

SACO-BIDDEFORD CULTURAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes from November 15, 2005

Attendees:

Diane Bowie-Zaitlin

Diane Noble

Ann-Marie Mariner

Don Sharland

Andrea Strassner

Renee O'Neil

David Versel

Rachael Weyand

Nora Tryon

Meeting opened at 4:10 PM.

- David updated progress on surveys. To date, 37 artists have filled out surveys. A good start, but we need to do much more to get the word out. David will try contacting the press again and make sure that the cards get passed out to more people.
- 27 public opinion surveys have been completed. Much more progress needs to be made. Chamber, Saco Spirit and HOB newsletters can be a huge help
- David updated what has been done on the plan inventory. The inventory should be completed by December, but more results are needed from both surveys before it can be fully declared done.
- Drop cards with people—Renee, Don
- Try to make appointments with Rotary—Bidd/Saco, talk to Dana Larson, Saco Bay talk to Phil Hatch
- Renee can ask Superintendent in Biddeford, I will ask Mike Lafortune, maybe PTOs too
- Christmas concerts at schools—pass out surveys and/or cards there
- Santa pictures on 11/26, 11:30 to 1:30 at Most Holy Trinity hall, 12/3 at HOB

Focus Group Update

- Three focus groups were held with 22 attendees. Notes and findings from these sessions are on the website.
- David presented the key findings from the sessions and asked for comments/input from committee.

Comments

- Renee is working at City Theater to bring in UNE-sponsored productions
- Self-image is already much better than it was 20 years ago, need to improve. Newcomers don't have that bad image—they appreciate what we have
- Two USM students are doing promotional video on Biddeford—ask Rachael
- Can we do next meeting at River's Edge, Steve Sobol also is interested in showing his space
 - Three people building live-work space in downtown Biddeford: Chris Betjemann, Kim Roseberry, Shea Ayers
 - HOB art show is going to be in Kim's space at 116 Main, 2-5 Sat 11/19
- Mutual Theater—Pepperell Bank wants to make it its Loan Department
- Shuttlebus service to UNE would be a good start, more connections would be better
- Billboard—owner of Maine Cleaners wants to do something with it
 - Could we put Diane's painting on the billboard as an "advertisement" for the cultural planning effort?
 - Who pays for it?

- It offers an alternative to MERC—ignore it, move on
- Buy up the storefronts, it becomes instant attraction
- Need better arts education—have our artists out there doing it
- Creative Council—how can it get started, how would it function
 - Neighborhood Community Development group model—have nonprofit do development projects for arts—Full City Projects would be right place to start
 - Press city to invest CDBG money in 2006
 - Can MaineArts float us along to keep the ball rolling?
 - Get Abbe in touch with local leaders about Creative Communities Initiative—can she come in January to talk at the public session?
 - Networking—essential component of it. Need to create forums and things will evolve organically
- Our area lacks the tradition of giving money to local efforts—need to cultivate culture of giving
 - Maine Philanthropy Center showed that York County has few charitable foundations
 - Our case—build on educational foundation for whole community, pursue Osher and Cohen Foundation moneys.
 - A lot of locals put their money into Portland, Boston, NYC
 - We need to be seen as “credible” and “compelling” to local donors
 - Organizations need to focus on being money generators, need to be self-reliant
 - Reny’s building could be key...businesses and artists could come together for one big space
- What is the name for the effort?
 - Key is connections—social opportunities, cultural aspect of it
 - CultureMill
 - Creative Factory Inc.
 - Cities on the Saco
 - Culture Bridge
 - Should we bring in a branding/naming consultant?

January public event

- Space—can we use museum? Or should it be somewhere else—a mill? Could we do Doug or Steve’s mills? Maybe McArthur Hall?
- Offer a Friday evening “happy hour” event at mill.
 - Try to get sponsors, don’t charge admission to public
 - Need lights and signage if at night
 - Third weekend, Friday January 20
 - Friday happy hour 4-7 PM, get SMMC to bring employees
 - Work with Chamber to make it Business After Hours-type event, have them put it in their newsletter (due December 15)
 - Get acoustic music for background—ask Holly
 - Comedian—Tim, Biddeford fireman, call Renee with information
 - Social hour, Intro, 30 minute “good & bad” discussion, 15 minute standup show, , music show, have tables around the room, not one central visioning session
 - Put a card on each table asking for people’s reactions

- Get feedback from people—have to answer questions before you get your beverages

Public Art

- Tabled until next meeting.

Next meeting is at North Dam Mill (old Pepperell Mill, 2 Main Street, Biddeford), Tuesday December 13, 3:30 PM

Get food for the meeting—tell people that it’s “holiday party”—make it a potluck

Meeting closed at 5:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



David E. Versel