

Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District Minutes of February 17, 2022

Members in Attendance: Ed Abrahams, Betsy Andrus, Jeff Gagnon, Robin Helfand, Kris Kanter, Seth Keyes, Sally Michael Keyes, Talya Leodari, Abi Rollins, Barbara Watkins, Karin Watkins

Also Attending: Laura Brennan (BRPC), Chris Rembold (Town of Great Barrington), Wylie Goodman (BRPC), Jackie Kain, Tim Newman, Philip Orenstein

Not Present: Jeff Caminiti, Eugene Carr, Richard Van Lê, Stacy Ostrow, Neel Webber

This meeting was conducted by remote participation as stated on the agenda, called to order by Ed Abrahams at 9:01 a.m.

Minutes of January 20, 2022–Seth K. made a motion to approve the January 20th Meeting Minutes. Barbara W. seconded. There were no objections or abstentions. The January 20th Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Barbara W. reported that the group recently paid Silo Media \$50 for edits to the website and \$96 to Constant Contact, which serves as the e-newsletter platform. This leaves a 2021 balance of \$1,448. DTGB CD has received funds for FY22 from MCC in the amount of \$7,500 but cannot spend them until they receive the contract. There is already committed \$2.5K to Berkshire Busk that was agreed on by a vote of the Steering Committee. Payment is also due to the Chamber for 2022 dues in the amount of \$260.

Lamppost Banner Temporary Re-Location – Ed A. talked to Carr Hardware about relocating the banners to their wall. They are willing to do that. There could be two rows of 12 banners each (24) attached with grommets (2 per banner). It will cost a maximum of \$1K to put them up according to Larkin. The Town is unsure about using Town money to put up the banners on private property. They are scheduled to go back up on the lampposts after the W E. B. Du Bois banners come down in early March and stay up until BIFF (June). They will then be replaced by flags on Memorial Day then put back up after Labor Day at the end of the summer. Betsy A. noted that when driving up Railroad Street, the banners are hard to see. Laura B. reminded the group that they have allocated money for installation already at \$1.2K, which assumes multiple installations and removals. After discussion of options, Karin W. made a motion to see what was involved in putting them on Carr Hardware's property using volunteer labor and then seeing if the group likes it. They can then be taken down at the end of the summer or left there permanently. There will still be 5 on Railroad Street. Larkin has insurance and a permit for work. Insurance at Carr would be handled by them. Chris confirmed that the banners at Carr will be called public art not signage so no permit will be needed. The motion was seconded, and all were in favor. The motion passed.

Guest Presentation/Discussion Richard Stanley could not be here to discuss live music at the Triplex. Put him on next meeting.

New Business Welcome Letter– Laura B. included a copy of the revised New Business Welcome Letter in meeting materials for today's meeting. Ed and Seth approved the letter as co-chairs. Laura shared her screen showing with which businesses have received letters. shared. Robin H. shared additional stores she went to (e.g., Barrington Outfitters, Fluff, Steam, Depart). Ed A. went to Heart yesterday and will go to the kitchen/remodeling retail store next to it (JRC Remodeling – Ed A. will send Laura B. their contact information). Jeff

G. went to Pixie Boulangerie and the Photo Gallery, the second of which was closed; he will go back again. Kris K. was present representing Railroad Street Collective. She has postcards but doesn't have a sticker. Kris K. provided letters to Depart Wine and Green Branch, which is going to open soon. They are near the River Walk entrance next to Walgreen's. Jeff G. volunteered to visit Shire Glass. Chris R. will bring a stack of cultural district stickers for Kris K. to distribute. Ed A. will provide a letter to Mama Lo's BBQ (in building where Steam used to be; they will open next month) and The Prairie Whale.

DTGB Website - Silo media was paid recently to addressing non-working links and code issues that have now been fixed.

Downtown Wi-Fi Status Update - There is nothing new to report on Wi-Fi. Ed A. asked if anything should be done to move this along. Chris R. said there was an email exchange about this yesterday and today and thus is in process. Tim N. said there may be an update soon as part of a Zoom with the partners including Cyber-Connect.

ArtWeek 2022 - Laura B. shared that the group had a good start on its first planning meeting, at which all the Cultural Districts were represented except for North Adams, which has a vacancy on staff. The collective budget for this year is \$5K. The event will run 9/15-9/25. Chris R. is the GB representative, but we would like to have a second person. Kris K. offered to volunteer. Kris K. and Laura B. will speak more in a follow-up call to talk. Jackie K. may also be able to participate; she stayed on the line after the meeting to speak with Laura B., Ed A., and Chris R. More people are better to help, however due to the size of the planning committee and the fact that most of the work falls to the artists putting their work on, the lift is not as large as it may seem. This is an impactful county-wide effort.

Social Media Management - The group discussed how to best tackle this subject moving forward in the busier season. In the past they have worked with interns from different sources. Robin H. has the contact from Miss Hall's Horizon's Program, which she will share with Laura B. They have done social media for Robin in the past. The Williams College Center for Learning in Action is another option. Chris R. has had a Town intern provide help not just for DTGB but for the Town overall. Wylie G. suggested the group put together a job description for the group's expectations for what this person should do.

Business Openings/Closings - Recent New Stores Include:

- The Library (skateboard shop) - Kris K. will provide letter
- Second "head shop" on Route 7 near tire shop; name TBD - Kris K. will provide letter
- Momma Lo's BBQ (restaurant) - Ed A. is providing letter
- The Elm (restaurant) at 20 Railroad - opening date TBD

Jeff C. has told Laura B. that upon a change in ownership at 20 Railroad Street, he would likely step away from DTGB CD involvement. Ed A. will confirm that with him. Karin W. noted that the group will then not have restaurant representation, which would be a loss. Ed A. suggested an invitation be made to the new owner taking over from Jeff. Josh Irwin from Moon Cloud could also be a possible replacement. Ed A. will reach out to him as well.

March Newsletter - Wylie G. discussed potential changes to future newsletters to keep them engaging but also not spending so much time writing them as in-depth. A review of data shows people may not be clicking on links as much as we would like to, so time spent on that may not be wise. Ed A. suggested Wylie G. come back with a recommendation about this. She suggested that maybe having the group provide her with examples of newsletters

they do read and like to provide ideas. One idea could be more videos. Robin H. suggested profiles of Berkshire Busk performers as an idea. Karin W. noted that feeding more content to Wylie G. to support each organization's marketing would be a helpful pivot.

Adjourn – Ed A. made a motion to adjourn at 9:35 a.m. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 17th at 9 a.m. via Zoom.

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

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

