

Newtown Cultural Arts Commission

Minutes of October 6, 2022 Meeting

These minutes are subject to approval by the NCAC, at the next meeting

The Newtown Cultural Arts Commission, held a meeting on Thursday, October 6, 2022 in the Community Center.

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 PM by Commission Chairman Laura E. Lerman.

Members present: Laura Lerman, Andrea Spencer, Roger Connor, Tracy Van Buskirk, Grant Ossendryver, Robin Lynch, Jen Cebry, Daniel Ferreira

Members absent: Robert Kaiser

Auxiliary members: Jim Cebry (Treasurer)

Members of the Public: Linda Parsloe. Dina Sabia

1. **Minutes:** It was moved that the minutes of the September 1 2022 meeting be approved: moved by Tracy, seconded by Andrea. At Andrea's request, there was clarification of the minutes regarding the CAC grant. Specifically, the total grant CAC received was \$7,400 and we previously voted to divide it equally between the Festival website and CAC website, so \$3,700 for the CAC website. The total cost of the CAC website was quoted at \$3,749. Of our \$3,700 grant, we paid Nancy Cole \$500 for the logo, leaving \$3,200. Therefore, a motion was requested to allocate up to \$500 towards the CAC website. With this clarification, the minutes passed unanimously.

2. **Officers' Reports:** None

3. **Treasurer's Report:** Jim noted that the grant proceeds were deposited into the gift fund (our regular checking account), of which he has paid \$2,400 so far for the website build and \$500 for the new CAC logo. Laura noted that the web development contractor, Diana LeRoi-Schmit had asked to be partially paid upfront, but because of anticipated delays in getting a check cut from the town, she agreed to start working without pay and then receive the entire amount from the town in due course. Jim also said that we are now paying the monthly rent again to the Congregational Church in support of the Weaving Club. Jen Rogers collects rent from the participants and remits it to us. During COVID, many weavers did not attend the meetings and the church accepted whatever the club could pay. We are now back on the regular schedule of \$225 / month.

4. **New CAC Website:** Discussed above.

5. Newtown Arts Festival Re-cap: There was a lively discussion about the art festival. Everyone complemented Barbara Snyder on the excellent job she did as Chairperson. Synopsis of the discussion:

- All attendees seemed happy to be there, so many smiling faces. The circus feature and science tent were complimented.
- Dina said the front gate ran smoothly. Payments via Square were a big hit. A few people asked for Apple Pay and Google Pay but Dina said it was expensive to have that feature. They could use one more register to keep the lines shorter. There were \$2,800 in pre-sold tickets on Ticket Leap. Having iPads at designated locations would be good. Some attendees wanted to give a donation and Dina is wondering if it is possible to add a donation button on the Square app.
- One volunteer offered to hold a dog while the owner went in to get food. This was above and beyond what we would expect of volunteers. This led to a discussion about volunteers: Daniel said maybe we should send an email to volunteers outlining their responsibilities. Jim and Jen said they were very short of volunteers for grounds work and traffic control. Younger volunteers would finish a job and then wander around. The consensus is that we need a dedicated volunteer coordinator who can reach out pro-actively to other groups such as Lions, Boy Scouts and Police Auxiliary to get enough workers. Jen said that on Sunday, the police required two volunteers at the road intersections by the grounds which we had difficulty manning. Robin asked if the dance school kids could volunteer but Jen felt that what we really need is more adults. She noted that the ambulance came three times and having more adults around is important.
- Tents: Daniel noticed that not many people were sitting in the chairs in front of the band stage, but instead were at tables under a tent. He asked about adding in a shade tent or bringing / expanding the eating tent closer. There was some discussion about liquor and that the town is very strict in requiring controls on “traveling alcohol”. If liquor is served close to the stage, minors would not be able to be there.
- Activity Tents; Robin praised EverWonder and said that Meredith donated supplies in kind. Discovery Museum was not prepared, did not bring supplies but EverWonder covered for them. This is the second year Discovery Museum was a disappointment so they will not be asked back. EverWonder might be able to expand their time at the Science Tent, or we could get another organization. Tracy said that the Make and Take Tent was very busy all weekend.
- Revenue: although we don’t have a head count on attendance, Jim said revenues were approximately \$59,000 and net profit was about \$11,000 excluding the Friday night concert.
- Vendors: Most feedback from vendors was that they were happy with the layout and sales. Brookfield Craft Center had a blacksmith demo that produced lots of odiferous smoke near the Dance Pavilion and there were

multiple complaints about that. It was decided to not invite that demo back, but the wood turning demo was great. Robin mentioned that Hunter Art Glass does a glass blowing demo.

- Admin Tent: Grant said this was a great new addition to the festival. He enjoyed manning it and seeing the joy of the attendees. He also noted a lack of overall management of the volunteers. They could easily be coordinated out of the Admin Tent. Grant suggested remote speakers located about the grounds to be used to announce activities, lost kids etc. Roger said that Norcom could donate walkie-talkies in return for signage. It was also suggested to swap the locations of the Front Gate tent and the Admin Tent to help funnel people through the Front Gate tent as they left so they would walk by the merch.
- T-shirts: Andrea loved working with Signature Print House (Newtown based) and all agreed the quality was excellent. The change to the new Volunteer T-shirt format was good because it can be used year to year and we don't have to wait for the names of sponsors before going to print.
- Food Trucks: 2 out of 10 cancelled at the last minute so variety of food was impacted. Andrea said it is always hard to get commitments and this year was especially hard. Post COVID, many went out of business and supply chain impacted ability to do repairs on their trucks. It was suggested that we should have one person dedicated solely to the food trucks, it's too much work for Andrea given all the other things she does.
- Friday Night Concert: Gross was \$11,400 but with a very expensive act (Amy Helm), we were break even at best. It was suggested that maybe we should go back to doing our own Friday night concert and have a local band with a local following.
- Beer and Wine Tent: Excellent! Saturday sales were the best ever. Net profit of about \$4,000.
- Next Year: it was agreed to have the Festival Sept 22-24 which is a week after our regular weekend but that date conflicts with Rosh Hashanah. In addition to all discussed above, we also need to address: How to choose the art work next year, find a Chairperson, how to include other Not for Profits ("Art of Community" tent?) and if we should involve Park and Rec since they don't do Newtown Days anymore. Jen said we should make sure there is an article in the Bee about the festival and our need for a new Chairperson and volunteers. If we can obtain another State of CT grant next year, it could be used to pay for a clerk to do some of the time-consuming tasks.

6. **Scholarships and Grants:** No update.

7. **Public Participation:** None.

8. **Community Center:** No update.

11. **Municipal Gallery and Artisans' Showcase:** Julia Sikes-Provey is in the Gallery and local Newtown authors are featured in the Showcase.

12. **Other Business:** Tracy Van Buskirk has resigned from the CAC to pursue other volunteer activities. Laura thanked Tracy for her years on the Cultural Arts Commission. Tracy said how much she enjoyed it and will miss her friends.

Daniel moved and Roger seconded that we adjourn. No discussion. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by

Tracy Van Buskirk
Secretary
Newtown Cultural Arts Commission