

**Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District
Minutes of June 5, 2020**

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

Members in Attendance: Ed Abrahams, Betsy Andrus, Jeff Caminiti, Jeff Gagnon, Robin Helfand, Kris Kanter, Seth Keyes, Barbara Watkins, and Karin Watkins

Also attending: Chris Rembold, Laura Brennan (BRPC)

Not present: Kate Burke, Tate Coleman, Talya Leodari, Casey McShain, Bridgette Stone,

Karin called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

Minutes of 5/8/2020 meeting. Ed moved to approve, Robin seconded.
Roll call vote: All were in favor.

Updates from committee members/organizations regarding reopening plans

Karin said One Mercantile is building a downtown website which seems it might duplicate our website. Karin will reach out to them to coordinate.

Karin said the Mahaiwe is not reopening yet, but they are developing some outdoor events including a possible drive-in movie series at Simon's Rock.

Seth said Saint James Place is still closed also, but that some tenants are inquiring about streaming performances from the site.

The farmers market is in operation, and despite some initial issues with traffic flow is running well. There was discussion about retail reopening. Kris said the Arts Market is not yet open but is waiting for Phase 2. One craft vendor did participate in the farmers market because they were selling masks.

There was a discussion of the Phase 2 of the state's reopening plan. Karin, Robin, Betsy and Jeff C. all had input about outdoor dining. Venues include sidewalks on Castle Street, closing some or all of streets including Railroad Street, the movie theater plaza area. Robin said there are conversations ongoing about maintaining the tables, etc. Chris said the Town is open to these ideas and the Town Manager will be updating the Selectboard soon.

The Committee discussed using its budget to promote the re-openings and encourage people to come downtown. This might be a series of boosted social media posts. Laura will work with Joe Grochmal on this. Betsy said she will be taking photos and can share them.

Ed moved to reallocate our \$500 that was reserved for the Art Week billboards, for promotions to promote the reopening including retail, outdoor dining and events. Robin seconded.
Roll call vote: All were in favor.

Robin said the local realtors have been promoting the Berkshires, and she suggested we ask them to be more active on this Committee. Ed will talk with Lance Vermeulin about this.

Website: Feedback on new Cultural District website.

Laura said the live website link has been sent out and so far there have been a few positive responses, with a couple of corrections to physical addresses as listed on the site.

Betsy will send out the notice again via the Chamber's e-blast, and will include our Cultural District logo for organizations to place on their websites with a link back to ours.

Discussion of creative projects to inspire and benefit the community – any further exploration of ideas discussed on and since 5/8 among committee members.

In previous discussions it has been noted that this Committee does not have a production role, or capability. Robin said Ken Roht may be able to fill this role for a short period of time, perhaps the summer. Jeff G. suggested through Labor Day. The idea is that Ken could produce weekend downtown events including music outside.

There was discussion of the Committee budget for paying for this. Chris said there is \$3,900 left for the calendar year but \$900 should be reserved for other items. Chris will check the Towns "celebrations" budget, but there is a spending freeze in place for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Robin will ask Ken how much this would cost. The Committee will meet again next week on the 12th to consider a proposal from Ken.

Other Business

None

Citizens Speak

None

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Next meeting: Friday, June 12, 2020 at 9:00 AM via Zoom

