

Minutes – February 27, 2023 -- Portsmouth Arts and Nonprofits Committee

Russ called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM

Members in attendance:, Russ Grazier, Genevieve Aichele, Larry Yerdon, Councilor Kate Cook. Remotely: Barbara Massar, Robin Albert, Renee Giffroy, Beth Falconer, Ben Van Camp. Not present: Jason Goodrich, Tina Sawtelle, Nihco Gallo, JerriAnne Boggis, Martha Clark, Courtney Perkins. Also attending, co-chairs of the new Cultural Plan Subcommittee: John Mayer and Karen Rosania

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

August, October, December 2022 and January 2023 minutes remain held over for approval.

AFTA Update (Robin Albert): Audience Survey

- We're at almost 800 but encourage organizations to continue. More audience data will be valuable
- Lauren Rosen may be available to administer surveys at your venue. lrosen2015@gmail.com
- Surveying can continue through May (Extended deadline.)

Organizational survey (financials, etc.)

- Will be sent to 50 organizations in Greater Seacoast
- We do not think a "training" is needed for this work.
- Organizations **can and should** do the Organization Survey even if they did NOT participate in Audience surveying.
- You may have already received your link from AFTA via email.
- MUCH easier than in the past. Smaller orgs. might take 5 minutes. Bigger nonprofits - 20 minutes or so.
- These are due March31, and we'll probably get a report mid-way on how many organizations have completed it.
- Brainstorm: What will be the best ways to get organizations to participate??
 - We'd like to send an email "plea" signed by Karen Conard and Sean Clancy.

Roll out of data:

- Data will most likely come in October/November
- Randy Cohen from AFTA will visit Portsmouth to present findings on Thursday, 1/11/2024

Russ recommended the Committee make direct contact with leadership of the organizations they know and encourage them to take action. Barbara noted that given the transitions in many arts and culture organizations it is important to explain how useful the data that results from the survey is in seeking grants, donors and other support.

Robin commented that Loren is available to assist in surveying.

The data will be available in the fall so that collateral can be produced in advance of the January programs.

Cultural Plan and Subcommittee

Reported on progress to date:

- a) Defining participants as artists/makers including arts/history organizations, residents, happy to have the 2002 plan co-chair.

- b) Timeline: The goal is to have an updated plan by Dec 2023. While this is ambitious, the subcommittee benefits from the pro-arts culture in the city and on the City Council. Might be an aggressive timetable compared to other communities but the project is beholden to the life of the Arts & Nonprofits Committee and to the timeline of the City Master Plan. Arts co-chairs have discussed with City Manager the possibility of a March 2024 deadline.
- c) Purpose: The discussion right now is too broad/too early for a statement of purpose without input from the committee, but draft is: “The purpose is to lead the process in creating the next Cultural Plan by soliciting and engaging a diverse group of stakeholder input and ideas across the broader community to guide the subcommittee.”
- d) Best practices and other plans: The possible scope in developing a cultural plan can be overwhelming; there is no guidebook and We’re learning about resources both national and local. Have observed that the 2002 Cultural Plan is largely aspirational with limited responsibility, timetable or resource allocation. Subcommittee has reviewed plans that fall into two categories: those where an arts agency is charged with realizing the vision, building stakeholder buy-in and implementing an action plan and more aspirational community plans. We believe the Cultural Plan is a really important element to funnel into the process for the Master Plan.
 - o Identifying needs to create the Plan in order to form subcommittees, such as defining the scope of work for a consultant RFP.
 - o Larry – use of the word “culture” vs. “arts” ensures organizations like Strawberry Banke are included. John Mayer noted an assignment for the Subcommittee: what are the key words and definitions for “culture” and “cultural planning.”
 - o Genevieve – emphasized how important the culture of the City is but suggested a deeper dive on what worked in the 2002 Cultural Plan and with ArtSpeak which followed, and what didn’t. Plan should implement process for execution and accountability – a structure that’s sustainable and will allow the Cultural Plan to continue.
 - o Robin suggested asking AFTA if there are resources such as benchmarks for comparable-sized cities.
 - o The Subcommittee is seeking NH State Council on the Arts, Creative Commons workshop, Nashua plan. Boston Creates.
- e) Meeting with other organizations – have to have appropriate engagement and explore every way to leverage input from the community. A quality plan requires comprehensive community input. PNH400 year might be challenging or may afford more opportunities.

Other “pain points”? Don’t know the budget, framework for the project (the what) or the who (will write the plan). Also how to distill the data quickly and efficiently – surveys, listening sessions, interviews, communications strategy. There is strong buy-in from the subcommittee members. Determined from the start due to the aggressive schedule that if a member misses 2 meetings s/he would be replaced by an alternate.

As AFTA work winds down perhaps that subcommittee can assist with the Cultural Plan? The June Arts & Nonprofits Committee will be a joint meeting with the Cultural Plan subcommittee. This is the biggest goal for this group.

Meeting adjourned at 1 pm. **Next meeting, Monday March 20 at 12 noon.**