

Watertown Public Arts and Culture Meeting

Monday, February 27, 2023

Attending: Roberta Miller, Archy LaSalle, Dawn Scaltreto, Carole Katz, Liz Helfer, Erin Webb, WCAC, David LaRocca

Call to order 6:05

1. Opening – Archy discussed how at the NBA All-Star game on Sunday, February 19, Canadian singer Jully Black changed one word of the Canadian anthem from “Our Home and Native Land” “Our Home on Native Land”. Doing something like that is wonderful and takes a lot of courage. She consulted with native elders who approved. This is a great way to move forward and make positive changes to the world.
2. Carole moves to approve January minutes, Archy seconds, all in favor.
3. Year in Review – Document presented by Liz. Under Finances, they note that we were not awarded from Watertown Community Foundation this past year, but we will reapply. Roberta sang the praises of Liz and highlighted her role as the Watertown Art Planner and how that contribution really enhances the work of the committee.
4. Subcommittee and Project Reports
 - a. Governance and Finances – One of the big problems we have encountered is getting a Youth Committee Member who has the time and ability to be a member of the PACC committee. Roberta and Erin talked to Jan Singer of the Watertown Community Foundation, who has suspended their Youth Board Member program. Liz said that we should speak with Angela Fitzpatrick, art teacher at the WHS who leads the Honors Art Group. We may be able to check in with that group and get their input and also notify them on what is going on with the arts in our town. Carole talked about possibly expanding the age to 25. Roberta said that we should have regular outreach to the Youth Community, and also with elderly citizens through the Watertown Senior Center. Archy suggests adding a Business Community representative or citizen not on our committee “liaison” list who can help us with outreach.
 - b. Outreach Subcommittee – Carole, Nothing to report except that efforts are ongoing regarding recruiting youth membership. Erin talked about the Arts Bulletin. Liz and Erin have been keeping a list of emails, and that they want to find a way to increase the membership base. Everyone agrees it is wonderful. Erin talked about the Arts Calendar – at the first Cultural Leaders Meeting, she talked with people who expressed disappointment with the blandness and lack of access to add information. She talked with people at the Boston Arts Calendar. Watertown IT Department Chief Information Officer Christopher McClure will meet with us to discuss embedding our own similar arts calendar, with opportunities to build in the city events, add photos, more. People in the city really seem to like Artsopolis as a foundation to build upon. It will cost money and require people to get it set up and running. We may be able to pull some funding from our budget.
 - c. Community Sculpture Walk – Artists contracts have been signed, installation sites are getting readied for installation with an Opening Reception on May 18, 5 – 7 pm. Promotion is starting with graphics coming along, and anodized aluminum sculpture plaques with a braille “slug” for accessibility are being prepared. David asks if there will be a “Please

- touch” sign to encourage people to physically explore the art. Archy talks about increasing diversity in encouraging more artists of differing backgrounds to submit artwork. If we can’t get it right, we should maybe postpone the release of the next Call to Artists. We must tap into people we already know who can help distribute the Call to Artists in a way that will encourage diverse artists to apply. The call will not likely go out until August. Dawn asks should we do the call earlier, June or July? Archy has some ideas to generate some interest among the diverse arts community. He is reaching out to curators of galleries and museums. We are seeking to diversify the applicant pool so that we can show a multitude of perspective and, experiences and include people of all races and ethnicities.
- d. Edible Watertown – A Summer Garden Coordinator will be hired to oversee the program expansion to the school gardens. The gardens will be planted with native plants and edible plants, among others. The emphasis right now is to place the garden beds at the Middle School as the High School will be temporarily located at Bemis Field. The beds will be movable, so they may be moved to the new High School once it is built. There will be several students hired, and students will also be creating signage and art for the gardens. Educational signs and graphics will be created by students. Science teachers will be included in the curriculum. Roberta, Sally, Liz, Judy Fallows are core members of the team. The schools are really excited about this.
5. New Business
- a. Yard Art – Liz - There are two workshops at HATCH, the first 7 pm next Monday night led by Amelia Young, HATCH coordinator, and Vicky Sax, with another scheduled for Monday, March 13 led by Amelia and Liz. Dawn will be working with the artists at the Senior Center to create a piece that will include Arlene Smith’s crafter’s group, too.
 - b. Liz introduced the Story Walk initiative by the Watertown Family Center. They could not get permission from the city to create one on the path behind the Boys Club because of our upcoming project nearby. Liz is engaged in discussions about where the Story Walk can happen, possibly at Filippello Park. It will be art and words in a story that children will engage in along a pathway.
 - c. Cultural District Meeting – Liz has about 92 people on the list. She discussed a timeline, and has invited all the cultural identities and businesses in the area, and invited individual artists. She is working on an expanded timeline, overview, get people interested in subcommittees to help with the boundary map and other tasks.
6. Visitor input – David LaRocca is a sculptor and had input on the call for artists. It is rare for sculptors to have an already made themed piece - that would be rare. It would be better to have artists submit sketches and maquettes. We do not have the budget to ask artists to create a new work from scratch, but removing the theme could increase diversity.
7. Next meeting – Archy may chair as Roberta may be out of town or returning that day. The meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 27, 2023, 6 pm.
8. Move to adjourn by Erin, Second by Archy, adjourned at 7:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Evans Scaltreto, 3/27/2023