

Watertown Public Arts and Culture Meeting

Monday, January 22, 2024

Minutes

In attendance: Swati Biswas, Barbara Epstein, Matt Hanna, Roberta Miller, Dawn Scaltreto, Erin Webb, Sally Young, and Liz Helfer (staff)

Absent: Archy LaSalle

Visitors: Meg Ramsdell, Quibin Ye and Xing Peng from the Chinese American Association of Watertown Dragon Boat Team, and Michael Albano from the Department of Public Works

Called to order at 6:05 pm

1. **Opening Inspiration:** Roberta Welcome back Erin! Tonight is special because it is also Sally's birthday! Archy is on vacation and will return for February's PACC meeting.
2. **Minutes** - Minutes of last meeting were approved with proposed edits on a motion by Erin, seconded by Sally, and approved.
3. Subcommittee Project Teams Reports
 - a. **Outreach (Erin and Matt)**
 - i. (Erin) Erin has been having a little trouble connecting with Matt via Gmail. There are some thoughts as to how best to collect links and info from other PACC members. A one page bulletin came out in December
 - b. **Governance and Funding –**
 - i. Year in Review (Roberta) – The Year in Review was sent out to the committee and Liz made it beautiful. It lists the accomplishments of the PACC committee, plus projects that we supported. The committee should look it over and send any edits or additions, if language needs to be augmented, please feel free to add your comments. The City Counselors and City Manager will receive a copy, and we can make a list of other places it should go. It is especially important to send out as we are seeking funding from various sources.
 - ii. FY 2024 Budget Allocation (Roberta) - It will not be as much as we hoped for but there will be an increase. Liz indicates that we will have a regular CIP allocation over the next 5 years.
 - iii. Review of Subcommittee Membership – We thought that there were too many on the mural committee, but one member is Liz, so we are OK.
 - iv. The PACC committee has one opening that needs to be filled
- c. **Murals Committee (Barbara)**
 - i. The Gorky Mural Call to Artists has been completed, and has been submitted to the New England Foundation for the Arts for the Public Art for Spatial Justice grant program.

- ii. We will vote to send the call out to launch in March pending funding. Barbara makes a motion that we issue the Call to Artists in March pending NEFA or other funding source. Erins seconds the motion and all approve.

d. Edible Watertown (Sally)

- i. March 7 is the auction/reception from 7 – 9 pm. Sally reports that the installation is going forth right now at Mosesian Center for the Arts, and the reception will be there. We are hoping to get Jared Bowen to cover it for his Culture show. We are hoping to engage other cities to do similar projects. Erin inquires if Liz has cleared doing an online auction component for the auction. People are asking about purchasing art at the auction already. Swati suggests that the artists be engaged to get their base to come and see the show. Erin suggests creating a promo kit so it is easy for artists. -Sally would like to add a committee member so that some of these tasks can be easier accomplished.
- ii. The Accelerating Climate Resiliency grant from Metropolitan Area Planning Council is in its second and final year, and the botanical drawing program for 5th graders will be facilitated with the schools in the spring 2024 semester. “Picture This” is a free app that can identify plants and give details.
- iii. Lecture Date Peter Del Tredici talks about Native Plants on April 24 at 7 pm in the Watertown Savings Bank Room at Watertown Free Public Library. There is a tentatively scheduled Zoom lecture for April 18, Sally will send out a message as soon as the details have been settled. Sally has been in touch with Watertown Community Gardens and they are interested, but will need to get it out to their people. Other lecturers have not been confirmed. Swati suggests approaching local nurseries and plant retailers to get out in their newsletters as well. Watertown Business Coalition might share the event. There is a public event at Olespania with the WBC this Wednesday. -We should have flyers for the auction and lecture series for that event.
- iv. We received \$409 for Edible Watertown 2024-25 from the Watertown Cultural Council.

e. Watertown Square Cultural District

- i. Meetings scheduled the second Mondays of the month at 4 pm.

