Minutes – June 7, 2021 – Mayor's BRC on Arts and Non-Profits

Russ called the meeting to order at 12:01.

Members in Attendance: Russ Grazier, Barbara Massar, Tina Sawtelle, Jason Goodrich, Robin Albert, Beth Falconer, Courtney Perkins, Renee Giffroy, JerriAnne Boggis, Martha Fuller Clark, Kathy Somssich.

Also in attendance: Ben VanCamp (Chamber Collaborative), Stephanie Seacord (Public Information Officer), Valerie Rochon (Chamber Collaborative) Nancy Carmer (Economic Development Manager).

The motion to approve the last meeting's minutes was made by Jason and seconded by Courtney. The minutes were approved unanimously by rollcall vote.

Russ reported on the progress of creating a universal arts calendar together with Matt Kanner's PortsmouthNH.com and the Chamber's GoPortsmouthnh.com. PMAC is already in the process of creating an outward link to PortsmouthNH.com. A Facebook post with PortsmouthNH.com as a co-host can automatically link to the events calendar. As the survey showed the public's desire for a universal events calendar, all venues should make a concerted effort to link their page to PortsmouthNH.com and GoPortsmouthnh.com.

It was suggested that the link should live on the city website's Community Development page and include information about where and when street musicians will perform and which streets are affected by street closures.

It was noted that some venues such as 3S and Discover Portsmouth Center have events every day that would overwhelm an events page. Monthly announcements were suggested for venues with rotating exhibits.

Russ hopes to open the door to a reciprocal relationship that benefits all of our organizations by using what already exists.

Ben VanCamp is concerned that most of PortsmouthNH.com's events are not in Portsmouth. GoPortsmouthNH.com is only for members of the Chamber Collaborative.

Russ would like to continue this topic with offline conversations on how linking our organizations with event calendars is working.

Nancy Carmer gave a Power Point presentation about the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), what it means for the city and how we can have access to funds. Portsmouth qualifies as a "Metropolitan City" and as such is allocated $12.88 million in two installments. The funds must be allocated by 2024 and spent by 2026. Arts and Culture is considered a "hard hit industry" and can receive funds. How we apply for funds will be clearer after tonight's city council meeting.

The application process has to go through the federal Treasury portal. City staff would like to divide the funds into various pots. Capital projects will be considered first, followed by arts and culture.

Beth mentioned that County funds are also available.

Nancy feels the best way to apply is to explain how the arts community was most impacted by COVID. She advised listing the top 3 projects that were impacted.

The city's challenge now is how to distribute the funds equitably. Reports regarding the projected outcome and how it was achieved must be submitted through the city to the federal government.

Russ suggested we look at what we can do that has a multilayered effect on the community, for example Portsmouth400, in order to jump start the economy with the arts. Right now we are in a holding pattern.

Nancy will email information to committee members on funds being allocated to other NH counties.

Russ stated that ARPA has made it possible for USDA to deliver grant funding to disadvantaged rural areas, including towns of less than 50,000 population, for which Portsmouth could qualify.

Valerie informed the committee that the Chamber spends approximately $250,000 (in a non-COVID year) on destination marketing, including direct print, digital, radio, paid and unpaid social media, and television advertising; public relations; the Visitor Center and Market Square Kiosk.

Russ thanked Valerie, Past President of the Chamber Collaborative, for her service to Portsmouth. Valerie predicts that as Portsmouth has become a culinary destination, it will also become a destination for Arts & Culture.

Senator MFC sees a revitalization of our streets through our arts & culture to be discussed at a meeting with Nancy.

JerriAnne spoke about the Juneteenth celebrations that will feature a series of programs. The programs go from June 17-19 and include workshops on Black history and genealogy, a concert, keynote address, Ancestor Reverence Drumming and Dance. www.blackheritagetrailnh.org

Sen. MFC made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Jason seconded and the motion passed unanimously with a rollcall vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:04pm

Submitted by Kathleen Somssich

Stephanie emailed a link to the committee: Logos and calendar links posted:
https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/community-events-calendar

Barbara forwarded an email to committee members: Webinar Recap of ARP State and Local Government Block Grants and SVOG Update.

Valerie emailed the Chamber's June enewsletter to the members of the committee. It goes out to 16,000 Friends of Portsmouth on a monthly basis.