



Lenox Cultural District

Steering Committee Minutes

Thursday, February 11th, 2021, 9:30am via Zoom

Attendees: Beth Tracy Gamble, LCC; Eileen Mahoney, Trinity Lenox; Gwen Miller, Town of Lenox; Kristen Moriarty, Shakespeare & Company; Deirdre McKenna, Lenox Chamber of Commerce; Rebecka McDougall, The Mount; Hilary Field Respass, BUTI; Jenn Nacht, Lenox Chamber of Commerce; Laura Brennan, BRPC

Absent: Derrick Holt, Color of the Berkshires; Amy Lafave, Lenox Library; Marybeth Mitts, Lenox Select Board; Natalie Neubert, Berkshire Music School; Cassandra Sohn, Sohn Fine Art

Guests: Stephanie Bergman, Mass Audubon; Arlene Schiff, LCC; Lynda Strauch, Wit Gallery

The meeting was called to order at 9:35am. Attendees introduced themselves to one another. The group discussed the distinction between a cultural council and a cultural district, and how they work together.

Lenox Cultural District Strategy Document – Beth Gamble reviewed the latest version of the strategy document she has developed to help guide the current Committee members in maintaining their mission and prospective and new Committee members get acclimated to our role and responsibilities. This document had also been reviewed during the recent District budget meeting earlier in February. It will continue to evolve as the District progresses. During this discussion, we added mention of outdoor recreation among the types of activity we are looking to promote.

Approval of Minutes from January 14th and February 4th – Beth G. made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Jennifer N. seconded. All voted in favor of approving both sets of minutes as presented.

Feedback on Stakeholder Meeting on Monday, January 25th – Laura B. asked for any feedback regarding how the session went. Hilary R. stated that she felt it was well organized, and the presentations were good. She felt it was one of our strongest meetings, and replicating it and building on it will be good. She asked who was missing from the meeting that we should consider doing more outreach to for next time. Jenn N. suggested inviting representatives from the Lenox Planning Board, and commented that the meeting demonstrated what great strides we have made in the last year. Hilary also suggested that we should be inviting people from the education community. Beth G. volunteered to contact the Lenox Library director to ask that they include information about our Stakeholder sessions, as well as our general e-newsletter sign-up, in their own communications. Jenn N. will reach out to the PTO at Morris School. Kristen encouraged the group to consider still maintaining the ability to attend meetings virtually even post-pandemic to be as inclusive as possible. Clarence Fanto attended the meeting and followed up with a positive article in the Berkshire Eagle. Deirdre M. has already posted the slides from the January 25th presentation, and Laura B. will develop meeting notes to accompany the slides. The next session will be in June 2021, and will include much more detail about our planned programming.

Programmatic/Promotional Planning Updates –

- **Lenox Loves Music Series** – we are currently waiting on word regarding a Lenox Cultural Council grant to help support this program. Hilary R. indicated that Natalie N. has not yet issued a call for artists. Hilary R. also indicated that since BUTI will not be doing in person programming on site in Lenox this year, she would like to step back from this subcommittee and help elsewhere. She will contact Laura to discuss

being deployed in another way. Jenn N. asked Hilary R. to consider whether BUTI students might be featured remotely during one of the Lenox Love Music series sessions.

- **Art Walks** – an invite only call to artists for the June Art Walk is going out through Richard Rothbard at American Arts Marketing. This Art Walk is scheduled for June 5th and 6th, and coincides with the likely opening weekend of Sculpture Now at The Mount. There will also be a Lenox Loves Music performance on the 6th, so this weekend could serve as a solid kick-off for the summer season.
- **Scavenger Hunts** – This topic was tabled since Marybeth Mitts was not in attendance, we will ask for an update during our March meeting.
- **Lamppost Banners** – Jenn N. has been in touch with Ryan Larkin to begin discussions on specs and hardware for installation. DPW staff will install the banners free of additional charge. Deirdre will be setting up a template to keep banners consistent. Kristen, Lynda, Laura, Jenn, and Deirdre will also participate in the subcommittee efforts to advance the banner project. Rebecka M. requested that featured venues be able to review and approve the final design. Kristen M. suggested that we may want to consider incorporating the logos of featured organizations as well. Laura B. cautioned that we will need to keep wording to a minimum but assured the group that we will allow featured venues to provide input during the development process, and invited Rebecka M. to serve on the subcommittee. Rebecka M. indicated that the Mount will likely soon change their representation on the Cultural District Steering Committee.

Misc. – Laura B. will add an item to the next agenda to determine the date of the June Stakeholder session. She will also plan to include an item for voting new members into the Steering Committee.

Governance Structure – At previous meetings, the group has conducted ongoing discussion of the potential to evolve our governance structure. Currently, we have two co-chairs, but no treasurer, recording secretary, or other executive committee roles. Subcommittee activity has been focused on specific tasks or projects, which seems to have worked well. Hilary stated that she would like to maintain the current structure including Laura B. developing agendas and facilitating meetings. Jenn concurred and suggested asking someone to help take meeting notes in the future. She asked Laura to continue developing the budget year to year. Gwen M. stated that she felt things are working well as they are currently set up. Governance discussion will continue and will be included on the agenda for one more meeting. Laura B. suggested that in a couple of years when it is time to apply for recertification as a Cultural District, a subcommittee should come together to help guide that process.

Misc. – Laura B. shared that the District's application for FY21 funding was submitted to MCC on the 10th. The final deadline is not until the 19th, and she anticipates that the application will be held until the final round of awards immediately after the 19th. Hilary R. reminded the group about the upcoming Listening Session with the new MCC Executive Director, Michael Bobbitt, and asked if we should submit a question in advance of the February 22nd Western MA session. Gwen M. suggested that we focus on ways to become more inclusive and diverse in our promotion and programming. Many members of the group expressed enthusiasm for this theme, and indicated that similar conversations are occurring in their own organizations. Laura B. will frame that topic into a question to submit in advance.

Next Regular Meeting Date: Thursday, March 11th at 9:30am.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40am.