

## **Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District Minutes of November 17, 2022**

Members in Attendance: Robin Helfand, Seth Keyes, Ed Abrahams, Carli Scolforo, Kris Kanter, Sally Michael Keyes, Betsy Andrus, Jeff Gagnon, Elissa Haskins-Vaughan, Jeffrey van de Visse (new member)

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

Not Present: Talya Leodari, Richard Van Lê, Barbara Watkins, Karin Watkins

This meeting was conducted by remote participation as stated on the agenda. Quorum was reached at 9:01 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes of 9/29/2022 budget meeting minutes** – Ed A. made a motion to approve. Jeff van de Visse seconded. There were no objections. The minutes were approved.

**Welcome/Introductions if needed** – The group held a round of introductions of new member Jeffrey van de Visse and existing members.

**Treasurer's Report** – Chris R. shared that there had been no new activities since the last business meeting in September. We most recently paid costs for ArtWeek advertising, 1Berkshire membership, and a small cost to Silo Media. There is \$3,523.00 available in the account.

**Bills to Approve for Payment** – There were no pending bills to approve.

**October 6th Annual Stakeholder Meeting Debrief** – Existing chair Seth K. and new co-chair Kris K. both felt the meeting went well and were appreciative of BRPC's support. New attendees and Jeffrey van de Visse deciding to join the committee were noted as the meeting's successes. Ed A. presented the 2022 Annual Report to the Select Boar recently. They were appreciative of the information.

**Social Media Strategy for Fall 2002** – The ad-hoc subcommittee met and had a good conversation and came up with a rough scope of work and shared drafts of a potential solicitation and quote. Chris R. and others wrote the short description of the consultant role. Carli S. provided helpful input regarding the amount of work and parallel funding needed to secure talent. The solicitation was not yet shared publicly but will be soon on social media and could be added to the December e-newsletter. Carli S. is not allowed to apply for the role because she was involved in the group's discussions.

**MCC FY23 Reporting / DEIA Statement** – Robin H. discussed the potential of the group adopting a DEIA pledge that could involve taking DEIA training and pledging to adopt DEIA principles in its work, as had been done recently by the CDC of South Berkshire (see <https://www.macdc.org/macdc-racial-equity-pledge>). The suggestion is aligned with MCC's focus this year as it asks cultural districts as part of a consolidated application process to be more explicit in reporting its DEIA activities and ADA compliance. Chris R. noted that the increased

\$15K budget would easily allow for training or programming around this topic and to ensure compliance in our visual and online materials. Jeffrey V. noted the difficulty of living up to such pledges using the example of the lack of ADA accessibility, using the example of his own radio studio via two entry stairs. Laura B. shared the idea of making reasonable accommodations through electronic, virtual, digital, and related media and technologies when possible. Jeff G. offered potential resources around web access (User Expert Program through the Institute for Human-Centered Design and WGBH's Accessible Media Program that could potentially be consulted). Laura B. noted the national and international Web design standards that we could ask Silo Media to use to audit the work they did on the website's design and identify potential corrections. Laura B. asked Robin H. to share her suggested DEIA training/pledge materials and/or for others to do the same so they can be discussed at the next meeting. We can also reach out to Carolyn Cole at MCC to identify best practice examples. This could be a topic for the next newsletter.

**MCC FY23 Reporting Check-In: Business Openings/Closings** – Byzantium is closing at the end of January. Two Flower, a coffee shop with a full bar, is opening around December 1 after having been closed since July/August due to staffing issues. The former Subway location may be turning into a restaurant.

**Events/Businesses to Highlight in December Newsletter** – For the next newsletter and going forward Wylie G. shared the idea of highlighting a local artist each month. Seth K. would like to highlight the Holiday Arts Market and Holiday Stroll which affects all of downtown. The stroll is 12/10. Robin H. noted Liam is doing a holiday quest that can be highlighted. St. James Place has a lot of holiday concerts coming up – Berkshire Lyric, Crescendo, Aston Maga, etc. Betsy A. can send photos. Wylie G. suggested adding an archive of past newsletters to the website so they can be searchable and adding different tabs to the Visit page so that it can be further differentiated. Robin H. suggested adding a news/press page to post positive GB media. Wylie G. also noted the calendar link on the website is not functioning as well as it could because it only links to the FB page where the annual meeting is displayed but little else. Chris R. shared the history of the calendar link and what has worked or not in the past. Laura B. suggested groups add us as FB co-hosts for events so that the calendar link is more active. Kris K. supported the value of a calendar for promotion. Betsy A.'s Southern Berkshires calendar promotes member events through their own searching of events and ones members share. Chris R. suggested this calendar task could fall to the social media consultant.

**Adjourn** - The meeting ended at 9:40 a.m.

**Remaining 2022 Steering Committee Meetings, all at 9 a.m.:**  
December 15