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Minutes

Parks, Arts & Culture Committee Meeting

Thursday, October 25, 2018, 5:30 – 6:30pm

City Arts 4th Floor

Attendance:

Committee Members: Chair David Hartnett, Councilor Joan Shannon, Councilor Ali Dieng

Mary Danko – Fletcher Free Library, Cindi Wight – BPRW, Doreen Kraft – BCA, Zach Williamson – BCA, Kristen Merriman-Shapiro – CEDO, Will Clavelle – CEDO, Holli Bushnell – BPRW/Clerk's Office, Jane Krasnow – A Playground for Oakledge

Meeting started at 5:30pm

1. Approval of agenda

Councilor Shannon moved to approve the agenda, Councilor Dieng seconds.

2. Approval of draft minutes from August 23, 2018

Shannon moves to approve the minutes, Dieng seconds. All were in favor

3. Public Forum

No members of the public were present, and thus no comments were made.

4. Old Business

A. BCA Update on Highlight NYE Event

Director Kraft and Zach Williamson reported that programing is in progress. 18 Proposals were received and more are still coming in. Over 40 people started proposals which the organization saw as extremely positive. The budgeted amount available for programing was \$30,000, which is minimal for an event like this. BCA is looking at what the best use of the money available through the RFP process and are looking at other programing options as well. Currently they are over budget but are working to bring costs down. The goal is to achieve a successful event with a modest budget and allow the event to grow in the years to come. Their fundraising efforts have been extremely successful (\$40,000 raised on 10/19), however they are hoping to cap the amount to spend at some point.

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Williamson detailed several different proposals from varied groups at locations all over the city. There has been some difficulty working with downtown business partners as many locations have already established their own lucrative programming or events on NYE. BCA hopes that, as the event grows, more local businesses will be willing to partner with the event. The event website will go live as of 11/15 with a full list of events/programming and ticket sales. The possibility of a press conference for the event on 11/15 was also discussed.

Shannon asked how tickets will work. Williamson responded that a bracelet will get you into most places (similar to the way First Night used to work). Certain areas will offer the option to pay separately (Leddy Park for example), whereas others will have bracelet-only access after a certain time (ECHO after 5pm). Some spaces are doing their own programming but still participating in the events. Those locations will have some restrictions on the number of people allowed in with only a bracelet (individuals will have to purchase tickets after the maximum capacity is met even if they already have a bracelet).

Kraft stressed BCAs commitment to honoring the stated desire for geographic diversity. For example, there will be a parade downtown earlier in the day, but events will spread out further into both the north and south ends as the day moves on. There will be a single large fireworks show at 8pm (as opposed to the two shows in previous years). Marketing plan to be executed starting 11/15, social media and VPR campaigns started 10/25, and partners are using their own social media and marketing techniques in addition to marketing coming from BCA.

Dieng asked about faith-based groups serving free food. Williamson reported that the UU church at the top of Church St will have a youth group providing food service. BCA is in talks with the Baptist church that previously participated in First Night food service. There will also be food for sale at The O.N.E Community center.

Dieng asked if the Flynn will be participating in Highlight. Williamson reports that the Flynn will be hosting Burlington Does Broadway in partnership with the VSO and the Lyric Theater. There may be some tickets available via Highlight, but it may end up being a VIP-type ticket. Kraft asked for the committee's thoughts on a connection between Highlight and the Flynn. She has concerns that the playing field (the possibility of purchasing a VIP Flynn ticket in addition to a Highlight bracelet) will turn people off. The general consensus was that a discount to the Flynn would be a nice gesture, but not necessary. Multiple ideas were floated for ways to incorporate the Flynn event into Highlight, all of which were positively received and may be attempted.

Chair Harnett expressed concern that individuals and families with minimal economic means also be able to enjoy Highlight. Kraft reported that they are already developing options. BCA has met with donors who will potentially purchase tickets/bracelets for disenfranchised community members.

Shannon asked if Edmunds Middle School will be used. Williamson reports that it is not currently programmed, but it may be used. Kraft shared that there is the possibility of using that space for dance of some sort (either performance or participatory), however it is an expensive space to use. She went on to say that BCA is asking every organization who partners with the event to give them a little extra support (or a financial break) this year in the hopes that this will become a successful long term event for many years to come.

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B. Update from BPRW

Director Wight reports that the Council Taskforce for Seniors (recording was fuzzy at this point and context was not clear) will be staffed by Candice Holbrook from BPRW and meetings will be moving forward.

The first phase of Oakledge for All accessible playground opened 10/25, and all were extremely excited to see the progress that has been made.

Work on the north stairs at North Beach is underway. Burned and damaged stairs will be repaired and replaced.

Notices at the Waterfront concerning the bike path detour. Utilities are being worked on and for now bikes will be asked to use the path by the waterfront.

Spring 2019 will see the start of work on the Leddy Pause Place on the bike path and work on City Hall Park.

A meeting at the commission level on electric bikes is scheduled. This meeting will include the walkway council and Local Motion. There will be a speed limit placed on the bike path and will be announced via memo.

Shannon wondered if e-bikes are a good idea. Wight shared that feedback on e-bikes is overwhelmingly positive. There was some debate concerning what kinds of e-bikes will be allowed (there are 3 different kinds of e-bikes ranging from pedal assist to fully electric bikes) as well as how the speed limit will be enforced. Shannon would prefer “unnoticeable” types of e-bikes.

Harnett voiced concern that the bike path is already extremely crowded and he wants to ensure that it remains accessible to all. He would like the commission to proceed with caution and hopes to even have a public forum on the possibility of e-bikes on the bike path.

