

FINAL

**ARTS & CULTURE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
Thursday, June 5, 2018
AVA Gallery, Bank Street, Lebanon, NH
7:00 PM**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Paul Coats (Director, Rec. Dept.)

STAFF PRESENT: David Brooks (Director, Planning & Zoning)

GUESTS: Nancy Pearson (Portsmouth, NH City Councilor & Cultural Commission Member), Trip Anderson (Executive Director, AVA Gallery), Erin Smith (Asst. Executive Director, Upper Valley Music Center)

1. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Suzanne Prentiss called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes: May 15, 2018

A MOTION was made by Sherry Fiore to approve the May 15, 2018 Minutes.

The MOTION was seconded by Susan Weber Valiante.

** The vote on the MOTION passed (10-0).*

Clarifications:

Page 1 & Page 4: Member name corrected to Devin Wilkie. Page 4, line 1: “Creative Arts Council” changed to “NH State Arts Council’s Creative Communities Program.” A couple typos corrected.

3. Discussion Items:

Mayor Prentiss thanked Mr. Trip Anderson (Executive Director, AVA Gallery) for hosting this Arts & Culture Task Force Meeting. Mr. Andersen gave a brief history of the AVA Gallery by describing the 45K sq. ft. Visual Arts Buildings origination, which included a \$5 million renovation, the creation of the Sculpture Studies Building (a.k.a., Hot Studio), and the installation of 140 Solar Panels that are responsible for 7.4% of the Solar Energy that is generated in all of Lebanon. He noted that AVA Gallery is “almost net zero.”

A. Presentation of the evolution of Art-Speak (Note: name spelling corrected per the Art-Speak.org web site), Portsmouth’s Cultural Commission with Nancy Pearson, Portsmouth City Councilor. Mayor Prentiss introduced Councilor Nancy Pearson of Portsmouth, NH by describing her career as a two-time City Council member, but a long-term advocate/leader/creative thinker when it comes to the Arts along the seacoast and in Portsmouth. Mayor Prentiss stated that Councilor Pearson has lived through, observed and then participated in the evolution of Art-Speak, which is the Cultural Commission for the Arts in Portsmouth, NH. She stated that Councilor Pearson was invited to speak to the A/C Task Force about the evolution of the Arts Culture in Portsmouth and their lessons learned so we will not have

to reinvent the wheel. Mayor Prentiss noted that while Lebanon may not have the ocean, we have many things in common with Portsmouth and described the similarities.

Councilor Pearson informed the Task Force that she moved to Portsmouth, NH in 2011, and has been either participating in, performing, creating, volunteering or donating for the Portsmouth Art Scene since 1995, noting that when she moved to Portsmouth she was already embedded in the Arts Community. She stated that friends of hers suggested she join the board of Art-Speak because this work related to her Graduate Degree at UNH (University of New Hampshire). After spending some time on the Board of Art-Speak (Portsmouth's Art Commission), she then understood what the cultural planning was and how it was created. She explained, at the time, the City thought it was supporting the Arts more than it actually was.

Councilor Pearson explained that after being elected to the City Council on an Arts Platform, she was able to connect everything that happened in the Arts to the City's community (i.e., transportation, housing, economic development, attracting work force) and spent her first term figuring out how Portsmouth could do a better job of supporting the fragile ecosystem of the Arts. Councilor Pearson stated she was able to redirect 1% of the parking revenue (\$100K) specifically to the Arts, because she had hard quantum data from the organization called the "Americans for the Arts" (in Agenda Packet passed out at the 1st meeting), which she presented to the City's Administration showing the revenue increases to the City generated by the Arts. She described how the Arts has transformed Portsmouth from a "Rough & Tough City" to a "Cultural/Arts City." She also spoke about the evolution of turning Portsmouth into a cultural/tourist destination and how the City's Planning Department became involved, noting that one City Councilor advocated that the City's Master Plan incorporate Arts/Culture into its overall planning process. As a result, in 1999, the then Mayor created a temporary committee who spent two years talking to the community in a very deliberate way (i.e., what does a cultural city look like and how do we foster it?). This committee then took all the notes and comments gathered and created the Portsmouth, NH Cultural Plan.

The Community Life and the Arts (Portsmouth's Cultural Plan) Executive Summary states that; "The Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Arts and Culture was created in the fall of 1999 to develop a cultural plan to be incorporated into the City's Master Plan. The committee comprises Portsmouth NH citizens representing business, cultural community service and education sections. After a full year of focus groups with members of Portsmouth's academic, civic, cultural and religious organizations, the Blue Ribbon Committee synthesized the major themes from these discussions in the following goals:

- 1) **Preservation:** Identify and preserve building and open spaces contributing to the unique character and cultural assets of Portsmouth.
- 2) **Space:** Expand and support spaces for cultural activities and events, including affordable space for artists, and venues and space for performances, exhibitions, meetings, storage, rehearsal and education. Councilor Pearson stated that this goal was an issue due to lack of space inventory and housing affordability.
- 3) **Youth:** Engage young people in arts and cultural opportunities in all aspects of their life, including educational, recreational and social settings. Councilor Pearson noted that the opening of the Portsmouth Music & Arts Center is considered an anchor for organizations in certain areas of the City.
- 4) **Business:** Engage businesses with the arts and cultural community. Councilor Pearson stated that Art-Speak uses the economic impact numbers (as talked about above) for industry specific businesses to show them "what the economics are for what they are getting."

