

June 24 NCC Meeting Minutes

In person: Paula Gannon, Anne Marie Stein, Cheryl Weber, Glenda Fishman, Susan Friedman, Jeff Davis, Julie Fox, Liv Aber, and guests Adrienne Hartzell Knudsen (Newton Cultural Alliance), Gloria Gavis (Newton Community Pride), Meryl Kessler (NCP), Linda Sevey (Massachusetts College of Art & Design)

On Zoom: Clara Chan

1. NCD update:

NCD staff at this point is just Paula Gannon and Lisa Rucinski. Still looking for a new associate director.

Currently focused on 4th of July – need volunteers: kids activities (500 people or so)

Live music in the gazebo, Music on the main stage, Food trucks, fireworks

Gath Pool opened at 4pm today. 8-lap pool plus an extra pool now. Beautiful and new and colorful. See details on the Parks & Rec website.

NCD Monthly Newsletter – need NCC members to take turns to write a blurb about events going on each month– please sign up.

2. Treasurer's Report:

Status of grantee contract returns– dispersed \$48K+

5 organizations have not returned their contracts yet.

Piano Summit is on hold so their \$2K is back in the pool for next year.

New Philharmonia Orchestra is declining their \$500– back in the pool for next year as well.

3. Create Newton discussion with NCA/NCP:

NCC Members, Paula, and guests introduced themselves and their organizations.

-NCP collaborates closely with the City. All events are fundraisers. Also funded by government grants, MCC, NCC, etc.

-New Philharmonia Orchestra lost its venue in Newton Center, is struggling to recover from that.

NCA is developing its own programming, offers space for arts purposes, and supports local restaurants & vendors.

-MCC has put the Cultural District application on hold, but encouraging that effort to continue. Meanwhile it may be a part of an economic development bill that is going to the state senate.

-What makes Newton better for artists, and what makes Newton better for audiences?

Advocacy is crucial. Are there things that NCD needs us to do to help with our shared arts advocacy mission?

-NCD focuses on the city at large; puts on large, free, and totally accessible events. NCP sponsors a lot of it. NCP also does this with their winter festival, Hyde Center does wonderful city-wide programming. But more help is needed. e.g., for 4th of July, and how about NYE?

Smaller events such as Juneteenth, Holi, Chinese New Year are run by separate smaller groups. Would be nice to have someone to organize all Heritage type festivals, equitably.

- Are city-wide events community events rather than arts events per se?

- NCD is also working on bringing new large venues on line. Wishing also for Maker spaces, work spaces for artists, ... West Newton Armory has been an invaluable arts work space– but we're going to lose that as the armory is redone. We need a new space like that.
- We could try to raise awareness of the kinds of space we need.
- New spaces for public art and performances: 28 Austin St, Allee, West Newton Cinema?
- There's a lot going on already, which needs to be made more known– need to get the word out about all that is happening. Where? Newton Arts Calendar should have all events on it. Every NCC grantee is required to post their events there, for starters.
- Are other departments in the city are joining the discussion about supporting the arts?
- Is one of the goals of Create Newton a robust public art program? That is not clearly stated. Newton lacks a Public Art Commission. We don't have a process or guidelines or structure for approving, funding, soliciting, etc public art in the city. (sculptures, murals, ...) For example, there's a new road configuration under construction in Auburndale– there will be a circle there– could there be some art in there as a gateway to Newton?
- Create Newton includes points about making spaces more accessible. Permit structure is now much more streamlined. \$30K was paid to a consultant to put together Create Newton, which includes ~30 recommendations (including public art commission, cultural district, ...) – but only bits and pieces are being done, without any central organization.
- How do we want Newton to be different 5 years from now, 10 years from now? That is not clear in Create Newton. What about the demographics along the proposed cultural district path? Need to think about who that will serve. A goal is to make Newton an arts destination. Arts creates economic opportunity. Does it need to be a destination for non-Newton residents? Or is it enough to just engage more Newton residents?
- Can we have a central place which defines what the various organizations do, such as an arts directory? Who does what, and how are they funded? E.g., why is Fence Art at New Art Center rather than NCP? Linda Plaut Festival is run by a few individuals– who will take over when they retire?
- Can we all meet again to continue this discussion? Yes.

4. Approval of minutes from May meeting

5. Meeting adjourned. New library director will join our next meeting, on Monday July 29 from 6pm to 7:30pm.