will call on him when we need his expertise. He is finishing up his term through December. He mentions a friend who may be a good candidate for the committee, a poet and writer. He has great energy and very outgoing.
2. Approval of June Minutes – There are a few small amendments from Barbara. Barbara moves to accept the notes with amendments, and Jay seconds. Unanimous approval.
3. Subcommittee and Project Team Reports
 - a. Outreach (Matt)
 - i. Monthly PACC Arts Bulletin – Not much new to report, a new bulletin went out. The click rate is up from the summer. It is 13% which is very good.
 - ii. Faire on the Square – It rained, lots. Difficult to park. Dawn did face painting with Watertown Art Association. Lots of interviews on WCATV, Catherine Clark was there. Parking was an issue.
 - iii. River of Light – Flyers are out, people are signing up and it has been widely advertised. The professional development call for Friday, October 18 has gone out to Rick Saunders from the public schools. Anyone can sign up, and it is free, so we want to insure that they are teachers. The two day workshop on the 19th and 20th for artists, participants must commit to being in the parade. The community ones on Monday the 21st, there is a morning for adults and an afternoon one for children. We have the Mosesian between 3 and 7 pm on January 18. There are several different drum groups at the High School who will participate in the parade. There may be fire dancers or other entertainment.
 - b. Community Sculpture Walk – The call is open. The opening celebration will be the same day as Porchfest with music. Saturday, May 17, reception at 11 – 12, then Porchfest will start at 12 pm.
 - c. Governance and Funding –
 - i. Public Arts Master Plan – Liz – The Implementation Matrix is currently an internal document, but will be public. There is a gap on the panel appointment criteria, curatorial vision priorities, no formal convening cross

departmental and developing a clear policy for t networking opportunities, and developing partnerships with the conservation committee and energy efficiency committee. There are no standardized evaluation policies and procedures. We are in Year 4. We have some internships, and we need to have more for students in K – 8. This is an intro, and we will dig in during future meetings.

- d. Edible Watertown – So far 13 Expert Pairings applications have been received, and the call will close Sept 15. We will have a meeting with the MAPC at the Lowell School, and go out to see the signs we created and do some botanical drawing on Wednesday, October 9, 9:30 – noon. Meet in the Science Room with Elizabeth Kaplan. There is a Lecture Series that was very well attended, Russ and Dara’s workshops had 13 participants who were enthusiastic to make her spirited infusions. Many of the people that are attending are new people and are very excited to participate. The 2025 we have money left over from the Climate Resiliency Project, about \$25,000. If we launch the 2025 project, we can use the funds to launch the project. They will need to review the proposal and vote on it, but Liz has discussed it with them. We need to vote to launch Phase 1 and use the money to release the funds, Erin makes a motion, Barbara seconds, all are in favor.
 - e. River of Light – Rather than the Artists Workshop being filled with members of the PACC committee, can Liz and Dawn come back and instruct the PACC committee in making the lanterns? Yes, sign up anyway, and if the workshop does fill, we as members of PACC can work in teams or step back. Gowri will be consulted just to make sure that is all right. Swati inquires about the possibility of having a dance component for the event. Roberta will discuss it with her.
 - f. Murals – The committee goes into the deliberations for the Gorky Mural at 7:02 pm. We used a ranking system to winnow the entries, top choices are Tina Chakarian in First, Brandon Marshall in Second, and Kacy Jackson in Third. As alternates, we ranked Meredith Kasabian and Best Dressed Signs as fourth and Mia Cross as Fifth. Motion to accept this ranking by Jay, Second by Barbara, all present are in favor, one present vote (Swati Biswas).
4. Old Business
- a. Choice making for art selection process: Barbara mentions that only 3 ranked choices limited us. Roberta and Sally worked together and gave 6 , Dawn gave “honorwble mentions”.
5. New Business
- a. We are moving up the November PACC meeting to Monday November 18 to avoid Thanksgiving week. We will make it in person.
 - b. There is a Cultural Leaders meeting scheduled, but we are moving the date. It will take place after October 9. October 17, Thursday, 9:30 – 12 noon at Turtle Studios The schedules will need to be checked. The Farmer’s Market may be ending early because of Saltonstall Park improvements.
 - c. Sally is having a 50th anniversary of her house in November and wishes to invite all of us!
6. Visitor Input – Dara Cheek was invited to speak early before getting into the Arshile Gorky discussion.
7. Adjourn – Next meeting pf PACC is scheduled for Monday, October 28. Archy made the motion, Matt seconded, all in favor to adjourn at 7:55.