

Greenfield Crossroads Cultural District Minutes – November 18, 2020

Present at Zoom meeting: Rachael Katz, Caitlin von Schmidt, Linda McInerney, Christy Moore, Steve Hussey, Steve Goldsher, Hillary Hoffman, Gretchen Green, Sandy Thomas, MJ Adams, Sarah Kanabay (enters late) Amy Timmins (enters late)

Meeting called to order at 6:08 p.m.

Linda makes a motion to approve the minutes with the single change of fixing the spelling of Anita Fritz's name; Caitlin seconds, minutes approved unanimously.

Continuation of discussion from last meeting of possible grant projects for the district. Rachael think that BeeFest continues to be a good target, we can help the organization. She attended the meeting.

Sandy Thomas gives some background on BeeFest, which has been around for ten years. There's a slideshow of BeeFest images. There has been an intentional focus on bees, Lorenzo Langstroth, and bee education. They have also worked to involve local businesses. Their interest remains with the event on the lawn of the Second Congregational Church, they don't have the infrastructure to expand beyond that. Their biggest concern in working with us is keeping the focus on the bees.

Because of people's timetables, conversation switches to MJ Adams and the possibility of a BID (Business Improvement District) in Greenfield. A document re. BIDs was sent to members prior to the meeting. A Downtown Study will be released, probably this month.

Rachael needs to leave at 6:30; Linda takes over to run the meeting. Amy Timmins joins.

MJ also explains there's some funding in CDBG to update the downtown master plan.

- The Master Plan Implementation Committee is taking a leadership role
- Many groups could be involved including our own, the Greenfield Business Association, the Downtown Neighborhood Association, and the Progress Partnership.
- Linda asks if the city is pro BID; MJ says the city hasn't really discussed it yet.
- How would the Progress Partnership fit in? No answer at this point.
- MJ explains that even without a formalized BID, the city can choose to implement parts.
- Linda says the city has reached a critical mass, we need a person who actually takes this on, for instance a city employee. She thinks the PP could spearhead a conversation re. a BID. MJ says they're just starting the discussion.

Resumption of grant conversation from earlier.

- Caitlin asks will it really work? Can we do what we discussed at the previous meeting without interfering with BeeFest?
- Hillary remembers we talked about developing a plug & play system for future events; could we use that to address the concerns?
- Amy (from BeeFest Committee) says she missed the start of the meeting, what are the sticking points? Linda explains some of our ideas. Amy says there are many things that can relate to bees like honey, flowers, recipes. The parade has always been a kids' parade around the common. She thinks there are ways we can merge and mesh.

- Sandy says they're not trying to be unreasonable, they just want to keep the focus. Can also bring in other pollinators too. They will have coroplast bees with sponsor names all over downtown like the GBA does with the holiday lights.
- Linda checked on parade info, she knows an artist who wants to write a GLCC grant for a parade.
- Caitlin talks about the importance of keeping the virtual part of the event and planning for the possibility that we still have COVID restrictions.
- Sandy says they have a person with a garden business and graphics background who will do a website with a garden map that people can use on their own.
- Caitlin wonders if we could do something with BeeFest with half the grant money rather than all; we don't want to take over the event. We could try to do something containable that could go remote.
- Linda wonders if we could do something with the Rec, like a drive through the Cultural District on the model of the Halloween event at Highland Park. Hillary doesn't like the idea of a drive-through as it doesn't help the businesses. She's concerned about spending a lot of time on something that might not happen.
- Christy reminds us that Energy Park is downtown. Linda wonders if we could do stations in downtown in store windows and Energy Park.
- Sarah agrees with Hillary that we need to involve downtown businesses.
 - Could we do a COVID-safe business tour? A sort of pollinator map of downtown businesses where people could follow the shape of a typical pollinator journey? "Be the bee!"
- Linda suggests, what if money is set aside for John Bechtold to work on a virtual map in conjunction with Sandy's map, a treasure map of businesses. Sarah suggests there could be a prize at the end. It could be inaugurated at BeeFest. Eggtooth Productions has invested in a "skinned" app where users use headphones to be taken on a journey.
- Caitlin is all in for that idea because it ticks so many of the boxes.
- Steve Hussey says the more businesses we can involve, the better.
- Christy agrees it's a great idea, and can be used in different kinds of businesses.
- Amy says they did a kind of scavenger hunt idea in stores; she likes the idea that users can also find out about history & pollinators, etc. while going into businesses.
- Hillary says it also gives a way to build art into it, gives visual interest.
- Steve Goldsher says the women from Exploded View did something similar in the Pushkin with stamps, etc.
- Linda says she and Sandy would have to work together to get info for John B.
- Sandy says that back in the day, with the GBA and the Historical Society, they blew up old photos (for store windows) and people loved it.

Linda recaps idea: we could hire John Bechtold to curate a GPS-triggered audio walk and she would work with John and Sandy and get Eggtooth actors to narrate, work with schools to get kids to make bees to display downtown, store owners could come up with a favorite flower for map and possibly have something to give out, to debut during BeeFest.

- Steve H reminds us we need to get kids involved, make sure it works for kids.
- Linda says there would be audio for the general public and stores could have something for kids
- Amy wonders if there's any way to partner with the schools, maybe as part of science class
 - Sandy says they did some work with Julie at Federal Street School
 - Caitlin says when the GBA involved all elementary schools in making bees, they had the most people ever for a downtown event because families wanted to find their kid's bee.

- Hillary cautions against using treats or toys for kids' giveaways. Others concur.
- Linda asks if Christy can help with the schools on the bee project. Steve H could also possibly help through his connection to the Tech school. Also, he reports ArtSpace's teen show is in May.
- Caitlin suggests instead of hanging bees in trees as before, they should be displayed in windows of businesses and empty storefronts.

Steve H moves to accept the idea Linda recapped above re., hiring John Bechtold, Hillary seconds plan as presented. Members vote unanimously to accept.

Caitlin asks if we need another motion to vote on the expenditure; yes. Linda asks John Bechtold what the cost will be.

Caitlin moves to adjourn; Steve H seconds. Meeting adjourned at 7:06.