

FINAL

**ARTS & CULTURE TASK FORCE  
MINUTES, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2018  
LEBANON OPERA HOUSE  
51 NORTH PARK STREET, LEBANON  
7:00 pm**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sherry Fiore (Public Rep.), Devin Wilkie (Public Rep.), Jessica Giordani (Local Art Rep.), Karen Zook (City Council Rep.), Suzanne Prentiss (Mayor/City Council Rep.), Robert Welsch (Heritage Commission Rep.), Joe Clifford (Local Art Rep.)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Chip Brown (Economic Vitality Rep.), Susan Weber Valiante (Public Rep.)

**STAFF PRESENT:** David Brooks (Planning and Zoning Director), Paul Coats (Director, Parks & Recreation Dept.)

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**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Suzanne Prentiss called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

**2. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 18, 2018**

*A MOTION was made by Devin Wilkie to approve the September 18, 2018 Minutes as written.*

*The MOTION was seconded by Jessica Giordani.*

*\* The vote on the MOTION passed unanimously 6-0.*

*Abstain: Robert Welsch*

**3. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

A. Discussion regarding Final Task Force Recommendations for City Council

Mayor Prentiss reviewed the Arts & Culture Task Force recommendations to the City Council to establish an Arts & Culture Commission:

- Promoting arts and cultural activities in the entire City of Lebanon.
- Cultivating relationships, activities and opportunities to grow Lebanon's cultural economy.
- Supporting the development of public-private partnerships that enhance the quality of life and doing business in Lebanon.
- Establishing policies for consideration and adoption by the Lebanon City Council for the integration of arts into all municipal buildings, structures and municipal spaces.
- Establishing policies for consideration and adoption by the Lebanon City Council defining the prospective places, forms of, and process for the adoption of public art in Lebanon.

As a starting point, Mayor Prentiss said she worked on this draft of recommendations for the City Council by reviewing minutes from previous meetings. She also got input from Councilor Zook as well as the support of Mr. Brooks for staff input.

Mayor Prentiss informed the members that they have the ability, from a governancy perspective, to set up commissions, but not cultural districts. The Arts and Culture Task Force will make the recommendation to the City Council to set up a commission and provide continue the work of the task force. A minimum set of responsibilities for a commission was included in the draft. Questions from the task force, regarding infra-structure and intersection with policy remained.

Mr. Welsch asked about the unanswered questions.

Prentiss responded that the questions will include the policies for public art, who is going to decide what it's going to be, where it will be, and what the approval process will be.

Mr. Welsch said he didn't see any details in the draft to give him an idea what the commission is going to look like. He said that the task force should figure out what it can do and what is possible- a concrete plan and goals.

Mayor Prentiss explained that you begin with broad base statements and then work out the details. As an organization, that's the junction we are at as the Task Force continues to set up a commission. Mayor Prentiss again pointed to the minimum set of responsibilities in the document.

Mr. Welsch asked what would the commission do and does it have any teeth. He indicated he didn't see a road map of how to accomplish anything.

Mr. Wilkie said that the lower portion of the draft would be a road map, establishing such things as meetings, sub-committees, signature events, and take the lead role in the implementation of Chapter 12 of the Lebanon Master Plan.

In response to Mr. Welsch, Mayor Prentiss stated the three goals for the task force that we started with:

1. Inventory the current assets of the city for culture and art.
2. Do we want to have a commission or a cultural district.
3. Navigate the governmental intersection between art, public art and public policy.

Mayor Prentiss said that they would be able to accomplish the first two goals, but the third is a process that can take a minimum two years. She added that one of the options could be extending the task force or start a commission that worked toward the third goal. Both the representative from Portsmouth and the Salisbury cultural district stated it took two years at a minimum to complete their work.

Mr. Welsch asked if the Task Force had an ordinance and outline and questioned what we would want to accomplish out of that ordinance.

Mr. Fiore stated that we're looking to establish Lebanon as a cultural hub in the Upper Valley and feels the goals are well defined.

Ms. Zook said that promoting a cultural art city takes time and we might not know what these events are yet.

Mr. Welsch asked how the City will relate to private arts and cultural organizations.

Ms. Zook replied that one of the working sub-committees will be established and work out the communication details.

Mr. Clifford stated that the Task Force has accomplished a lot during its meetings.

Ms. Giordani added, that we need to look at the bigger picture within the three goals.

Mr. Welsch asked, if there are no details – how can the City Council approve the commission. Mayor Prentiss again pointed to the minimum responsibilities and acknowledged that this has been a big project and there's a lot more to do, but we don't have to be finished. That's what we tell the Council.

Mr. Clifford asked how much detail has to be provided to the City Council.

Mayor Prentiss suggested that the Task Force put together a power point presentation and present it as an agenda item to the City Council. She pointed out that the Task Force has traveled around the City to learn about different arts and cultural opportunities and met with many organizations. You have a proposal and tell a story. Ms. Prentiss said while the Task Force isn't in a place to make final recommendations, they do have a report explaining what it's done and where it can go.

Ms. Zook said she was in favor of going forward and establishing a commission, noting we have accomplished something and we're ready to move forward and make it happen.

Mayor Prentiss explained that the Task Force and the Council does not have the legal authority in the city to establish a cultural district or legal authority to establish a commission. She suggested that powers within the group establish those boundaries. But that procedure can't be accomplished until a structure exist. This is the only legal structure right now.

Mr. Welsch stated that these are not bad goals, but implementing them is the trick.

Mr. Clifford said that the marketing thread is real important. He noted we had a feeling that Lebanon had an arts community. The question is how do we promote that. Mr. Clifford added that we've done our homework for six months and there's a lot of unanswered questions. But we should add more meat to the document.

Mr. Welsch said he didn't see an action plan within the document, but had no problem presenting it to the council in this form. He noted he was not objecting to this, but would just like to see more meat and potatoes on the bone. Members of the Task Force pointed to the action items we had discussed within the document and throughout the process.

Mayor Prentiss said if an Arts and Culture Commission is created and has an infrastructure, the Council would decide and have the authority to give the Commission a voice in all things related to art.

A discussion then took place about the pros and cons of staying a task force or creating a commission. The following items were discussed:

- Alignment with other city departments
- The process, structure, and staffing of the Commission Authority, policy and financing concerns
- A timeline, comparisons to other commissions and groups in the City of Lebanon
- The language in the document

Mayor Prentiss said moving to a Commission is a complicated process and there are a few more steps that need to be taken. While the process plays out, she suggested a public outreach initiative and a trial could take place around the Christmas season.

Mr. Welsch suggested additional events that could also take place with a model that stresses the importance of public awareness.

#### **4. NEXT MEETING – OCTOBER 16, 2018**

Mayor Prentiss said that the Task Force should begin drawing up a story and preparing a power point for the next meeting. She suggested that one or two members of the Task Force present the power point to the City Council. The Task Force proposed a target date for the presentation, making it an agenda item on the City Council's meeting on November 7, 2018.

Ms. Prentiss said she would do the initial template, but other members can interact in the process. A color-coded chain email will be put together, allowing each member an opportunity to make suggestions and offer specific ideas. Mayor Prentiss and Ms. Fiore agreed to compile the information and create a document that can be presented to the City Council. The composition of the proposed Commission will also be addresses at the October 16, 2018 meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS: NONE**

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT:**

**A MOTION was made by Karen Zook to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 pm.**

**The MOTION was seconded by Joe Clifford.**

**\*The vote on the MOTION passed unanimously (6-0).**

Respectfully Submitted,

Stuart Kaufman  
Recording Secretary