

FINAL

**ARTS & CULTURE TASK FORCE
Tuesday, July 31, 2018
Kilton Library, West Lebanon, NH
7:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Clifford (Local Art Rep.), Robert Welsch (Heritage Commission Rep.), Sherry Fiore (Public Rep.), Devin Wilkie (Public Rep.), Chip Brown (Economic Vitality Rep.), Jessica Giordani (Local Art Rep.), Karen Zook (City Council Rep.), Susan Weber Valiante (Public Rep.), Suzanne Prentiss (Mayor/City Council Rep.)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: David Brooks (Planning and Zoning Director)

GUESTS: Trip Anderson (Executive Director of AVA Gallery and Arts Center)

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Mayor Prentiss called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. **Approval of Minutes: July 10, 2018**

Correct misspelling of Robert Welsch in the roll.

Move Paul Coats from ‘Member Present’ to ‘Staff Present’ in the roll.

A MOTION was made by Devin Wilkie to approve the July 10, 2018 Minutes.

The MOTION was seconded by Robert Welsch.

** The vote on the MOTION passed (9-0).*

Mayor Prentiss briefly discussed the cancellation of the last meeting.

Mayor Prentiss discussed the direction that the Task Force is heading. As the Task Force continues to educate itself, it is important to keep in mind the charge of the Task Force and the goals that were originally identified. In October it is expected that the Task Force be able to present its findings to the City Council.

3. **Discussion Items:**

A. Review of July 10th presentation by and about NH State Council on the Arts

Mayor Prentiss asked Joe Clifford to summarize the last meeting. He also discussed what had been done since the last meeting, including speaking with the presenters from last week. He acknowledged that there is a lot of work ahead but if the Task Force is able to capitalize on the opportunities, there are a lot of resources that are available. There was a round table discussion regarding key takeaways from the last meeting. The group expressed some concern over the amount of work needed to access State funds. State grants may also have additional administrative activities that could add to the work needed. The group discussed pop-up installations. Mayor Prentiss spoke with someone that did pop-ups in empty spaces and it could be a viable option for Lebanon. There was discussion regarding opportunities to partner with area businesses, including rounding up change on purchases to support the arts.

B. Discussion with Trip Anderson, Executive Director of AVA Gallery and Arts Center regarding the formation of an Arts District

Mr. Anderson is trained as an architect and has extensive experience working on economic development projects. Prior to accepting the position as the Executive Director of AVA, he became excited about Lebanon visioning study. He also has experience as a grants officer and understands the landscape of grant funding. In Worcester, MA he was involved in the creation of the Salisbury Cultural District, which is the case study he is presenting tonight. He discussed the core issues that the Task Force may consider as it thinks about the direction that the City might take. There were 11 founding stake holders involved in the creation of the Salisbury Cultural District. It took approximately 40 minutes to walk the length of it. There were important historical and cultural influences and landmarks that provided a foundation for the creation of the cultural district. State designation occurred in 2016. Mr. Anderson discussed the public and private partnerships, as well as partnering with the state and local government. Mr. Anderson stressed the importance of grass-roots support for the project. He discussed the formulation of the Executive Steering Committee and the legal aspects of the designation, including leveraging funding opportunities. The Task Force asked questions regarding the partnerships that were created during the designation process. Mr. Anderson said that there was a diverse collective of partners that provided support for the project. He discussed the inventories that were taken for the project and the methodology that was used for identifying assets and events. He said that a similar survey of the Colburn Park area would likely yield surprising results. Mr. Anderson discussed the follow up, including data tracking, metrics, and the economic benefits that were produced. There was a question from the Task Force regarding the boundaries of the district. Mr. Anderson said that two delegations of stakeholders did a full-day walk-through of the proposed district. The process from concept to completion was approximately two and a half years. The district included a number of residential areas that included older, historic homes, and student housing. The Task Force asked about the growth in the number of events. Mr. Anderson said that increased dialogues were created from the partnerships and collaborations, which contributed to the increase in events. There was general discussion regarding the difference in infrastructure between New Hampshire and Massachusetts. It was discussed that the pace of government need not necessarily dictate progress towards growth of arts and culture in Lebanon. The Task Force asked Mr. Anderson for his opinion on potential challenges. He said that sustainable funding is important, as well as widespread, grass-roots support. He said the key to creating sustainable funding is that it has to realistically connect to the community and its interests. The Task Force asked what Mr. Anderson's opinion would be regarding a signature event in Lebanon versus mirroring other cities. Mr. Anderson said that he recommends a physical inventory of the area's assets and then creating an events directory for each business, along with baseline data from area businesses. He cited examples of recent public events that were family-oriented and could have been opportunities for creating partnerships and benefiting the area. The Task Force discussed the various interests that were involved in the Salisbury Cultural District, including stakeholders, partnerships, and governance.

4. **Future Agenda Items:** Not discussed.

5. **Next Meeting Date:** August 14, 2018, DHMC Auditorium A

6. **Other Business:**

Mr. Welsch passed around a walking map from Rockland, ME.

7. **Adjournment:**

A MOTION was made by Susan Weber Valiante to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 PM.

The MOTION was seconded by Joe Clifford.

** The vote on the MOTION passed (9-0).*

Respectfully submitted,
Brandy Sailors-Dow
Recording Secretary