

BRC Arts & Non-profits – Minutes of 2/22/2021 meeting

Barbara called the mtg to order at 12.02pm

Members in attendance: Russ, Larry, Courtney, Jason, Robin, Barbara, Nihco, Beth, Kathy.

Also attending: Public Information Officer Stephanie Seacord, Laura Brown, Mayor Rick Becksted, Councilor Cliff Lazenby, Andrew Bagley.

Larry moved and Courtney seconded acceptance of the minutes from 2/15 meeting. Unanimously accepted.

Kathy made the correction to identify Stephanie Seacord as the Public Information Officer of the City.

Russ called for an update on data gathering (sub-committee members: Tina, Beth, Jason & Nihco).

Beth presented the sub-committee's working document with survey questions for artists, presenting organizations and patrons. Russ shared the document on screen.

Beth asked committee members to review the document, add questions, make suggestions. The sub-committee has designated a timeline goal of March 7 for completion of the survey.

Robin suggested that the issues brought by the other sub-committee be integrated in the survey.

Beth asked for suggestions to simplify and streamline the survey, to make it effective and direct. These suggestions should be made by this Thursday (Jan. 25). She also thanked Tina for her work on the survey.

Barbara asked for feedback regarding a deadline for the surveys.

Courtney reported on the work of the sub-committee (Courtney, Robin, Kathy, Bill) to work with the City to get consistent safety guidelines. Courtney talked to City Manager Karen Conard who would like a zoom meeting with the sub-committee and Health Officer Kim McNamara so we can begin a dialog with the City.

This sub-committee has identified different areas that require safety guidelines. This sub-committee is collecting safety protocol documents from venue and museum managers. A Google folder to store the documents will be created by Courtney.

Barbara asked that road races be included in the areas that need safety guidelines.

Beth requested that art galleries be included as well.

Russ asked for a timeline for communication with the City regarding the warmer Spring weather.

Larry mentioned that Strawberry Banke will open mid June.

Russ requested input regarding a method to keep the public in the loop, for example an email list to release updates to the public, venues, organizations and artists.

Stephanie informed us there is an email account [hotline@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:hotline@cityofportsmouth.com) and remarked that it is easy to set up a Mailchimp account to start fresh.

Russ suggested a form on the City website to sign up for email and information.

Stephanie proposed a specific page on the City's website to embed the form and remarked that there is a database with 5,000 names.

Barbara suggested each member send out personal social media posts to keep public informed.

Robin remarked that the committee needs a strategy to get the survey out to the public.

Beth mentioned that it could result in duplicates when we pass the survey to our respective constituents.

Russ suggested we could use social media to reach out to organizations not already on our lists with suggestions of a contact person.

Laura Brown has a 2-year-old email list that the committee can use and she volunteered to help disseminate information to the community.

Russ informed us that Stephanie has posted information and links in the chat bar and he will make them available.

Robin and Barbara spoke to the need to reach out to individual musicians outside our area and include them.

Stephanie mentioned that the Mayor is especially concerned about those artists in the "gig economy" who are impacted by the pandemic and may fall through the cracks. He feels they should be included too.

Andrew Bagley asked the committee to consider a collaboration bringing artists and restaurants together.

City Councilor Cliff Lazenby asked the committee to focus on what specifically the City Council can do to assist now and in case of another crisis later on. He stated the City would advocate with the State to help arts & culture survive.

Barbara stated that the Governor is considering removing support for the SBA (Small Business Administration) and asked whether the City can intervene.

Cliff will look into that.

Mayor Rick Becksted called in from a job site to thank the committee. He meets with other NH mayors every other week and will bring this up to them to garner support. He asked the committee to create phases because the levels of need change. He is hopeful that this committee can be used as a model to build up the Arts & Culture in the future.

Larry and Barbara stressed the importance of the SBA.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.57

Submitted by Kathleen Somssich

