

FITCHBURG CULTURAL COUNCIL
MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCT. 18, 2022
LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

In attendance: Tamar Russell Brown, Audrey Pendleton-Chow, Eileen Berger, Joshua Klaus, Liz Murphy, Shara Osgood, A.J. Tourigny, Joe Bowen (*ex officio*)

Call to Order: Tamar called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Public Comment: Ward 6 City Councilor Derrick Cruz addressed the council about a public sculpture project. Cruz explained he knew a local artist who wanted to create a life-sized human figure out of oak, depicting the effect of artificial intelligence and automation on the future of humanity. Cruz was seeking input and discussion on where the installation could be erected, given there will be noise during its creation.

Joe said he had also been in touch with the artist and was exploring possible sites, though finding an appropriate site has proven challenging.

Liz asked if the site would be where the sculpture was permanently situated, or simply for manufacture. Derrick replied the artist was flexible; first priority was an indoor manufacturing site with appropriate power and noise tolerance. Liz suggested the artist contact Mary Jo Bohart in City Hall.

Josh suggested industrial park in West Fitchburg may have possibilities.

A.J. suggested a rendering - if available - could help in soliciting sites.

Shara asked if the artist had a budget in place for renting space, but nothing was shared. Derrick said

Sean Gallagher (seangallagher.info/creatures) is the artist.

Tamar suggested reaching out to Redevelopment Authority. Derrick had been in touch with them and said suggestions were made for vacant school properties.

Tamar said she would support the council writing a letter of endorsement for the project. Liz said she would follow up with Derrick as well.

New Membership: Tamar welcomed new members A.J. Tourigny and Joshua Klaus. Tamar asked A.J. if he would be willing to serve as secretary and he agreed. Motion by Eileen, seconded by Liz, nominating A.J. as council secretary. Unanimous approval.

Treasurer's Report: Liz shared local funds currently stand at a combined balance of \$3,473.21 (which does not include funds that have been collected electronically for Bazaar or Open Studios). Tamar advised that two student artists will soon be awarded \$500 checks, which will leave \$2,473. The FY2021 grant fund has been zeroed out, with remaining funds transferred in August to FY2022 grant fund. \$23,512 remains in that fund, of which \$2,300 can be reserved for administrative purposes. Grants to be paid out for FY2022 total \$19,881. Unexpended funds can be channeled to FY23.

Grant Coordinator's Report: Eileen said she is trying to close out reports for FY2021 but is still awaiting final reports from a small number of grantees. She has also been in touch with grantees who never collected their awards (which means money will be left over).

Shara addressed the council about amendment to her FY2022 grant (#5431), which originally involved painting a basketball court at Lowe Park. However, given the site will soon be altered by renovations, she asked to amend the project to be a chalk art festival for a project that will serve the neighborhood. She will seek to involve local community groups. She asked for the council's approval to redesign the project and extend the deadline to late spring 2023.

Audrey asked about location, and Shara said it would still be at basketball court at Lowe Park.

Audrey noted art week was late April to early May, so that may work as a time for next spring. She said the original proposal - a mural - is not dissimilar from the new plan which would still be public art at Lowe Park.

Shara told Eileen the budget will exceed the original grant but she is searching for additional funding sources.

Josh asked why the project wasn't a new application for FY23 cycle. Shara said she considered reapplying or returning the funds, but was encouraged to seek an amendment. Josh asked about tabling the project and having her reapply for the full amount. Joe noted there is latitude for extensions, and several grantees have been given leeway. A.J. noted a new application would have to be treated in the context of all other grant requests. Eileen said she appreciated that Shara had solicited wider community support for the project.

Eileen moved to accept extension and modification of grant, seconded by A.J. Unanimous approval, with Shara recused.

Tamar noted the grant deadline had been extended 24 hours by the state.

FCC Events: Liz shared the Winter Bazaar will be held at City Hall from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 3. Outreach will begin soon to attract vendors. Exhibitor space will range from \$10 to \$15, with the majority of vendors kept indoors. Fees are being kept low in acknowledgement that exhibitors will need to get their hawkers/peddler licenses from the city (or state). Paperwork will be part of the event website. Josh suggested using social media to help promote. Liz advised that setup will begin the evening of Friday, Dec. 2 and continue Saturday morning. Audrey also suggested press releases or interviews with local radio and FATV to promote the event.

Tamar thanked the council members for their assistance with Fitchburg Open Studios in September. A wrapup meeting was scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 22 to discuss how it went.

Audrey said the Creative Meet and Greet the night before Fitchburg Open Studios was also successful. Tamar thanked Thirsty Robot Brewing for their hospitality for that event.

Grant Meeting Schedule: Tamar asked if Fitchburg State could print the grant application books once again (along with finding a meeting room on campus or at the ideaLab) and suggested the first grant meeting would be held third Tuesday in November (4:30-6:30 p.m. Nov. 15) with remaining meetings scheduled after that.

Audrey asked that FATV be considered for the grant sessions as well. Eileen said she would be uncomfortable being candid in a televised setting. Tamar and Joe noted that all deliberations are public as the council is a municipal entity. Josh suggested the applications could be considered in executive session in terms of the open meeting law. Joe said city or state guidance could help determine if that was acceptable. Audrey noted that meetings have always been public, though only in recent years has FATV recorded the meetings. Josh asked that expert guidance be solicited so sensitivity could be considered. The discussion continued for several minutes about whether an executive session could be appropriate for grant review.

Vote: Approve Prior Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve meeting minutes from Tuesday, Sept. 20 by Eileen, seconded by Josh. Unanimous approval.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 5:24 p.m. by A.J., seconded by Shara. Unanimous approval

Submitted by Matt Bruun