

Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District Minutes of December 16, 2021

Members in Attendance: Ed Abrahams, Robin Helfand, Kris Kanter, Sally Michael Keyes, Seth Keyes, Stacy Ostrow, Barbara Watkins, Karin Watkins

Also Attending: Laura Brennan (BRPC), Chris Rembold (Town of Great Barrington)

Not Present: Betsy Andrus, Jeff Caminiti, Jeff Gagnon, Talya Leodari, Abi Rollins, Neel Webber; Richard Van Lê

This meeting was conducted by remote participation as stated on the agenda.
The meeting was called to order by Ed Abrahams at 9:11a.m.

Minutes of November 18, 2021 – Karin W. made a motion to approve the November 18th Meeting Minutes. Seth K. seconded. There were no objections. The November 18th Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Barbara W. reported that we have had no expenditures since the last meeting. We have received an invoice for \$170 from Kwik Print for the Cultural District postcards. The group unanimously approved this invoice.

New Steering Committee Member Approval – Karin W. made a motion to add Eugene Carr of Berkshire Busk! to the Steering Committee. Barbara W. seconded. Unanimous approval.

Lamppost Banner Temporary Re-Location – Ed A. provided the update that he had spoken with Frank, a manager at Carr Hardware, and they are amenable to the banners being located where the DuBois mural was previously located in the parking lot next to Ruby's (at times when they cannot be on the lampposts). The group was supportive of this solution, and Ed will continue to work with Carr Hardware staff on banner relocation as needed.

New Business Welcome Letter – Laura B. shared her screen to show the group a draft letter, which has been provisionally approved by the committee co-chairs. Laura will distribute the draft to the full Steering Committee for review and edits, after which Steering committee members may use the letter to welcome new businesses moving forward.

Postcards for Holiday Stroll Follow Up – Richard Van Le designed 4 x 6 postcards and after approval from co-chairs due to time constraints, had 500 printed through Kwik Print in time for the Holiday Stroll. Ed A. has distributed approximately 300 to Robin's Candy, SoCo Creamery, Evergreen, the Library, and the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce. Kris K. also has a stack in her store. Seth K. offered to take some for distribution at Saint James Place.

Downtown Wi-Fi Status Update – Chris R. stated that the project is moving ahead but still slowly. The Town Manager Mark Pruhenski along with others are coordinating with a few owners of strategic buildings for placement and the Town will develop easements as they proceed. One placement is nearly ready to be turned on.

Pittsfield's ARTWALK App – Robin H. brought to our attention that Pittsfield has launched a smartphone app to help visitors navigate cultural offerings. She has found that visitors are

interested in more detail on what is available, and this would offer opportunities for regular updates of content. Ed A. raised the issue of capacity to update information regularly, and Robin suggested that we work with Gene C. to request assistance from his staff.

Museum on Main Street Update – There are no updates on this project.

MCC Monthly Update: Business Openings/Closings – Members of the group mentioned the following new businesses/expansions:

- A gift shop on Railroad Street, possible name of Home Love or Home Love Berkshires, owned by Emily (family connection with Cantina).
- Shire Grow & Glass, located on the east side of Main Street, just north of the District border and next to the skateboard shop, not yet open.
- Barrington Outfitters building's second floor will soon be a furniture store, either under Barrington Outfitters management or separate ownership.
- The Masonic Temple has been purchased, new owner has not announced plans, other than addition of windows and reconfiguration of what is currently green space.

The new gift shop was suggested as a potential topic for an upcoming e-newsletter.

Additional Discussion – Extending borders of the district was brought up, and Laura B. explained that changes are permitted during redesignation every 5 years. The group also discussed potential additions to the Steering Committee, including someone from Prairie Whale, or individual artists and performers. Ed A. will reach out to Mark at Prairie Whale.

Laura B. reminded attendees of a Micro-Transit survey and will resend a link for sharing widely.

The group discussed the MOTT Travel & Tourism Recovery grant currently available. A county-wide application is being developed including Cultural Districts, Chambers of Commerce, and outdoor recreation venues cooperating in a digital retargeting campaign.

Laura B. asked for volunteers for the ArtWeek Berkshires 2022 subcommittee. Chris R. hopes to be one of two people to serve in this way, and the request will be emailed around.

Robin H. requested that the new Mask Advisory be included in the next e-newsletter. Chris R. will send official wording, along with a link to a downloadable PDF sign to be placed in storefronts. Robin H. offered to laminate signs as needed.

Adjourn – Karin W. made a motion to adjourn at 9:57 a.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 20th at 9 a.m. via Zoom.

2022 Steering Committee Meetings, at 9a.m.:

January 20	July 21
February 17	August 18
March 17	September 15
April 21	October 20
May 19	November 17
June 16	December 15