

Amherst Public Art Commission

Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2017

In attendance: Emma Ayres, Eric Broudy, Amy Crawley, Daniel Grant, Ellen Keiter, and Rene Theberge

Meeting called to order. Eric noted one change to the June minutes: "The projects Amy and I identified were not cited as 'top priority projects,' but merely those that had already come to our attention that need to be prioritized for action, if any...." Ellen will edit the minutes and resend. The June minutes were accepted as amended.

APAC elected Ellen Keiter as secretary, a position left vacant Bonnie Isman who "retired" from the Commission after six years of service.

Chairman's Report

- Rene stated that Jim Wald will follow up with Dave Ziomek regarding status of the Splash Park.
- Rene forwarded the Commissions questions about Steve Brewer's proposal for the Poetry Windows; he is waiting for a reply from Steve.
- There is currently an open seat on the Commission. Three residents have submitted applications. Deborah (Town Manager's assistant) will schedule interviews, but they likely won't occur until the end of August or early September. The Select Board must approve the final candidate.

Treasurer's Report

- Daniel announced a balance of \$157.28.
- A recent \$500 payment was made to the brochure designer and another \$70 reimbursement was made to Rene for the plaque.
- Rene anticipates income from the BID and the Chamber for brochure printing.

Percent for Art

- Eric noted the Jones Library project has been delayed; funding is not expected to come through for three or five years.
- It is not clear what the first capital project will be. More immediate may be the boiler at Wildwood Elementary or the new roof at Fort River Elementary. Rene questioned if the boiler project qualifies; technically any project over \$100,000 qualifies for Percent for Art.
- Eric and Ellen met to discuss protocols (timelines, checklists, budgets, etc.) once the first project is approved. They will develop a template based on other Percent for Art programs to share at the September meeting.
- The Massachusetts Attorney General has 90 days to establish the percent for art fund in Amherst (Paul Bockelman submitted the request at the end of

June).

Cultural District

- The Cultural District will host an event on July 25 at Amherst Works from 7 to 10 pm. The goal is to make Cultural District known to artists, supporters, businesses, etc. as well as to highlight the various art venues and cultural events in town. A second objective is to create a comprehensive list of artist contacts. Tony Maroulis will speak on behalf of the Cultural District and request donations to match the \$5K grant from the state. The state approved an extension until September 1st.
- The Cultural District currently has three adhoc subcommittees: 1.) a planning committee for the July 25th event; 2.) a publication committee for the Cultural District brochure and map with a restaurant insert card; and 3.) a fundraising committee to complete the state match.

Public Art Condition

- Emma's friend examined Poetic Dialogue; he would need to transport the sculptures to his workshop in Worcester. Rene said he'll have a better sense of the Commission's finances after the brochure printing.
- A question was raised whether the cost of repair and maintenance could come from the DPW budget since the work is town-owned property.

Downtown Amherst Fire House

- Emma remains active with a group of citizens interested in seeing the Fire House converted into a performing arts center. They plan to launch a "Monthly Firehouse Presents" series in the fall to keep the topic in people's consciousness. The group continues to focus on the firehouse, while also considering other site options.
- Eric attended the Parking Forum meeting. The Select Board decided to table the parking forum until more is known about plans. Eric hopes a combined parking garage/performance space can be considered. Planning board member Richard Roznoy disagreed strongly with this idea; Eric read Richard's email correspondence ("distracts from both options...creates a confusion of purpose").

Town Gallery

- Amy said 75 people attended artist Linda Jane's reception. A local radio station has also contacted her for an interview. She has sold one piece to date.
- While the new hanging system is complete, the Commission is still waiting on improved gallery lighting.
- Amy noted that exhibitions are scheduled through June 2018.

Social Media and Website

- Amy continues to promote the Cultural District event at Amherst Works.

Mapping Project

- With Bonnie's retirement, Rene requested help distributing the 10,000 public art map brochures (in boxes at the BID). Bonnie left a list of places where they are displayed, to be replenished every four months.
- Sarah LaCour is willing to assist us in distribution to the extent that it meshes with their existing distribution efforts. The Commission decided to divvy up the responsibilities; each member can bring brochures to places he/she frequents.
- Rene noted that the Cultural District brochure appeals to essentially the same audience as the public art map brochure.

Other Business

- Eric met with the arts coordinator in Easthampton to inquire if Amherst is organized in the most efficient manner—APAC, Cultural District, BID, Arts Night Plus, etc. Eric distributed a Venn diagram showing overlaps of people and missions, indicating that various arts groups are partially coordinating but not fully.
- In theory, the Cultural District is the coordinating entity, but it doesn't represent everyone.
- Rene commented there are "too many cooks in the kitchen" and questioned why there are so many entities all concerned with the same thing?
- Rene suggested that Arts Night Plus, the Cultural District, and the Firehouse group be combined with subcommittees to address individual projects/events.
- Question: should we create/transform into an arts council to manage/oversee these entities?
- Amherst Cultural Council is not represented in the diagram—should it be?

Meeting adjourned 1:15 pm.

Next meeting: August 31, 2017 at 12 noon.