

Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District Meeting Notes of June 17, 2021

This meeting was conducted by remote participation (video/teleconference) as stated on the agenda.

Members in Attendance: Karen Watkins, Neel Webber, Seth Keyes, Robin Helfand, Jeff Gagnon, Barbara Watkins, Abi Rollins

Also Attending: Chris Rembold (Town of GB), Madison Biaisin, Intern, Laura Brennan (BRPC), Wylie Goodman (BRPC)

Not Present: Tate Coleman, Jeff Caminiti, Sally Michael Keyes, Ed Abrahams, Betsy Andrus, Talya Leodari, Richard Le, Kris Kanter

The following are Meeting Notes rather than Meeting Minutes because there were not enough members present to reach quorum. No actions were taken at this meeting that required a vote.

Minutes of 5/20/2021 meeting – Minutes of the last meeting were not approved due to the lack of a quorum.

Treasurer's Report – Barbara W. informed attendees that the account currently has \$8,340 remaining; \$2K has been provided to Berkshire Busk. At Karen W.'s request, Laura B. showed the group the budget previously agreed to as a committee. Most of the money was allocated for the lamppost banner project (\$4.8K) but to ensure there are sufficient funds for all projected activities, Laura B. noted it would be good to have a more accurate estimate of production costs. Money has not been spent thus far on social media maintenance. In the past Chris R. said this was handled by a hired intern at Town Hall but her time is ending soon. If the Cultural District owes Town Hall money for the intern's time, funds are available. The \$800 committed to outdoor programming is a placeholder. Laura B. added that while the group has flexibility to move money between categories, they should ideally stay within the expectations provided to Mass Cultural Council. For ArtWeek the group has committed \$1K for advertising. If the collaborative decides to spend less, the money could be re-allocated. Thus far they have only issued payment to Berkshire Busk. MCC would like to have them spend the money allocated within the fiscal year, although it can be encumbered now even if not distributed. A more detailed report will be provided for the next meeting.

Berkshire County Cultural District Collaborations: ArtWeek Berkshires, Sept. 16-26, 2021

--- There is now a landing page on Berkshires.org: <https://berkshires.org/artweek-berkshires-2021/>. Cultural District members are encouraged to make event submissions via this online form: <https://forms.gle/874ZCCa7z2Mv2xHn8>

Laura B. shared that the collaboration is moving forward with GTB members strongly encouraged to participate. Submitted events will not be adjudicated but they are asking for submissions soon so that events can be promoted. The landing page is not yet populated with events but there will be links to send people to soon for more information. Events can take a wide range of forms (e.g., pop-up studio, exhibit, art, show, open studio, etc.). It is fine if an

event was already planned, it will be added to the Art Week listings. Events do not have to be hands-on or experiential but can be. Events can also be virtual. A press release is going out today to encourage submissions from across the county. This is a collaboration with four other Berkshire County Cultural Districts with 1Berkshire lending promotional support. Dierdre McKenna from the Lenox Chamber created a graphic art depiction for the shared cultural district collaboration that can be used for this event and/or future ones. The artwork is inspired by the Cultural District signage MCC had given them with slight changes. The deadline for ArtWeek submissions is August 6 to be included in promotional efforts but earlier is preferable.

Berkshire Busk Update – Karin Watkins/Seth Keyes. Karen W. said that the project appears to be very robust and well-managed by Gene. It will start July 2 and occur every Friday from 6-8:30 p.m. until September 4. Robin H. donated ad pages to be used for the festival. They will start running the first week in July. The GBCD logo will appear on ads. Robin asked for Chris to send it to her at 300 DPI. Laura B. will in the interim send Robin H. a PDF.

Lamppost Banners Project – Robin Helfand/Richard Le/Neel Webber – Robin H. explained that the original budget for banners was \$3K for 24 banners with a fee of \$1.2K for permitting and installation, primarily permitting. Material costs, however, have gone up by 20-30% or possibly higher since that was originally decided. Later the budget went up to \$4.8K assuming \$200 per banner for 24 two-sided banners. Wylie G. shared with the group the Survey Monkey that had been created to ask Banner Subcommittee members about next steps for the project. The survey received five responses. For question 1, most respondents felt the group should solicit more images (3 out of 5) while two were unsure. For question 2, people were equally divided in terms of how necessary it was to get written consent from an organization/entity depicted on a lamppost banner prior to production to ensure they were happy with the image (2 – Yes; 2 – No; 1 – Unsure). Commenters felt if the organization was not going to be named it was less important and/or if images were in the public domain. In terms of question 3 regarding the placement of banners on Railroad Street in terms of how far up the street they should go, comments included:

- No further than municipal lot -- unless we have enough images and budget for additional banners to wrap all the way down Elm.
- Sight line at top of street before curve
- Just to the top by Baba Louie's
- Just to the sightline at the top.

In terms of the need for more images, Robin H. and Neel W. explained that while there were many laudable entries, many from young people, not all were workable for the banners for various reasons due to the nature of the artwork, quality, legibility, and/or copyright issues. There was also a lack of images representing some categories and an over-abundance of certain images in others, which would lead to an inaccurate representation overall. They currently have 31 or so images from which to choose. The committee is now in the process of making final selections from these. Six categories would not be represented in the current iteration. As a result, Robin H. and Neel W. recommend that the process be slowed down so that more images can be gathered. The issue of when invoicing will take place was discussed so as to meet the group's obligation to MCC. It was decided that so long as invoicing can happen before August,

that would be acceptable. The group would thus need Larkin to send a bill, or the group would need to send him a purchase order by then. Permitting and installation could take place after August 31. The town may have to see documentation of what is being encumbered by July, however. Laura B. urged the group to be as formal as possible with invoicing and expense documentation, particularly because they owe MCC an annual report in a month and a half. Laura B. asked if Larkin could do a partial production run to meet the timeline in two stages and whether there would be an extra cost for that. Robin thought that he could do that without extra cost. Funds are expected to be encumbered by late August or early September. Laura B. felt it was important to respect that deadline. Neel W. has connected through a graphic artist who is himself a Monument Mountain graduate and other professionals who can produce images within a week or week and a half. In the end, all submissions, even those not selected, will be featured on the website with a brief bio of the artist. Karen W. asked if an institution does not want an image selected to represent them if they can switch. The decision was that if that occurred, they could instead turn the image into a category rather than representing a specific institution. All banners will be shown to institutions first. Neel W. said that he thought people are likely to be flexible. Neel W. and Robin H. will go back to the committee to review the 31 images to determine which are most viable and what is still needed. Chris R. thanked Neel W. and Robin H. for their hard work. Karen W. thanked Robin H. for donating advertising.

Website Updating – Chris R. received updates from Ed A. The Town's new intern, Madison B. will look at the website, too. Chris R. reached out to Silo Media for an estimate for the website and banner project; the budget is currently \$600 for that to encumber the funds. Unless people have final updates soon, they will be working to update the website. Chris R. would like the website to feature photographs and felt Berkshire Busk was a good model. Jeff G. suggested reaching out to Dylan Kubis, a local photographer featured on the cover of the recent issue of the journal [Artful Mind](#), who may be able to take photographs of downtown businesses for them. Dylan's work is good, and he is taking assignments, such as making photographic postcards of towns. Jeff G. could reach out to his father. Karen W. thought hiring a photographer was preferable to having pictures taken by volunteers. Laura B. suggested finding out what his fee might be to cover the downtown to get good street shots.

Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, July 15, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom.