West Concord Junction
Cultural District Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Harvey Wheeler Community Center Lecture Room

Members present: Harry Bartlett, Lisa Evans, Margot Kimball, Ann Sussman, Jen Montbach, Kate Yoder (acting chair).

Members absent: Carlene Hempel (chair)

Visitors: Marcia Rasmussen, director, Planning and Land Management, town of Concord, Jane Obbagy, Director, Concord Chamber of Commerce.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes approval: The minutes from the October, November, December and January meetings were unanimously approved.

Updates on walkability efforts with WCAC and 13b discussion: Ann Sussman present her findings and recommendations from the three walking tours that she conducted over the past two months. Ann will attend the WCAC meeting and present her recommendations for sidewalk improvements and areas of evaluation to West Concord more conducive and safer for pedestrian traffic.
- Bradford Street and Commonwealth intersection; broken sidewalk to mill in Cultural District.
- Sidewalks leading across train track are uncertain;
- New fencing at rail trail at train station impedes access to train and crossing to go to Post Office and sites to north;
- Interrupted sidewalk access to Brookside from Commonwealth Avenue;
- Unsafe crossing at Church Street to Commonwealth Avenue.

Ann also presented “Front Door” guidelines and the need to extended the “good district” front door past the 5 & 10 to cross the 13b lot. The need to restore and maintain the narrative of the West Concord district as a furniture manufacturing village. Creating tophilia, a positive and unique sense of place; making people happy, also considered the “love of place.”

ArtWeek planning: Jane Obbagy said that someone from town government had been in touch with her to display an electric car; the committee decided that it did not want to be involved with the placement of the car and suggested that the town get in touch with the businesses to work on placement of the car during the week.

Jennifer Montbach and Margot Kimball presented their plan for gathering artists at Art Gym to make a custom painting to be used for the tile project.
There was a discussion about what mediums the participants use to make the tiles. Margot will create kids and directions to be distributed to the groups with the tiles. 128 – 8” x 8” tiles will be created to make a finished piece of artwork that will be 4’ x 8’. Marcia Rasmussen has resources to help fund the purchase of the tiles. Margot will provide Marcia the list of materials needed for to place the order. Jennifer will give Marcia the document to be printed. The committee determined that it will be best for the first year of the event to keep all activities on one day, Saturday, May 4th, 2019.

Kate Yoder presented the Bluegrass Band Scramble event that will take place at the Concord Conservatory of Music (West Concord Union Church). The band scramble will begin at noon, CCM faculty member Ian Goldstein will give a lecture on the origins of bluegrass music and its culture around 3:15 pm. There will also be a instrument petting zoo that afternoon for the community to learn more about acoustic instruments. There may be a kids bluegrass jam present by a group from the Boston Bluegrass Union. The final concert presenting the band scramble participants will take place at 4 pm and is free and open to the public. We are also trying to get a band from Berklee College of Music to perform at the concert.

The is currently to publicize the ArtWeek around town with 4” x 6” postcards and posters. Erin from the town will publish the Facebook posts.

Update on RFQ for our consultant project: Marcia Rasmussen announced that the consultant has been picked and gave the schedule for when the surveys will be conducted. They will be planning an event to facilitate meetings and surveys. There will be a public meeting in April and the plan will be presented in May.

Preliminary Porch Fest brainstorming: Jennifer Montbach has been doing research to Porchfests in other communities around the state to learn best practices. She recommends that we keep the scope of the event within easy walking distance within the West Concord district, a loop up towards the Central Street side of town. She has put up a preliminary website for the event, WestConcordPorchFest.org. Dates in September were recommended, September 21st is preferred.

Next steps include reaching out to local bands and ensembles; reaching out to homes in West Concord to host bands; creating a map for attendees; and publicity. The role of the Cultural District Committee to is be a match maker between the homes and the bands.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Next meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 5, in the basement Lecture Room of Harvey Wheeler Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Yoder