Minutes of the BRC on Arts & Non-Profits, April 5, 2021

Russ called the meeting to order at 12:03.

Committee members in attendance: Russ Grazier, Barbara Massar, Tina Sawtelle, Robin Albert, Bill Humphreys, Larry Yerdon, Jason Goodrich, Beth Falconer, Renee Giffroy, Kathy Somssich and Nihco Gallo (by phone). Also attending were Nancy Carmer, Stephanie Seacord and Laura Brown.

Larry made the motion and Robin seconded to approve the minutes. The motion was passed unanimously.

Nancy Carmer announced that any organization that is applying for a Shuttered Venue Grant can ask the City for support with recommendations, etc.

Tina (with Beth, Jason, Nihco) provided a summary of the survey results. This is a brief overview:

60 artists responded

1. Resuming fairs and festivals; reopening performance venues.
2. Financial support for artists in form of grants to hire artists, free parking, affordable housing.
3. Support with marketing, posters.

14 organizations responded

1. Felt very supported by the City.
2. Would like more collaboration between organizations.
3. Would like a centralized event calendar and coordinated marketing campaign.
4. Felt the City was consistent in their safety guidelines.
5. Designated consumer confidence as their biggest concern.

481 patrons responded

1. 90% plan to attend outdoor events.
2. Majority will attend with families and "Bubble Buddies."
3. Majority are looking for 75% of the population vaccinated before feeling safe.

The sub-committee will evaluate written comments and categorize comments.

In view of the survey responses regarding outdoor venues, Russ wondered if the city has enough outdoor space and venues to meet the need of the community and questions what indicators the community needs to feel safe.

A conversation followed regarding broader marketing to tourists. Nancy Carmer stated that the City is working together with the Chamber to promote the Reopening of Portsmouth.

A conversation regarding a centralized website with an event calendar mentioned Matt Kanner's PortsmouthNH website and an event calendar produced by the Chamber. A collaboration with Matt Kanner was suggested. Duplicating what is already available or reinventing the wheel should be avoided.

It was suggested that Matt Kanner and Valerie Rochon be invited to this committee to consult on event calendars and a coordinated marketing campaign for venues and events.

Russ stated that organizations want to lead patrons to their own websites.

Laura Brown reminded the committee that she is involved with Portsmouth 400 and that Portsmouth400 could help with a centralized event calendar.

Russ asked committee members to dig deep into the survey results, think about where the committee goes from here and bring ideas to next week's meeting.

Tina reiterated that the emails are confidential and respondents' personal information is not included in the survey.

Barbara: the barricades have been placed and painting is ongoing, indicating a positive sign that Portsmouth is reopening.

Stephanie reported that New Hampshire is #3 in the U.S. for distribution of the vaccine. 40% of the state has received at least one dose.

Jason hopes that a "creative corridor" can be created from the Foundry Garage to Downtown Portsmouth to make the journey into town from the parking garage more attractive, safer, and more widely used.

Robin reminded the members to bring any information regarding their organizations to the Discover Portsmouth Center for distribution to visitors.

The Hit the Decks event is May 10-14 and can be used to promote organizations.

Russ adjourned the meeting at 1 pm.

Submitted by Kathleen Somssich