

Minutes – October 18, 2021 – BRC for Arts and Nonprofits

Russ called the meeting to order at 12:02

Members in attendance: Russ Grazier, Courtney Perkins, Robin Albert, Jason Goodrich, Renee Giffroy, Kathy Somssich, Larry Yerdon, Nihco Gallo. Attending remotely: Tina Sawtelle, Beth Falconer, Barbara Massar.

Non-members in attendance: Nancy Carmer, Ben VanCamp, Valerie Rochon, Stephanie Seacord (remotely).

Courtney made the motion to accept the last meeting's minutes, Jason seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously. Corrections to the minutes are included in the next meeting's minutes.

Valerie Rochon addressed the committee regarding the plans of Portsmouth NH 400. The values that are guiding Portsmouth NH 400 are:

- Diversity, Inclusion, Respect, Accessibility
- Historical Accuracy
- Community Pride through Education and Engagement
- Sustainability
- FUN!

The underlying threads are Celebration and History.

Portsmouth NH 400 is in the process of incorporating as a 501(c) 3 Non-profit. They have identified 7 pillars of events and messaging:

- Arts and Culture
- Maritime and Military
- Community and Neighborhoods
- Commerce and Trade
- Education
- Signature Events
- Legacy Projects

June 3, 2023 has been selected for the parade. Another signature event may be an airshow in September. Portsmouth NH 400 has received 400 suggestions and is asking arts organizations to put a PNH400 spin on performances, activities and season plans.

JerriAnne of the Black Heritage Trail of NH is planning to include a Juneteenth celebration. Portsmouth Symphony Orchestra is commissioning a new work about immigration and slavery. Darci Creative is working on a logo and branding.

Fundraising will have three "buckets:"

- For 3-4 signature events such as the parade
- Sponsors for nationwide and international marketing
- To assist other individual projects, such as residents who want to order historical plaques for their homes

An application is being developed to act as a clearing house to connect people who want to be involved. They would like to have the major events identified no later than June 2022 to include them in marketing.

Barbara expressed Pro Portsmouth's interest in wanting to be a part of the celebration. Organizations are encouraged to collaborate (including on 2022 fundraisers).

Nico presented a proposal to support independent artists and art workers. A program of ten grants to artists who were highly impacted by the pandemic paid for with ARPA funds was proposed.

Questions arose about:

1. The requirements to receive ARPA funds,
2. If Portsmouth residency would be a prerequisite to receive a grant,
3. If visual artists are included in the proposal and how this proposal would apply to them,
4. If the funds are considered relief or to bridge a financial gap,
5. If the City would be funding future art work.

Nihco would like a sub-committee to be formed to address the proposal. It was suggested that the experience of other towns and comparisons for the dollar amount of the grant would give strength to the proposal. We were reminded that the ARPA funds are to be allotted by 2026 and that there are thousands of artists who work in Portsmouth, but don't live here. It was stated that the economic recovery may take 5 years. It has an impact on the broader community and we can't address this without looking at how to jump start the recovery now and sustain it in the future.

Jason and Ben reported on the Marketing project. Ben will meet with Nancy Carmer, the City Manager and the city attorneys for a go-ahead by the end of the month.

Robin reported on the AFTA study. At their meeting today they will be looking at what they need to increase the database of participating organizations. They will use a Google Doc for members of this committee to add organizations that will be included in the survey. Then each organization will be approached about naming a contact person for that organization.

Initial funds have been allocated by the City and Nancy Carmer has talked to City Manager Karen Conard about additional funds for the 2023 AFTA roll out, but further funding is still unknown.

This committee will submit a year-end report to the City Council with plans that go beyond the tenure of this City Council. This report should include recommendations for funding the arts in the future, details of the Marketing program, the AFTA Study, Portsmouth NH 400 and the importance of the arts in Portsmouth to be passed on to the next City Council. It could include anecdotal reports from individual organizations. Basically the report documents the BRC's responsibility per the Mayor, what we did, what is still left to do. It would justify the work that this committee has done. The Mayor has expressed interest in making the BRC on Arts and Nonprofits permanent.

Perhaps the report could be springboard -- it's been 20 years since the City last created a cultural plan. The new version of this BRC might recommend or become a new Cultural Commission, and create a new masterplan, setting goals and a vision for the arts in Portsmouth and would be a way forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01. Submitted by Kathleen Somssich

