

FINAL

ARTS & CULTURE TASK FORCE
Tuesday, September 18, 2018
Upper Valley Music Center, Lebanon, NH
7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Weber Valiante (Public Rep.), Sherry Fiore (Public Rep.), Devin Wilkie (Public Rep.), Joe Clifford (Local Art Rep.), Chip Brown (Economic Vitality Rep.), Jessica Giordani (Local Art Rep.), Karen Zook (City Council Rep.),
MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Welsch (Heritage Commission Rep.), Suzanne Prentiss (Mayor/City Council Rep.)
STAFF PRESENT: David Brooks (Planning and Zoning Director)
GUESTS: Benjamin Van Vliet (Executive Director, UVMC), Erin Smith (Assistant Director, UVMC)

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Councilor Zook called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.
2. **Approval of Minutes: September 4, 2018**

*A MOTION was made by Sherry Fiore to approve the September 4, 2018 Minutes.
The MOTION was seconded by Susan Weber Valiante.
* The vote on the MOTION passed (7-0).*

Mr. Van Vliet, Executive Director of the Upper Valley Music Center, spoke about the history of the UVMC. Mr. Van Vliet encouraged Task Force members to tour the building after the meeting. There has been a lot of community support for the Center; Mr. Van Vliet discussed the success that they have had and the partnerships that have been developed with other area organizations. There was general discussion regarding hours, program offerings, and funding.

3. Discussion Items:

A. Review Working Draft of Arts and Culture Inventory

An updated inventory and list of church properties was presented to the Task Force. Councilor Zook asked how many of the churches are open for public viewing. Mr. Brown said that it would be important to know what the art and culture offerings were at each of the locations.

Mr. Wilkie discussed the changes that had been made to the inventory. There are check marks in the inventory matrix that identify event spaces, art/culture assets, and art/culture provider. There was discussion regarding how to best present the information in the inventory for clarity and ease of use. There was discussion regarding individual assets that were included on the list.

Councilor Zook asked the Task Force to consider how to identify content that would fill an afternoon or a full day, depending on visitor's schedule. Mr. Brown discussed the option of having an Art Walk that directed visitors to important locations or recurring events. Mr. Brooks said that there is an opportunity to define and highlight what comprises the historic district or areas of interest. Mr. Brown suggested the possibility of engaging corporate sponsors to create a mobile app, which would cost up to \$75,000 to create and \$25,000 to maintain. He

said that it may be an opportunity to partner with other towns to highlight offerings including historic walks, historic drives, background information on area sites, or event information. It was discussed that packaging experiences could be tailored to families, professionals, or older adults.

The Task Force discussed the historic features that are included in the inventory. It was suggested that plaques detailing information of historical or cultural importance could help visitors appreciate the area. A cultural scavenger hunt is another suggestion.

B. Discussion regarding Final Recommendations for City Council

The Task Force discussed what the recommendations might be. It is agreed that there is a significant inventory of cultural assets available in Lebanon. Other recommendations:

- An Arts and Culture Council would be valuable to the City. A Council could influence policy and promote arts and culture in the city;
- Administrative support, such as ‘Friends of’ or a support person employed by the City, will be important to the Council’s success;
- A ‘Friends of’ that was a 501c3 could access funds that a City sponsored council could not;
- An Arts and Culture Council could be another agent of the City and may be a helpful advocate within the City;
- It was acknowledged that funding is a critical factor;
- Could a municipal funding source be specifically ear-marked for arts?
- There should be a focus on uniting Lebanon and West Lebanon;
- Arts and culture are important to economic development;
- The Task Force would like Lebanon to serve as a model for other New Hampshire cities;
- Lebanon has a number of learning opportunities, especially with children, which should be highlighted;
- An Arts Commission could investigate the cost/benefit of having a City employee that focuses on arts and culture and investigate the scale/scope of becoming an arts and culture destination;
- It is important to demonstrate value to the tax base.

It was agreed that Mayor Prentiss’ viewpoint was necessary for future discussions to offer insight into what the City may be able to support. Infrastructure is important to long-term success. Corporate sponsorship may be an option to fund a pilot program to explore arts and culture in the area, which may attract, retain, and benefit area workers. There was discussion on how an interested corporate sponsor might provide funding- would funds go to the City, would they go to a separate organization, who would an administrative support report to? The Task Force considered asking Tripp to discuss how funding was secured.

4. **Future Agenda Items:**

5. **Next Meeting Date:** October 2, 2018 at the Opera House

6. **Other Business:**

7. **Adjournment:**

A MOTION was made by Susan Weber Valiante to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 PM.

The MOTION was seconded by Chip Brown.

** The vote on the MOTION passed (7-0).*

Respectfully submitted,
Brandy Sailors-Dow
Recording Secretary