

Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District Minutes of November 18, 2021

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

Members in Attendance: Ed Abrahams, Jeff Gagnon, Robin Helfand, Kristin Westerman Kanter, Richard Van Lê, Talya Leodari, Abi Rollins, Barbara Watkins, Karin Watkins

Also Attending: Laura Brennan (BRPC), Wylie Goodman (BRPC), Chris Rembold (Town of Great Barrington), Eugene Carr (Berkshire Busk)

Not Present: Betsy Andrus, Jeff Caminiti, Sally Michael Keyes, Seth Keyes, Neel Webber

The meeting was called to order by Ed Abrahams at 9:04 a.m.

- **Minutes of October 28, 2021** – Barbara W. made a motion to approve the October 28th Meeting Minutes. Karin W. seconded. There were no objections. The October 28th Meeting Minutes were approved without a formal roll call.
- **Treasurer's Report** – Barbara W. reported a \$1,764 unencumbered balance in the Cultural District's account. Laura B. shared that an FY22 application has been submitted to Mass Cultural Council supporting a \$7.5K request. Karin W. asked if the remaining money in the account from FY21 will be added into next year's budget allocation. Laura B. confirmed that it would be and that this money, as well as new money, if awarded, is spoken for in terms of future activities.
- **MOU Signature Confirmation** – Laura Brennan shared that everyone had signed the MOU except for Neel Webber and Richard van Le. Richard was in attendance and confirmed he would sign after the meeting.
- **Lamppost Banner Temporary Re-Location** – Ed A. and Sally K. did not have an opportunity to meet to discuss this item since the late meeting. The banners will remain up until MLK Day when they will be replaced by W.E.B. DuBois banners. This topic will be tabled until the next meeting.
- **Welcoming New Businesses – "This is the District..." Letter for Art-Related Businesses** – The DGBCD had developed an introductory letter and packet two years ago that would need to be updated. Laura B. will look at the document again and send to the Co-Chairs to suggest edits and updates before BRPC works on them.
- **Activation Activities for Cultural District in Winter?** The Steering Committee discussed whether having a presence at the GB holiday stroll made sense; typically, local groups can table. After discussion about the benefits or deficits of different marketing assets (e.g., postcard, QR code decal for store windows, decal, or bumper sticker for cars), Richard L.

offered to design a postcard with a QR code to be accompanied by a cardboard stand-up - 8 x 10 - for the stroll that stores could display. In the discussion, QR codes were advocated to reach young people. Others felt having a physical marketing asset for people to take was also important. Robin H. noted that decals cost approximately .08-.13 each for Indoor or Outdoor adhesive displays. Postcards (4 x 6 @ 500) cost between \$30 (Overnight Print) to \$50 (Vistaprint). The group decided to use printer Kwik Print to support this local business, even if the cost is higher. The final budget agreed to via a motion made by Karin W., seconded by Barbara W., and approved without objection by Steering Committee members was for \$80. There is \$500 available in the current FY 21 budget not yet assigned. Richard L. will contact Kwik Print to determine the cost and send the final quote to Laura B. for circulation to the group to approve.

- **Downtown Wi-Fi Status Update** – Chris R. stated that the project is moving ahead but slowly. The Town Manager is coordinating with a few owners of strategic buildings to place antennae on them and the Town will develop easements as they proceed. There is strong interest from building owners. In terms of funding, the Town agreed they would ask individual owners to contribute (\$2K each for 10 buildings). ARPA funds are not being used, as identified uses of ARPA funds have not yet been determined. The total cost of the project is \$20K to cover equipment.
- **Museum on Main Street Update** – There are no updates on this project.
- **MCC Monthly Update: Business Openings/Closings and Events to Highlight in Next Newsletter** – The group mentioned one business likely opening in the former location of Mistral, but it is not yet confirmed. At Abi R.'s suggestion, the group concurred that the focus for the December newsletter should be highlights of the group's and partner's accomplishments in 2021 and a look-ahead of events planned for 2022.

Adjourn – Barbara W. made a motion to adjourn at 9:27 a.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 16th at 9 a.m. via Zoom.

2022 Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District Steering Committee Meetings, all at 9 a.m.:

2022 Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District Steering Committee Meetings, all at 9 a.m.:

January 20

February 17

March 17

April 21

May 19

June 16

July 21

August 18
September 15
October 20
November 17
December 15