

Minutes – April 18, 2022 -- Portsmouth Arts and Nonprofits Committee

Russ called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM.

Members in attendance: Russ Grazier, Courtney Perkins, Robin Albert, Larry Yerdon, Councilor Kate Cook, Genevieve Aichele, Nihco Gallo. Remotely: Barb Massar, Renee Giffroy, Tina Sawtelle, Beth Falconer, JerriAnne Boggis, Ben Van Camp. Not present: Martha Fuller Clark, Jason Goodrich.

Non-members in attendance: Sean Clancy, Stephanie Seacord (recording secretary)

In the absence of a quorum, minutes were not approved.

AFTA Update: Robin reported on the Apr 14 Q&A session. Though there were not as many attendees as hoped, that may be because others have done the AFTA survey before and felt they had no questions. But there were some new people.

Robin, Renee and Lauren will be participating in the AFTA training on Apr 21, then will conduct training for the participating nonprofits on May 12 [location?]. Arts Committee, etc. encourage to call the AFTA Committee with any questions.

New this year: the survey is offered on paper (which the organizations must compile with cover and report) and digitally via a QR code (which are tabulated automatically). The survey must be answered in person, on-site. Data will be collected between May 1, 2022 and April 30, 2023.

Russ noted it's important that the organizations on the committee are prepared to conduct the surveys as the highest number of their performances with live audiences take place in the next 6 months. We're hoping for strong reporting in May-Sep so there's no need to scramble for data in Nov-Jan when holiday demands interfere.

Councilor Cook asked if the basic information would be provided before the May 12 training so organizations could start surveying as of May 1.

AFTA reports that the financial data reporting from each participating organization is simplified. Many participants had difficulties in providing information that was out of synch with their fiscal years.

GoOut Marketing Campaign Update (Ben Van Camp): Campaign is ongoing. Expect the first monthly report by May 16.

Digital ads and Google AdWords were focused on supporting Restaurant Week and will shift to the GoOut campaign. Because the target audience for these is outside the area, we may not see the ads.

Cultural Plan Update: Actively involved in creating a Plan committee and determining best practices/best process to do so. Russ asked if maybe a small technical committee of 2-3 Committee members might form the working group to report to the full committee.

Met with Howard Altschiller at Seacoast Media Group, involved in the 2002 Cultural Plan and interested to be involved again.

Next step: identify and formalize members of the working group to create a call for community participation: not exclusively arts group executives but a broader base so all voices are heard and a true community plan is the result. How big is the committee? 16-20 last time, but volunteer bandwidth is limited. City has identified funding for the plan – is a coordinating consultant included?

Meet once a month for the duration of the 2-year plan timeline (aligned with the current City Council term)? 2002 Plan took 4 years but this one might be faster, with the framework in place. Just as the 2002 Plan came out of what had started on the arts scene, this Plan will come out of the collaborations generated by the pandemic. Nihco noted it's very inspiring to feel the impact of their work. More confident in the state of the arts after the 20 intervening years.

Robin suggested a smaller group could engage with the consultant to create a process that would include the wider community. (2002 Plan Focus Groups involved 60 people.)

Barbara agreed: “Start small and go big.” Participants in that group must be committed, can’t miss a meeting. Think we need guidance on how to proceed.

Russ suggested the logical path is to secure the City funding to bring in a consultant – as happened with the GoOut Marketing effort: 3-6 months of funding to launch the process.

Councilor Cook reminded the Committee that the Council approved the Cultural Plan project and gave the City Manager authority to identify available funding. She is happy to serve on the working group as the liaison with staff and Council.

Russ suggested that the Committee and Councilor prepare and issue an RFQ for a project consultant with the City to vet applicants within 2-3 months.

Larry noted that the steering group can ensure representation by different cultural components and work with the consultant on a plan to identify all the stakeholders, then bring that plan to the Arts Committee for review.

Russ: we can work with SMG to reach a broader base, using their online reach to get responses through print inserts and digital forms. Nihco offered the idea of using the outreach of the marketing campaign, but then realized that campaign is not directed “to Portsmouth.”

Genevieve noted the importance of involving the young people who will be fulfilling the goals of the new Cultural Plan in 20 years, as this group is realizing the 2002 goals.

Robin emphasized the important of having an inclusive group of stakeholders.

Genevieve commented on the new opportunities of social media and the geographically widespread audience experienced in livestreams. Who is our arts community?

Russ noted that Ellen Fineberg and Chris Dwyer are both willing to provide feedback.

PNH400 could serve as a rallying point for listening groups and collecting visioning data for a 5 or 10 year cultural plan. Ask PNH400 to send someone to the May meeting.

PNH400 Legacy Committee Update (Barb Massar): The way to be recognized as part of the 400th is to complete the program application. That gives you permission to use the logo as an official PNH400 partner. Partners receive the marketing toolkit. Suggested incorporating a line in press releases and other marketing materials: “X is a proud member of Portsmouth NH 400” to keep it in people’s minds. Signature 2023 Events: June 3 Parade & Riverfest. Aug 28 Community Dinner. Sep Air Show (announced late June 2022.) Additional events: June 15-19 Black Heritage Trail Juneteenth Festival.

ARPA Funding Update: Nicho’s artist grants included in the Arts & Nonprofits Committee recommendations for using ARPA funds on the arts. Extending the marketing campaign – under the specific guidelines for the use of funds – can emphasize the post-pandemic effort to build audience confidence to return.

Current marketing campaign focused on awareness not individual brands. Still challenging to project 2023 plans – hard to project fall 2022 plans.

Other Business: Discover Portsmouth is now open. Bring your rack cards.

NEXT MEETING: May 16, 2022 at 12 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.