

ARTS COMMISSION MEETING

April 5, 2017

Attending: Mayor Joanne Yepsen, Chair Sue Kessler, Lance Bell, Joel Reed, Beverley Mastrianni, Ameyo Amyot, Devra Cohen-Tigor, Dee Sarno, Ria Curley and guests Ryan Van Amburgh, SEDC and Cecilia Frattelli-Lockwood of Textile Studio.

- Chair, Sue Kessler opened the meeting at 6pm and introduced Ryan Van Amburgh, Economic Development Specialist with SEDC who gave a quick overview of a project they are working on to launch a business incubator space in Saratoga Springs:

Proposed Incubator Space in Saratoga Springs:

- Communities across the country, including locally in Schenectady, Glens Falls and Troy, are developing incubator spaces.
- The SEDC wants to launch an incubator space to help early stage start-ups for small businesses. They want to keep artists in the loop. Artist needs and wants are important. Saratoga needs to capture and retain talents in all endeavors.
- SEDC is looking at physical spaces between 5,000 and 10,000 sq. and they hope to secure something within a year and in the future launch a mentorship program.
- The goal is not to compete, but to collaborate. SEDC states that we are all interconnected!
- On April 12th there will be a special presentation about this incubator endeavor to be held at the Bow Tie Cinema in downtown Saratoga Springs. There will a movie presentation, "Generation Start-Up," and a Q & A with local entrepreneurs. Additional information will be mailed to the commission members.

Vote on Updated By-laws

- Sue Kessler introduced Belinda Colon, a new member of the Art Commission. Belinda is Associate Director and Gallery Manager for Spring Street Gallery and volunteers for Beekman Street, Arts Fest Fridays and several other organizations in town. Sue also reminded members that Jack Hyndman and Bill Finlay have resigned from the commission. "We will miss their input."

Vote on Updated By-laws

- Sue Kessler distributed updated by laws for discussion. The members of the commission found most of the updates fine, but did have some concerns about Section II that described who the members of the board were. There was a concern that some artist genres were not clear.
- There was no vote taken and Sue Kessler will rework the section of concern and report back to the full commission at the next meeting.

Gold Star Mother's Monument Proposal

- The commission received a letter from the Federated Garden Clubs of New York in Saratoga Springs. They are in the process of placing a Gold Star Memorial plaque in Saratoga County and were interested in some place in Saratoga Springs. The plaque would be placed on a rock.
- The Garden Club was interested in placing the rock plaque in High Rock Park.

- The commission had concerns of too many monuments and/or rocks filling up High Rock Park. Overall the committee felt the Gold Star Mother's Monument was a worthy endeavor, but is not an artistic project and not a task we should take on.

Re-establish Committees

- The commission felt strongly that our designated committee structure has to be looked at and fine-tuned. Commission felt it was important to reframe the committees.

Three topics were suggested:

1. POLICY ISSUES & PLANNING

Create a Master Art Plan (Very Important)

2. PARTNERSHIPS & CULTURAL EXCHANGES

Local, Regional and Global

3. CREATIVE ECONOMY

Incubator Space, Venues, Artists, Businesses

- We will visit this issue at the next meeting.
- Sue Kessler will distribute a committee structure proposal before the next meeting so that the commission can focus on assigning committee members and setting goals at the next meeting.

Partnership with Nashville

- Mayor Yepsen voiced concern about young people leaving our area after high school and college. We need to keep them engaged and show Saratoga Springs as an area that entrepreneurs and recent graduates would want to live in. Mayor wants Art Commission to make a difference!
- The Mayor has been in contact with Jennifer Cole in Nashville who is interested in some kind of exchange with Saratoga Springs. Something like the Sister City Exchange in Russia. The Mayor has talked with Joel Moss who lives here and in California. He's very involved in artistic endeavors and is interested in cultural exchanges.
- It was suggested we look at Burlington and Woodstock who have active arts communities. It would be worth exploring their programs.
- We will continue to follow-up on cultural exchanges, particularly with Nashville – perhaps with a joint concert?

Beekman Street Arts District

- Ameyo Amyot introduced guest Cecilia Fratelli-Lockwood from Beekman Street area and they discussed some concerns regarding Beekman Street.
- Beekman Arts went into a bit of a lull, but artists are coming back.
- There has always been an understanding that Beekman Street had been designated as an official arts district. But now more business is coming in and less space is available for artists.
- It's important to have creative partnerships between artists and business.
- It was suggested that the Commission send the Planning Board a letter to support the fact that Beekman Street should remain a designated Arts District.
- The Beekman Street Business Association is creating a letter and Ameyo will send a copy to Arts Commission for background information.

Miscellaneous

- Mayor's office gets a lot of arts questions. Should a Commission Member be in charge of the arts questions?.
- Who is in charge of our arts material, lists, grants, information, etc. Where does the material live? This should be discussed in conjunction with the new committee structure.
- The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm. All in favor!

- Minutes submitted by Dee Sarno