

Wakefield Cultural Council

Sunday, March 21, 2021 at 2:00 pm

Meeting Location: Virtually Through Zoom setup and posted by Town of Wakefield

Members Present: Caroline Lieber, Kathleen Cain, Sarah Guerin, and Colleen Getty

Members Apologies: Jamie Hale, Andy Levine

Agenda Item #1: Approve Meeting Minutes from last meeting

Discussion: All received after completed. No changes needed.

Action: Minutes were approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #2: Wakefield Cultural Council Name Change

Discussion: After attending a webinar hosted by the Mass Cultural Council back in Feb 2020, Colleen suggested the council consider changing the name from Cultural Council to Arts Council. All is needed is the approval of the municipality.

- Sarah said we had a lot of confusion with the word "culture." It sets a better tone for the future to change to "arts."
- All agreed and the members voted unanimously that it would be a better name. Even the member of the public who attended the meeting was in favor of the change.
- Sarah and Caroline both mentioned that the town was going through a rebranding currently and so if we are approved for a name change, can we also ask if this would be good timing to be included in the creation of a new logo that is in keeping with whatever new requirements are being created for the branding of various town committees and councils. All agreed this made sense.

Action: Colleen agreed to reach out to the town to ask for the permission and what was involved or needed from our council. Also, to simultaneously ask the town that if we change the name can/should we also be part of the new rebranding and have a logo to be associated with the council. Will copy Caroline on the email.

Agenda Item #3: New WCC Chair

Discussion: Caroline introduced a revisiting of the topic of her term expiring and therefore the need for a new chair. With one year left in her term it makes the most sense for the council to transition while she is still among its members and can be present to pass the torch more easily onto someone new rather than having it thrust upon them suddenly after she leaves. We all agreed this was ideal, but Sarah is unable to commit at this time, Andy is not planning to renew for a second term (as mentioned in a prior meeting) and Jamie was not present. Kathleen did not want to commit to the responsibility, but agreed to keep it in mind.

- Caroline started to outline some of the responsibilities that come along with the chair position.
- Sarah felt Kathleen would be a great fit for the position.
- Colleen agreed that Kathleen would be a great fit, but understood the hesitation—suggesting that perhaps the first year would be more like a co-chair commitment since Caroline would still be on the council and able to help out.
- Caroline finished by stating that the chair responsibilities can be as much or as little as the council prefers. When she started there was minimal commitment, but the council has expressed a desire to grow our presence in the community and be more visible, so that could increase the responsibility, but all is adjustable.

Action: The group decided that we will take a wait and see approach to see if Kathleen's schedule allows her to commit to working together with Caroline on the chair post. Also, we will see what new members come join the WCC when/if the Town Council approves new WCC members who have applied to begin their terms in the next month or so. Our group gives a thumbs up to all the applicants that were put forward by the town.

Agenda Item #4: WCC Local Art Initiatives

Discussion: Caroline introduced the topic of how our council would start to help promote the arts more and become more visible in the community. She asked if anybody had ideas.

- Colleen suggested the Festival by the Lake might be a good venue to have a table to engage with the public, to help them better understand what the WCC does but also to get feedback from them about what our priorities should be.
- Sarah suggested the Farmers Market as another good venue to have a table at to help spread the word and get feedback on priorities as well.
- All agreed that it made sense to try to attend some town events and become more visible and that those venues would serve as good opportunities to get feedback from the public on what our priorities should be.

Action: Kathleen agreed to contact AnneMarie Gallivan to find out if they are allowing nonprofits at the Farmers Market this season (due to Covid changes). Colleen will provide any updates on the Festival by the Lake since she attends it for The Room to Write.

Agenda Item #5: Grant Reception

Discussion: Caroline asked the group what they thought of having a grant reception of any kind this year—even if just virtual. She mentioned that she had found a link on the Mass Cultural Council site that was helpful and included all there was to do with a reception and all the details to think about. It is under the "Grant Cycle" list on the site. She mentioned if we do a Zoom reception the upside may be that more people can attend.

- Colleen was in favor of a virtual event. Maybe grant recipients can offer up a 2-3 minute intro or description of what their grant supports. As far as when to plan it, since we normally plan our in-person event the night before the AP Art exhibit at ACE perhaps it makes sense to try to schedule it close to any art events going on at ACE or if the AP students are doing anything to piggy back on that as a way to maximize awareness of both events. She mentioned to be aware of any senior graduation or events that might fall on a Wednesday (but probably not likely:).
- Caroline mentioned the AP was doing a show and that perhaps we can pair with that. She saw that normally we have it on a Wednesday night, so with the group's permission we'd shoot for that same timeframe vs a weekend.
- Sarah suggested that we could ask recipient if they would like to display art or perform music, etc like we encourage at our in-person receptions
- Kathleen asked a little about what the usual reception looks like and so the group explained a few general details about what we have done in the past for in-person receptions: food, drink, music, and the big highlight: High School AP Art exhibit. She mentioned that May 19th was a library event, so perhaps avoid that date.
- Diana Kennedy (member from the public, but possible new member of WCC) mentioned that Wednesdays were tough for her but she may be able to make it work.

Action: Caroline agreed to email Chris Carino and Joy Schilling to see if there were any events to pair with when scheduling our grant reception date and a way to mutually help highlight events.

Colleen will put together a press release about the grant reception and grant recipients once the details of any virtual reception are figured out, so we can include it in the press release.

**** Attached below are some notes from the Feb 2020 webinar so they are easily accessed here in the minutes for future reference. These were not all discussed during our meeting, but Colleen sent the information out to members as an FYI:**

- *Some cultural councils refer to themselves as arts councils (Ex: Medford & Somerville just to name two). I asked if there were any rules to this and the answer was that it was simply up to the municipality as to how they would like to be referred to. As we were just talking about the confusion for members to join the cultural council, I thought we may want to seriously consider changing our name to Wakefield Arts Council to minimize confusion in soliciting new members and keeping them, but also in terms of being more clear of our mission for the public to understand.*
- *We can design our own logo and this may help us to stand out more. We would first want to discuss the idea of changing to "arts council" before that, but it may be worth considering creating a logo once we do that is used consistently so the community can more easily identify what our group does and supports.*
- *We can use part of our 5% administrative allocation to purchase a banner (once we design a logo) so that we can display it at events like the grant reception and any public appearances we decide to do in the future. This may be a good idea.*
- *We can use up to 15% of our allocated funding to create a community project or festival. There were some interesting ideas and it may help us to have a stronger presence in the community. It also helps to build and strengthen the relationship with the DPW and parks departments as well as the local governance. I believe there is a specific person on the Town Council who is a liaison with us.*
- *Some councils have jars with various priorities listed above them at their grant receptions and ask people in attendance to drop a ball (or whatever) in the jar that they want to see a priority. Also, they use a poster and give participants post-it notes to apply or make comments. This may be a great idea for our May reception to start to get input from the community in addition to any more structured paper or online survey.*

Next Meeting: Unscheduled currently, but one will be planned to finalize details of any reception and to meet any new members that join by then.

Minutes Prepared By: Colleen Getty