

Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District Minutes of May 20, 2021

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

Members in Attendance: Ed Abrahams, Betsy Andrus, Kris Kanter, Talya Leodari, Barbara Watkins, Neel Webber, Seth Keyes, Richard Le, Robin Helfand

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

Not Present: Tate Coleman, Jeff Caminiti, Jeff Gagnon, Sally Michael Keyes, Abi Rollins, Karin Watkins

From 9:05 a.m. to 9:13 a.m. the group discussed business not requiring a vote prior to having sufficient members to reach quorum. After Robin H. arrived, Ed A. called the official meeting to order.

Minutes of 4/15/2021 meeting – Ed. A. made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Barbara W. made a motion to approve. Ed A. abstained because he was not at the last meeting. Seth K. seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Ed. A. made a motion that the meeting items discussed prior to quorum be entered into the official record. Seth K. so moved. Betsy A. seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

Treasurer's Report – Barbara W. informed the group that the balance currently stands at \$8,340.00. Money was spent between this meeting and the last to pay expenses approved for Berkshire Busk (\$2,000) and to renew the membership with the Chamber of Commerce. Money given to Berkshire Busk will go directly to pay performers. Laura B. asked about the Berkshire Visitors Map opportunity Betsy A. had previously brought to the group's attention a few months ago. Normally 500K maps are printed but they were reduced to 100K this year due to COVID. The group may have missed the current opportunity to be included. Prices to buy an ad range from \$540 to \$165 (i.e., double box: \$540; single box: \$380; ½ box: \$245; highlighted location: \$165). The ad could be the group's logo and a website link. Robin H. shared after speaking with Mary that the logo could also be put on the map to show where the GCD is located. Betsy made a motion to move forward with an ad buy at the ½ box size. Neel seconded. All were in favor. Separately, Betsy A. shared that the owners of Warrior Trading offered to create signs for the group for free. Ed A. was in favor of exploring this.

LRRP Project – Laura B. alerted the group to the GB Local Rapid Recovery meeting taking place at 5 p.m. over Zoom that evening to share results from the diagnostic phase of the LRRP. She will be sharing data and results of the GB business survey and starting to talk about sample project ideas to gather community input.

Berkshire County Cultural District Collaborations ArtWeek Berkshires, Sept. 16-26, 2021
– Laura B. confirmed that ArtWeek is happening. There is a landing page up on Berkshire.org

for all activities but it is not yet populated. 1Berkshire is partnering on regional collaboration and supporting promotion. Individuals and organizations can make submissions to participate using their form, however Laura confirmed this is not a juried event and that the form is being used solely to promote participants on social media. If an organization has something it would like to do during that time, they should talk to Laura B. and Karen W. If an organization already has something happening during that period, it can become an ArtWeek event. Open studios and solo shows are also strongly encouraged. Laura B. shared a link on GB's social media and a newsletter that goes out. Ed A. will mention the event and share the link at the upcoming Town board meeting. There is an August 6th deadline for submissions.

Berkshire Busk Update – Seth K. updated people about a 6 p.m. Zoom pitch contest that evening hosted by E4All at which Berkshire Busk will be a contestant. Tourism dollars will be directed to the winner. Seth will forward an email to those who wish to attend and vote. Relatedly, Betsy A. shared that there had been a jazz band playing recently on Railroad Street and that they had had a positive impact on local gathering. Ed A. said that the town has moved quickly to respond to new opening directives and that Railroad Street will be thinned out for outdoor dining beginning Memorial Day weekend.

Lamppost Banners Project – Neel W. stated that he has received about 60 submissions for banners with 50 viable candidates, 25 of which are from middle-school students. Five are from graduates of Monument High School. Massimo Mongiardo, a professional artist and Monument High alumni, has submitted. Participants range in age from 13 to 33, many are graduates from Monument. Neel W. is waiting for three more submission. He is waiting to form a committee to make the final selection. Richard L., Robin H., and Jeff G. will be involved. Voting will take place by Monday or Tuesday. There will be 24 banners in total, but images could be different on each side; the committee will need to decide on this, with recognition that light can make design travel through according to Betsy A. Banners are planned for 30" x 36" and will be double-checked before printing. Images that are 40" x 30" will be fine so long as there is room for text. Production is expected to take from two to three weeks according to Larkin. The likely deliverable timeframe is before the 4th of July. Neel W. will ask for contact information for child winners to get short bios. A smaller committee will decide if there will ultimately be 24 images or more.

The final dimensions will be 30"x 36." There is a two-week turnaround for production. Selections will be made by a small committee rather than the full Steering Committee. Volunteers from the last session included Abi R., Jeff G., Barbara W., Robin H., and Jeff C. Robin also asked for Richard L. to be included.

Additional Live Music Updates – Talya L. provided information about a group of folk singers who walk the Appalachian Trail performing concerts at various locations. The group had to postpone their 2021 series due to AT restrictions. Their planned date for 2022 has been announced as June 19, 2022. Talya noted, however, that she is frequently approached by musicians who would like to perform in the area's smaller venues, but she is unable to help them with booking. She asked if there are other places or people to which she can send them. Berkshire Busk would not be appropriate due to their size and pricing. The Select Board Office through Amy and Carmen have a Master List of locations. Seth K. stated that the Cultural

Council handles many of these kinds of performance. There is currently limited funding to pay bands. Seth K. noted the VFW was doing a summer concert series, as well, but whether musicians were being paid was unknown. Chris R. suggested the Farmer's Market as another option. The Barn or private venues are another option suggested Robin H. Ed. A. noted Flying Church is still available for rental. Wylie G. noted that private concerts in people's homes might be another way to provide musicians with performing options. A solo musician charges \$400 and then \$150 for each additional musician up to a quintet. Musicians potentially could be sent to the Flying Church (Paul is contact) as is St. James Place. There is not yet a C of O, however, for the Flying Church. Wylie G. noted that connecting musicians/performers with Cultural Districts in nearby towns might also be helpful to them to generate opportunities for revenue and cultural exchange. Laura B. will share contact information with Talya L.

Chris R. noted that it would also be helpful if the group re-started its previously shared Google calendar so that groups know what one another are doing and do not double-book activities/events/performances.

Website Updating – Chris R. suggested that the GBCD website is out-of-date due to some businesses having closed. To that end, Chris asked if the Steering Committee could review the website to identify any edits that are needed. Following that, the group should compile a list of changes and send in a single email to Beth to fix.

Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at 9:46 a.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, June 17, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom.