

Hingham Cultural Council

Meeting Notes

May 17, 2016, 7:00 pm

Town Hall, Hingham, MA

Present: Trish Baggott, Leah Godfrey, Marlie McManus, Jean Roberts, Sonia Steele, Janine Suchecki

The meeting was called to order. Janine introduced Sonia Steele, new member of the Hingham Cultural Council, whose official start date was 1/7/16.

Marlie reviewed the meeting minutes from January 12 meeting. Janine moved to approve the minutes and Leah seconded.

Cultural District Proposal

Two Hingham residents were in attendance: Vcevy Strekalovsky and Rebecca Wetzel. Vcevy and Rebecca introduced themselves and informed the Council that they had asked to meet to explore the possibility of instating a Cultural District in downtown Hingham. They provided some history on their involvement in Hingham to date, indicating that they had been a part of a group called Hingham Arts Commission – an entity that saw hoped to develop Hingham into a resource for the country, much like Hingham Heritage Museum. “We try to bring about opportunities within Hingham” for public art, i.e. the Lincoln Memorial. They relayed to the Council that efforts became political and eventually dissolved. Most recently, Vcevy and Rebecca appeared at Town Meeting in search of support for seeking a Cultural District designation for Hingham. The idea was tabled at Town Meeting.

Vcevy and Rebecca asked the Cultural Council if they would be willing to apply for this designation through the State. Discussion followed about the benefits and process for receiving this designation. Vcevy distributed a packet of information about cultural districts and what is involved. Marlie asked what benefits a town enjoys from this designation. In addition to building awareness for town cultural attractions, Vcevy replied that it gives a town clout, status, and opens up grant opportunities. Marlie asked about defining the “borders” of the district and inquired about how Scituate went about their designation. Janine raised questions about how this affects Hingham’s designation as a Historic District and whether that presents a conflict. Janine then consulted the State’s website for clarifications (http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/applications/culturaldistricts_guidelines.asp). It was determined that much work needed to be done before any further steps can be taken. A Cultural District requires clear boundaries, stakeholders, partnership with downtown, a management plan and an assigned 3rd party to manage the operation of the District. Janine suggested that Vcevy and Rebecca approach the HDA (Hingham Downtown Association) for input. Marlie added that the HCC may be conduit for this process down the line, after many of the questions have been answered and suggested that Vcevy and Rebecca form a committee and/or pull in more volunteers to assist them. Sonia suggested that Vcevy

and Rebecca reach out to Scituate or one of the other Cultural Districts in MA for advice on how they sought their designation and how it operates. It was decided that more research needed to be done on the part of those seeking the designation, and that all work shall be completed by Vcevy and Rebecca before the Hingham Cultural Council could become involved. Rebecca agreed to relay this to Vcevy who had departed the meeting early.

Mail

Janine reported that she had just retrieved a large bin of mail and documents that had come from Deanna Costa, the prior HCC Chair. She has been combing through it for important pieces of mail that relate to the grant process. Trish said that in order to avoid double-paying reimbursements, the mail would have to be double checked. Jean relayed that she has not been receiving email updates from the Town. Janine shared a piece of mail from the James Library in Norwell, stating that they wanted to revise the project for which the HCC has already approved a \$300 grant: instead of Books in Bloom, the Library requested funding for "Michael Tougias: The Finest Hours". It was decided that this grant revision would not be approved after determining several inconsistencies and incomplete sections in the application. It shall be noted that this \$300 should be carried over for next year's grant cycle. Janine will send communication to the James Library informing them of the denial.

Trish suggested a more formal organizational system for the mail and grant cycle going forward. Marlie asked if the Selectmen's office knew to discontinue sending HCC mail via US Mail to Deanna Costa's former home address.

Janine suggested that two members serve as co-Treasurers to work together on organization and financial matters. Jean may have to step away from the Treasurer role as personal demands are potentially increased in the coming months. Sonia agreed to take this role with Leah as co-Treasurer. Leah will work with Town Hall to see if a mailbox can be established for HCC. Sonia will develop a folder system for grant applications. Trish will work with Sonia to transition and train on the financial procedures. Janine will update MCC (Mass Cultural Council) with new titles of Co-Treasurer for Sonia and Leah.

New Member Status

Marlie confirmed that Jane Shute will be joining the Council after the formal process of the Selectmen appointing her. The Selectmen will be evaluating talent bank forms during the month of June. Jane's term would begin July 1, 2016.

Action Items:

Leah will follow up with Selectmen's office to see if the Cultural Council could have a designated mailbox as a receptacle for incoming mail that could be checked regularly.

Janine will update MCC on new officer status and mail denial letter to James Library.

Trish will train Sonia on financial procedures.

Marlie will compile agenda for the next meeting and submit to Hingham Town Clerk and secure meeting space for next meeting.

The next meeting of the HCC will be Tues Sept. 20 at 7 pm in Town Hall.