



## *Lenox Cultural District Steering Committee Minutes*

Thursday, September 17th, 2020, 4pm, via Zoom

**Attendees:** Beth Tracy Gamble, LCC; Eileen Mahoney, Trinity Lenox; Gwen Miller, Town of Lenox; Marybeth Mitts, Lenox Select Board; Kristen Moriarty, Shakespeare & Company; Rebecka McDougall, The Mount; Deirdre McKenna, Lenox Chamber of Commerce; Jenn Nacht, Lenox Chamber of Commerce; Natalie Neubert, Berkshire Music School; Hilary Field Respass, BUTI; Cassandra Sohn, Sohn Fine Art; Laura Brennan, BRPC

**Absent:** Maureen Gamelli; Andrea Goodman; Derrick Holt, Color of the Berkshires; Amy Lafave, Lenox Library

The meeting was called to order at 4:02pm

Gwen and Jenn offered an update regarding plans for Winterland in Lenox. After positive feedback on the programming offered during summer months, both the Town and Chamber are enthusiastic about plans for a skating rink and warming stations in the Village center with space heaters and fire pits, sledding at Spring Lawn and/or Kemble Inn, potential for warm beverages, tree decorating contest with scavenger hunt element. Trees would be provided by collaborators and may be sponsored and decorated by various organizations. Events would kick off first weekend of December (Friday the 4<sup>th</sup>) and go through the end of 2020. Possible to coordinate with Naumkeag's Winter Lights event.

Natalie offered to add carolers, both adults and children, to the event. Jenn indicated that Santa will be featured on Friday the 4<sup>th</sup>, seated in a large snow globe so that children can visit but remain distanced. This may be a good time to coordinate live music. The children's choir is a small group and will not be able to do the originally planned holiday concert.

Cassandra suggested a station be placed near her section of town to attract foot traffic to businesses in that area.

Hilary requested a discussion about the roles of various organizations in producing Winterland – Chamber and Cultural District and their distinct roles. Jenn suggested engaging individual artists in decorating trees. Cassandra suggested a call for local artists and including information about the artists next to their trees to help promote their work.

Natalie suggested expanding the locations of trees outside of the District, to encourage traffic to other partners, possibly with literary themes. Rebecka reported in that The Mount will be working on winter/holiday plans and cautioned that they may not be able to participate as described. Gwen reinforced that we should be open to incorporating programming plans from partners into the overall event and acknowledged that they may not be able to take on additional work.

Beth expressed concerns about meeting procedures and the interconnectedness between the District, the Town, and the Chamber. She would like us to discuss this further in a future meeting so that we are clear on our purpose and our audience. Cassandra suggested setting aside time in the new year to

regroup and reevaluate. Rebecka suggested referring to the FY21 goals submitted to MCC to help guide this conversation, and also conducting a survey of stakeholders to see if their needs have changed.

Gwen asked that we hear from the outdoor music subcommittee next and reminded the group that the programming thus far in 2020 was generated through Steering Committee discussions and supported by stakeholders during the June Community Meeting. Jenn added that we, like everyone, has had to shift gears during the Pandemic, and have had to be nimble in producing events that helped provide cultural activity to the public. Beth requested that we have more regular meetings and better communication among the Steering Committee, expressing frustration with the operational aspects of the Cultural District, especially as they relate to successfully issuing a regular newsletter.

Marybeth shared that she had been working with a small subcommittee on Scavenger Hunt plans but had been waylaid. The intention is to have seasonal variations on the Scavenger Hunt. Hilary suggested that we identify people interested in supporting that project and return to the agenda.

Deirdre offered a report on the #LenoxLovesMusic series, which will have its last session in the next weekend. It has been very successful and well received by the public, and the subcommittee is working on a final report which will summarize the six weekly performances attended by hundreds of people (residents and tourists) in a safe manner.

Jenn provided an update on ArtWalk. There are 37 artists registered so far and they are putting final touches on the map and logistics. Multiple artist “villages” will be set up around town and a suggested route developed. Advertising is in place including a billboard, paid ads, rack cards, posters and lawn signs. Additional help is appreciated in distributing more signs. Hours are 10-5 Saturday and 10-4 Sunday. Working with the Town to make sure that crowds remain distanced and safe. Jenn is also interested in volunteers to help manage crowds on either day. She is open to having a table set up to provide information about the Cultural District during the ArtWalk. Cassandra and Jenn will be doing the Facebook Live takeover with 1Berkshire on Thursday the 24th prior to ArtWalk. Steering Committee members are encouraged to repost/share posts from the Lenox Chamber to help promote ArtWalk. Cassandra suggested that this may be a good time to set up an Instagram account for the Cultural District and she would be able to manage posts during ArtWalk. **Laura will establish the account and provide credentials to Cassandra.**

**Approval of minutes from June 15<sup>th</sup>:**

Beth made a motion to approve, Jenn seconded.

No corrections or edits.

Approved unanimously.

**Review of June 29<sup>th</sup> meeting:**

Laura requested any feedback on the Community Meeting and suggested scheduling another session for Community Stakeholders in the late autumn. Rebecka asked about minutes and Laura indicated that we utilized the PowerPoint presentation but minutes from the meeting were not taken. Gwen stated that the meeting was recorded in Zoom and **Laura will develop meeting notes based on that recording. Gwen will send the video recording to Deirdre to post on our landing page.** Moving forward we will try to schedule these Community sessions bi-annually.

### **MCC Annual Report:**

Laura shared that the FY20 annual report has been submitted to MCC. It is separate from a more detailed application that will be submitted in the fall to request FY21 funding. The goals set forth for FY21 in the earlier report are meant to be broad and will be refined in the future. Rebecka asked whether there are any remaining funds, and Gwen confirmed that there are. Rebecka asked if MCC required that these funds be spend down immediately, and Laura stated that MCC was very open to funds being carried over in this particular case because they recognized that many activities could not occur due to COVID restrictions. In the future it would likely be expected that funds are spent down by the end of a fiscal year. Beth shared that the Lenox Cultural Council would be announcing information about their grant applications soon, and she will share that with the group. She encouraged the Cultural District to apply in the range of \$750 to support one or more of our programs. Funds would be awarded early in 2021 and could be used anytime during that year.

### **Next Meeting Date**

The group identified a date for the next meeting – Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am.

### **ArtWeek**

Cassandra shared with the group that the Cultural Districts in Berkshire County have been trying to convene to discuss the possibility of launching our own ArtWeek in 2021. The statewide event was canceled in 2020 and may not be reintroduced at the state level. Laura will follow up to encourage the county-wide group to discuss options.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30pm