- f. Dragon Boat Team for Watertown (Guests Qibin Ye and Xin Peng) –** (Moved from New Business so we can go straight to selections for the Sculpture Path following the discussion) The Chinese American Association of Watertown is petitioning to register for next year’s Dragon Boat Teams, which is very competitive. -Registration opened January 11 and the team is waitlisted due to overwhelming interest-. They have 15+ paddlers registered through Google forms. -There may be some other volunteers. The registration Fee is \$1500, and they will need to fundraise, also sponsor the amount for breakfast, snacks, drinks and lunch for the participants and volunteers which is an additional \$600. There can be up to 24 paddlers, and then a team of 6 volunteers for set up and breakdown as well as support throughout the event. They hope to get some in-kind donations from local businesses. They will also need t-shirts for the team members. \$300 for shirts. They have reached out to people around the town, and people are very interested. Liz comments that the Watertown Savings Bank will support this effort for \$500. -June 8 is the pre-race, the event is June 9. They are seeking funding and support from PACC. Xin Peng pointed out that they are still on the wait list for

Commented [BE1]: I may be wrong, but I don't think this was why they were waitlisted.

2024, and that they are not a 501-C3, but several funding sources do not require non-profit status.

- g. Community Sculpture Walk** – Liz is not going to include the ones which did not receive a vote unless we need to visit that list. 19 did receive at least one vote. The top vote getter was *Like You and Me* by Claudia Ravascheire and Michael Moss, 2nd place was *Beacon* by Michael Alfano, Waldo Jespersen's *Cubist Hotbed Pie* was next, and 4th was *Transparencies in Time* by Jose Trejo Maja, which is a proposal and not an existing artwork. We discussed selecting 5 pieces in case further discussion with the DPW regarding installation and maintenance takes one out of the running. Solid 5th place was Emily Bhargava's *1659*, a table made out of silverware. *Beacon* by Michael Alfano was selected as a top choice by the students, and we gave our word that we would select one of their choices. We discussed the challenges of maintaining the area around the *Like You and Me* elements with Watertown DPW member and Watertown resident Michael Albano. He said that there may be challenges with that one, but we should not necessarily count it out – he loves it. He thinks, like the rest of the committee, that the beautiful *Cubist Hotbed Pie* by Waldo Jespersen is just too dangerous. *Transparencies in Time* by Jose Trejo Maja was discussed next, and though it is a proposal, it was very highly ranked by the committee. The artist is a Native American and the text is celebrating Native heritage. There was a discussion as to whether this may be completely sealed and waterproof. It was selected as our 3rd choice but will depend on whether the artist will be able to complete the artwork in the time frame for our install schedule. Everyone liked *All Style no Substance* by Ken Reker and this was selected as our 4th choice. The next top choice was *Baroque* by David Skora, which is the 5th choice. Barbara moved that we accept this slate of sculptures, and Sally seconded, and it was unanimous.

4. Old Business

- a. Watertunes – Barbara will send out her blurb. We will meet next Monday in person at 4 pm to flesh out this idea a little more.
- b. YardArt – Dawn and Sally talked about committee highlights, including an installation at Senior Center, and other installations at Arsenal Yards and the Commander's Mansion.

5. New Business

- A. The DPW has committed to funding bike racks, and some other locations will have installations at a later date. The artist's call will include creating a design and the fabrication of the racks.
- B. Porchfest (Matt and Dawn) – The date is set for May 18, a Saturday in May, and it is a fun way of bringing musicians and the community together. The website will launch in January, February will be the call for porches to host and musicians to play. The main expense is \$2000 to set up the website, and Matt will find out what the maintenance will be. We would apply for grants and corporate sponsors going forth in future years.
- C. River of Light – This is a proposed art experience and parade in the depths of winter. Participants will create lanterns. Roberta will bring it up next Monday.
- 6. Visitor Input – Meg Ramsdell said she learned a lot, if guests and community members have other thoughts you can always email Liz.
- 7. There will be an additional meeting on Monday, January 29 at 4 pm, in person in the Third Floor Conference Room at Town Hall to cover some items that we were unable to completely cover in this meeting. Next regular meeting will be Monday, February 26, 2024, 6 pm

8. Motion to Adjourn by Sally, second by Swati at 8:35 pm