

ENFIELD CULTURE & ARTS COMMISSION

Regular Meeting – Tuesday, January 4, 2022

Via Zoom 6:30 pm

Present

Emily McIntosh, Damon Patnoe, Donna Hamre, Jennefer Ryan, Emily Clifford, Jason Neely, John Santanella, Joshua Hamre

Approval of prior minutes: Emily M. made a motion to accept the minutes, Joshua 2nd the motion. Minutes accepted.

Chairperson's Remarks

Hot Chocolate packets were distributed at the Festival of Trees. The packets consisted of a packet of hot chocolate, a peppermint spoon and Hershey kisses. The budget was approved for \$250, \$138 was spent, 97 packets were delivered to library patrons of the Festival of Trees event as well as other events held during the holiday week.

Staff Liaison Remarks

The Festival of Trees event had a smaller turnout than usual with an over all attendance of around 30 individuals. The Opera House Players did not perform. The library staff led the caroling and the hot chocolate packets were very well received.

There was no mini grant application received from the EHS Community Action class for their book project proposal presented last meeting.

Jason has sent questions to the Town Manager's office regarding the OHP representation to see if it is still necessary for an OHP Board Member to be a part of ECAC. Jason has spoken with Maya from the OHP and confirmed that anything over \$5000 qualifies for needed representation on the board. He shared the award letter from the initial grant for their information. We are awaiting a response as to how to proceed.

The ECAC 2021/2022 Budget request will be due in March. The Zoom renewal fee will be included in the budget request.

New Business

Joshua shared a suggestion that a Board of Education Liaison be on the ECAC in addition to the Town Council representation. The Liaison would be appropriate due to the talent in the schools in Enfield. John suggested getting our information out to the head of the Arts Department as well as Music and Social Studies departments. This would allow us to be more involved in what is going on at the schools and around town.

The Bandshell is a venue that is being created. The question is who is going to program that space and schedule the events?

Jen spoke about her concerns of having a Town Council and BOE led commission. Kite and the First Readers programs are already funneled through the schools. Emily M. also shared concerns about OHP and BOE liaisons. We would have 7 commission members and 5 liaisons. Emily doesn't mind speaking with the boards at the meetings and working with the schools.

Joshua would consider moving into the BOE Liaison role and that would open up another ECAC member position. Joshua was brought onto ECAC to step into the OHP spot, he sees this transition as a way to grow ECAC and its exposure. It would provide the opportunity to give updates to BOE on what is going on in the schools.

The suggestion was made to tread carefully; we are a community-based commission. We need to work harder to be sure that ECAC grants are available in the schools and to build up connections with the department heads. It seems like we already have multiple roles fulfilled. Jason reminded that we are a public meeting, if the Arts, Music and Social Studies departments leads want to attend we can add them to our monthly invite distribution.

We can see both sides. The Senior center, library, BOE, and OHP are all represented, if we continue to invite more town members it muddies the waters.

We discussed the Band Shell, would ECAC Sponsor it? As a board we can vote to be involved in the venue, to be more visible. As a Town Commission, we don't have to pay to use the Town Green. Would we be running the events? We have been asked to do big projects/ big events in the past. We are volunteers, we will support it but sometimes the ask is bigger than we can handle as a small group of volunteers.

John is a very strong advocate for the culture and arts. His excitement should not be confused with pressuring. John is putting our name out there into the community. He is here to clear the way for the things we want to do. He wants to represent a new and different way forward, not to bring any misconceptions into his role.

John asked How do we better integrate with our schools? To raise profile and visibility of ECAC commission? We can add the Town Manager and Kathy Zelesky to the distribution list. Emily C. said we can create different types of connections, departments at different schools, we can direct mini grants to specific people directly. We need to broaden our contact list to include department heads, Junior class head advisors at the high school, National Honor Society, Student Council, invite high school kids to attend our meetings. Engage schools, teachers, administrators. We would need to direct our invitation through the Superintendent's office and staff.

We need to consider what are we doing with the schools. Jennefer has concerns of ECAC becoming a subsidy for programming for the schools.

Jason reviewed for John the history of how ECAC got involved with Opera House Players and how the \$25,000 grant was disbursed.

We have a huge opportunity right in front of us. John would like to do whatever he can to help us. Enfield needs more culture.

Jason spoke about the Band Shell and Higgins Park piece. For next meeting, all members should reflect on and think about the Band Shell and Higgins Park project. We should all think about what our ideas are for what we want to do with it.

How do we want to see the integration into BOE? We should take time and think it over.

We will talk about the budget at the February meeting and members should be prepared to share any ideas for what to include in the budget. A suggestion was made to alter the amount of the Mini grant to raise it up and be more flexible, amounts not to go above \$5000.

Old Business:

The virtual concert series didn't go anywhere due to scheduling conflicts. It was a nice gesture with the best of intentions. As the Spring and Summer brought more in person concert opportunities our contacts were leaning more toward in person rather than virtual shows. There was also a struggle to find local venues interested in hosting live performances. Sage King is still interested in working with us on future events.

There are several 2020/2021 budget items that did not materialize due to COVID.

Miscellaneous:

none

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 6:30 via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 7:46pm

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Hamre, Secretary