Director Danko asked if police patrol the bike path. Wight reports that there are some patrols during the day and a cart is used in the evenings. The bike path is one of the safest places in Burlington, and the only calls to police have been about fireworks.

Wight also mentioned that BPRW is looking at a parking kiosk at Leddy Park. They are just starting to research the need for parking enforcement there, but a discussion may be forthcoming.

Dieng asked about a dog bite incident that happened in recent weeks. Deryk Roach of BPRW reported that there are currently more dogs than children in the city. Dieng would like an overview of licensed dogs and regulations on dog safety. Shannon requested from Lori Olberg of the clerk’s department for reports on the number of dogs licensed in 2005, 2010, and 2018 as well as the off-leash dog report. She would like to see if the raised cost of licensing has impacted the number of dogs licensed. She wonders if the fee is too high. Kraft asked if there was a discount for multiple dogs. Shannon thought this might be a good idea.

Dieng asked if it was a choice to license your dog. Licensing your dog is required by state law but is implemented by city or town.

C. TENTATIVE: Corrections contract update

This item was not discussed.

D. CEDO update on 11/6 Memorial Auditorium

Clarification - The meeting in Contois Auditorium to discuss Memorial Auditorium is DECEMBER 6, not November 6.

A second workshop has happened since the last PACC meeting. They discussed top uses, revenue generating options, etc. They are working with Champlain College students to create a filmed tour of the building that shows the damage and the kind of work that will need to be done.

The public meeting on 12/6 will recap the information gathering process, discuss possible designs, and include operating models. CEDO plans to take a week or two to incorporate all the feedback into their proposal for the March ballot. A PACC meeting is scheduled for 12/18 for the finalized proposal and vote.

Shannon asked for clarification on the three different ground floor plans. Will Clavelle explained that it is the lower level, not the main level. The main level will continue the way it always has (a space for concerts and large events that will be modernized), but the lower level has some flexibility.

Dieng asked about the possibility of housing city offices in the building. Kristen Merriman-Shapiro shared that this option has been discussed with multiple departments and there is not a lot of interest in moving city offices into the building. Essentially, CEDO is hoping to keep the plan for the use of the building as flexible as possible. More details will be included in the operational model. Should PACC members have specific ideas they should be emailed to Clavelle. CEDO intends to further develop their plans for the building after taking into account the operational costs.

Harnett asked about a potential partnership with the private sector. Merriman-Shapiro reports that there are multiple options available for future building management, including working with a non-profit or possibly selling to the private sector. The cost for annual upkeep could be between \$100,000 - 500,000 and there is a question of how much of this burden the city wants to put on the tax payers.

Dieng had previously asked about the money that has already been put into the Memorial Auditorium project. Merriman-Shapiro reports that \$62,768 has been spent on surveys and other aspects of the development project. Including the cost of CEDO salaries the total amount spent is \$87,857. By the end of the year that number will probably be closer to \$100,000.

Harnett concluded this subject by confirming the date for the town hall meeting (12/6) and the PACC meeting to discuss the outcome of the town hall (12/18). Highlight will also be on the agenda of the 12/18 meeting.

5. New Business

A. A Playground for Oakledge

Jane Krasnow presented a history of her group, A Playground for Oakledge (Formerly Play and Engage in Accessible Places for Everyone). The goal of the group is to provide a playground space that is accessible to all children and families. There is currently no universally accessible playground in the state of Vermont. APfO is an all-volunteer group that has been working to move their goal of a universally accessible playground in Vermont forward. After a lot of research and effort they formed a partnership with BPRW.

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Krasnow reports that at least 10% of all children have challenges (1 in 7 families include individuals with challenges or limitations). The new elements of the Oakledge playground (the first pieces of which opened 10/25) are designed to be used by people with *all* kinds of issues/challenges. APfO hopes that this model will become standard for future playgrounds.

Shannon reports that she had a constituent contact her with concerns about the large amount of money the city is spending on this playground. Shannon encouraged the individual to speak to another community member who has children with limitations. The constituent ultimately came back to Shannon and shared that they thought a fully accessible playground in the city was a great idea and a good use of funds.

Krasnow showed pictures of the new swings that opened today. The entire group was impressed and appreciative of the work that had been done. They looked forward to seeing the further improvements.

Hartnett asked if the Parks Foundation was participating in the development and implementation of APfO's plan. Wight reports that the Parks foundation is the fiduciary agent. This project has also received a Disney Grant of \$30,000 that was matched by \$65,000 from Penny for Parks.

There is a grand opening event on 10/27. Hartnett encouraged Krasnow to contact Representative Peter Welch as he has a specific interest in accessibility. Merriman-Shapiro went further by encouraging the group to contact Senators Sanders and Leahy as well, and to let Rep. Welch know that BPRW has applied for a large governmental grant to complete the project. Hartnett encouraged APfO to invite delegates to come to the event on Saturday.

Krasnow concluded by asking any member of the group to provide feedback via email if they have any ideas. The committee congratulated her on all her hard work and wished her and her group continued success. Hartnett shared that Krasnow will be attending future PACC meetings to update on the progress of work at Oakledge.

6. Department Head Items

There were no Department Head Items

7. Councilor Items

There were no Councilor items

8. Discussion of Future PACC Dates and Introduction of new staff person

Future scheduled meetings are the Town Hall for Memorial on 12/6 and the follow up PACC meeting on 12/18. Future meetings will be held on the last Wednesday of every month starting in January. Holli Bushnell (Cemeteries and C/T Departments), the new staff person for the committee, will schedule events on the calendar and send out invites to PACC members and department heads.

Hartnett welcomed Bushnell and thanked her for stepping in to help with minutes and organizational support.

9. Adjournment

Shannon moved to Adjourn at 7pm. All were in favor.

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