

**TWIN CITIES CULTURAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes from January 10, 2006**  
**Meeting held at Franco American Cultural Center, Biddeford**

**Attendees:**

Tammy Ackerman	Diane Bowie Zaitlin	Paul Gagne
Pris Gagnon	Holly Hudon	Pam Johnson
Judith Kinsman	Keith Ludden	Ann-Marie Mariner
Peter Morelli	Bonnie Pothier	Leo Simoneau
Andrea Strassner	David Versel	

Meeting opened at 4:00

**Presentation on Franco-American Cultural Center**

Pris Gagnon spoke about cultural center. Center was always stated as a goal of La Kermesse and is now being realized. In last few years, organization has focused on gathering materials from La Kermesse and the history of the local French community. Room has a lot of different memorabilia, and they want whole community to enjoy the resources that they have. They next want to do a plan for using the space and making people more aware of it.

Paul Gagne acknowledged Leo Simoneau from Richelieu Club, who came to talk about what his group has given. Paul talked about wanting to get a permanent space for displaying local French history.

Many French organizations have no space and are losing membership. La Kermesse is most visible group and has become a way to organize many of the older groups in the community.

**Cultural Plan Update**

- Keith Ludden from Maine Arts Commission introduced himself and gave a brief presentation about the Community Arts and Discovery Research programs.
- David presented findings from cultural assessment summary and discussed mission statement. He then asked for further input on the cultural assessment:
  - Andrea noted name shift to “Twin Cities” as a good development.
  - Diane B. thinks that adding in creative economy angle broadens appeal of the effort beyond the arts community. Adds appeal to whole community. “Artists are included in society.”
  - Keith said that creative economy gets to notion that arts/culture support economic development in more ways—suppliers in the community
  - Pam thinks there’s been a disconnect between artists and the general public.
  - Leo asked if schools are promoting arts and culture from young ages.
  - Bonnie thinks that Crossroads, Museum, Saco Spirit, HOB are all building awareness in the community with children.
  - Diane N. talked about K-8 art show at Saco Museum, Biddeford is doing that too.

## **Mission Statement and Goals**

The previously-developed mission statement was read. The only change suggested was to change “creative assets” to “creative economy.” The new mission statement is:

*Highlighting, enhancing and sustaining the region's creative economy by promoting collaboration among the diverse communities of Biddeford and Saco.*

A goal setting session was held, with David moderating and Andrea transcribing. David asked participants to suggest goal statements that would represent their hopes about where this effort will be in five to ten years. Suggested goals are listed as prime bullets with strategies as sub-bullets, as follows:

- Community understands and appreciates history and contributions of local ethnic groups
- Artists, businesses and the general public interact and support each other
- Raise visibility of locally produced arts and culture
  - Provide a physical place/center for artists to go to display work, put on a show (could be at the mill)
- The community actively supports local arts and culture
- Environment that encourages proliferation of more arts and culture
  - Living/work space for artists
  - Marketing assistance for artists
  - Mill/studio tours that bring in the public
  - Arts map/brochure
- Build a strong network within the arts community
  - Frequent activities to bring people together—involve business/arts
  - Artists get out of their studios to meet one another and the public at large
- Schools promote arts and culture from a young age
  - Combine efforts on both sides of the river—school exhibits at both places
  - Support teachers by establishing curriculum materials for arts/culture
- Annual theme for the arts for the whole community
  - One city one book—all school study it for whole term
  - Early mill days—1850s—early French immigration
  - Ocean/rivers and the environment
  - Farmers and fisherman
  - Textile arts
  - Furniture
  - Do Milling About every year—public event in a mill building
- Continually keeping an inventory of arts and cultural resources
  - Get artists on the Internet—email network
  - Wire entire downtown for internet use—mills and downtown

## **Other Random Ideas for the Plan**

- Use mill space to construct theater scenery for Boston performing space
  - Upstairs of Potter's furniture is currently being used for storage space by Portland Museum of Art
- Production space for TV, movies, etc.

- Pris got email from woman in Norfolk—having international celebration there—organizer is from Biddeford and went to La Kermesse parade—she wants to use replica of Champlain’s boat in parade there (was built by Technology center students). Pris has pictures of it that we can use.

### **Discovery Research Update**

David asked for input on getting more people to fill out cultural inventory forms:

- Inventory artists at Milling About—give them the survey form and/or have them fill out survey at table.
- Capturing cultural/folk traditions (quilting, food, history, language)—need to call people directly
- Maine Arts commission database—do they have any in their database already? Keith will look into it.
- Compare surveys from Milling About with ones we already have—each committee member then gets five names to call people.

### **Next month’s meeting?**

Tuesday 2/7 at McArthur Library, if available.

### **Other Notes**

Holly mentioned Mardi Gras North—Sunday 1/15 potluck meeting 4PM at Heart of Biddeford to plan the event. Twenty musicians already on board. Event will be weekend of May 12-13, have booked McArthur Hall, Mulligan’s, City Theater, Riverdam Millyard, Chris Betjemann’s building, Jonesy’s, Mechanic’s Park gazebo. Matthew Doucette (fiddlemaker) will do workshops.

Meeting closed at 5:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



David E. Versel