

Maynard Cultural Council Minutes

August 27, 2014, 7:00 pm

Maynard Town Building, Lower Level Conference Room

Present: Joyce Dwyer, Gail Erwin, Ron Labbe, Elizabeth Milligan & Eric Wing
Absent: Erik Hansen & Reya Stevens

Chairperson, Elizabeth Milligan, opened the meeting at 7:05 pm.

The minutes from the June meeting were unanimously accepted as written.

Elizabeth Milligan announced that David Gavin is the Maynard Cultural Council's connection on the Board of Selectmen (BOS). He wasn't able to be at our meeting tonight.

The dates of the upcoming meetings through December are: Sept. 4, Oct. 23, Nov. 6 and Dec. 4. Though our regular meeting is on the 3rd Thursday of the month, many holidays landed on the 3rd Thursday, so a number of meetings are on the 1st Thursday of the month—as noted in the meeting dates above.

Elizabeth told us that we, along with other state Local Cultural Councils, will receive an increase in funding of \$200 to total \$4,700 in the amount we are to grant out this year. We also have \$1,700 in locally raised funds that aren't in the funds to be granted out. They are separate monies we have available to use in a way we deem useful.

Elizabeth Milligan will write a "thank you" to our representative, Kate Hogan.

Our grant cycle starts with the application deadline of Oct. 15th. Right now Elizabeth will be putting in public service articles to the Beacon Villager, the Action Unlimited and the Globe West section of the Boston Globe. Ron Labbe and Eric Wing tossed out ideas of additional ways we might alert the public that grant monies for cultural productions will be available and how to access an application. Elizabeth will put hard copies of application in the Town Building and Library for pick-up. And applications can also be downloaded for the Massachusetts Cultural Council website. Elizabeth stated that she hopes the schools will put in more applications than last year for our MCC grant monies. We may want to publicized in some way some of the projects we fund—to get our name out there more.

Elizabeth Milligan forgot to bring the "secret code" for us MCC members to log into the state MCC website to access data on our own grants approved as well as much other information. She will e-mail us with the code.

In light of the new arts page in the Beacon-Villager, Joyce Dwyer asked Gail Erwin if she had submitted an article to the Beacon regarding her show currently up in the Town Building on both levels. Gail said she had 4 upcoming shows and intends to send out some PR on those shows.

Elizabeth Milligan put out the word that the MCC is still looking for someone to take on the job of treasurer, so that Elizabeth will have just the chairperson job. There were no takers at the meeting tonight but the request is still out there for us to consider.

The Cultural District for Maynard was part of a conversation Elizabeth Milligan had with Andrew Scribner-McLean, the Assistant Town Manager. There will be a public meeting on the Cultural District application in September or October. Bill Cranshaw felt it important to devote an entire meeting to this subject. We'll learn the date of that meeting later.

Elizabeth announced that Serendipity (a restaurant in town at Nason & Main) had changed ownership recently and that Laura and Johnny Hobson are the new owners. Elizabeth asked them if they would be supportive of the Cultural District designation as a business in town and they said they would be supportive. And, the Freedom's Way Heritage, a group we funded, will write a letter of support for the Cultural District. Every bit of support helps. It's easy to be a supporter as it doesn't require any funding. Ron Labbe expressed the hope that with the change of ownership of Serendipity that they would still continue the art and music there as it's a good place for people to gather.

Eric Wing talked about how developing a data base of our own could be very helpful next year for spreading our information or requests. He suggested that it could take a year to gather all the Maynard town and cultural websites together and input all this information. It could even be used by the state MCC to promote.

Elizabeth Milligan had spoken with the Maynard School Committee recently and had asked them to be a supporting member of the Cultural District. Even though they are not inside the limits of the cultural district, they do school events within the Cultural District. This could help showcase the schools too.

Elizabeth Milligan put out the idea of incorporating the federal Wildlife Refuge and its trails with the high school's trails in the woods behind the school into a different type of Cultural District.

Eric Wing had spoken to the BOS this past week. The Cultural District may need something to kick start the activity of it in town. He's trying to promote more activity, pairing up activity with the restaurants and other merchants and things to see and do. An event card is one way to do this. The events to see would be on a list on its own website with a calendar, sharing on social media, events etc. We want visitors to return, so thought is important on how to both pull in people and have them return to Maynard again.

Gail Erwin has been to a huge arts festival in Edinburgh, Scotland called The Fringe and thought a mini "Fringe" event could happen in Maynard. Elizabeth suggested pop-up art events. Eric suggested a cultural restaurants listing on the events card—plus the possibility of a drawing for a larger prize.

Elizabeth let us know of a Literary Cultural District in Boston, which is the first of its kind in this country. Different areas of Boston have literary significance.

Ron Labbe updated us on what he had done on the Carbone Park sculpture project since our last meeting that the Maynard Cultural Council is interested in doing. He spoke with Jean Mineo, Director of Boston Sculptors Gallery who deals with loans of sculpture. Their public sculpture loans are usually May through October to avoid the work being out in winter weather. Other issues he discussed with her are liability and insurance. Permanent art is felt to be better in our situation, but we're not closed yet to loans of sculpture at this time. Ron talked to Maynard sculptor, Eric Zeller, about possibly making a sculpture for the site. Ron also recommended doing a "Call for Art" for sculpture to receive proposals. Perhaps a \$1,000 stipend or prize would be something we could consider doing as we, the MCC, have some money outside the grant monies that we could use.

Gail Erwin then alerted us to some possible pitfalls with this public art project we are considering that we need to think about. Love it or hate it, it is permanent if we do a permanent piece. The general public's taste may be all over the place and to not foster ill will toward the MCC, the town or the potential Cultural District, Gail suggested a town-wide committee with broad representation to get general backing to choose the sculpture/sculptor. She suggested it was too early just yet to be talking offers to any specific artist before we get our ducks in order and have criteria in hand before doing a "Call to Artists".

Gail suggested some resources Ron and the MCC could use: our town Selectman, our town Conservation Commission and Cons Com Officer, Linda Hansen (as the site is on Conservation Commission controlled property), Laura Howick (a potter and Maynard resident and employee of the Fitchburg Art Museum & former employee of the DeCordova Museum), Nick Carpasso (with the Fitchburg Art Museum & formerly of the DeCordova Museum) and Jean Mineo (Director of Boston Sculptors Gallery).

Gail reviewed her experience some years ago while siting many outdoor sculptures for a summer season at the Acton Arboretum and some of the issues and the great amount of time that project entailed. We are a small group of already busy individuals so we need to be realistic.

Ron Labbe offered to write up criteria and bring that to our next MCC meeting next week.

Elizabeth Milligan alerted us to some upcoming political/art items happening that we may be interested in participating in or just to be aware of. She'll e-mail our group with additional information about that after the meeting.

Our meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Dwyer
Secretary, Maynard Cultural Council

Fall meeting dates of the Maynard Cultural Council:

Sept. 4

Oct. 23

Nov. 6

Dec. 4.