- 5) Marketing: Market Portsmouth as a business and cultural destination. Councilor Pearson stated that of all the initiatives that Art Speaks does, Marketing is the most successful and described what Art-Speak has done and what is planned for the future.
- 6) Agency: Create an Arts and Culture Agency to act on the City's behalf on all matters related to arts and culture. Councilor Pearson noted this was the creation of Art-Speak, which is a 501-3(c) nonprofit organization. She noted there are certain things Art-Speak must do for the City (i.e., make sure the City is addressing these goals; must hold a couple of public forum or committee meetings to discuss cultural items.) She also stated that Art-Speak is responsible for overseeing any Public Art initiative in the City explaining that in 2006 the City passed an Ordinance for Art Policy, which stated that any municipal project at/or exceeding \$2 million would require that 1% of the project be put away in the budget for Art/Culture. She further described this ordinance along with other agreements and described the Guidelines that Art Speak must use.

Councilor Pearson stated Portsmouth is in the process of updating their Cultural Plan, which is 15 years old and have hired the original person who helped put together this Culture Plan to come in and revise it. She also stated that the 2020 Portsmouth Master Plan has incorporated Arts & Culture throughout the entire Master Plan.

In response to Mayor Prentiss's question about Public Art, Councilor Pearson stated that this topic is a big deal right now in Portsmouth and described how the City is/has addressed this issue and gave examples on how Municipal Public Art is approved and enforced by the City. Councilor Pearson also informed the Task Force about the City's Street Art Program, which connects private property owners to artists where an artist has the opportunity to paint an interior/exterior wall, describing the procedure used for this program. She also informed the Task Force that Municipal Art is funded by the City and Private Public Art is paid for by the owners of the property describing, in depth, the African Burial Ground Memorial/Sanctuary Park history and used this as an example.

Councilor Pearson, after being asked, stated there is no ordinance for what color of paint can be used on a private building, just lettering that could be interpreted as a sign, but artists do have guidelines they must follow. Mr. Brooks, in answer to Mayor Prentiss's question, stated the City of Lebanon has a very broad/gray area on signage definition regulations, so painting a mural on the side of a building may/may not be an issue depending on the zoning (i.e., a Historical District). Mr. Brooks also described what type of mural could be considered an advertisement sign and stated he would love to have this as a discussion topic, described his vision for some buildings in Lebanon. He would like to make sure the City of Lebanon's regulations do not prohibit the use of Public Art on buildings. He informed the Task Force that the next Public Hearing on a Sign Ordinance would be August 15, 2018.

Ms. Zook asked about the prohibitive State issues that surrounds the creation of an Arts District and how Portsmouth has addressed this issue. Councilor Pearson stated that the creation of a Listen's Group is a great tool for municipalities to use to get residents involved with City issues and described how this group was used in Portsmouth to address affordable housing. Councilor Pearson also described Portsmouth's Character-Based Zoning, which allows a builder/developer to get things they want in a project if they give the City something they want (bartering), describing how this is used and the benefits for both parties.

In response to Mr. Welch's question about the stability of school age children, Councilor Pearson stated there is no issue with drop off, but did note that new city staff cannot afford to live in Portsmouth due to the lack of affordable work force housing. Mayor Prentiss also noted that this is an issue in Lebanon as well.

Councilor Pearson discussed examples of Public/Private Arts in Portsmouth.

Mayor Prentiss asked about how to demonstrate the value of using economic numbers, not to just the city but to residents. She also wanted to know what Councilor Pearson would do if she was starting where we (Lebanon) is starting now.

Councilor Pearson stated that there is an organization based out of Washington, DC called the Americans for the Arts. This organization has quantifiable data on the economic impact for Arts/Culture and a great section on the positive impacts of Arts/Culture in many regions across the United States, as well as tools, concepts, and surveys. She explained their Economic Impact Study is very intensive, described how Portsmouth has used their tools, reviewed their procedures, used their surveys, and how described how survey questionnaires were broken down. Mr. Anderson described how the calculator on their web site worked, and how using comparisons between the Upper Valley Region and other comparable state/regions could provide data for the questions the City of Lebanon would like to have. Mr. Anderson noted that the data provided on their web site are all documented case studies of regional development through which Arts & Culture was the catalyst for development data (over 15-20 years) and that social data is now becoming part of the effect of Arts/Culture on community development.

In response to Mayor Prentiss's question regarding the inclusion of Arts/Culture on City projects/committees, Councilor Pearson stated she would recommend that someone from the Arts Committee sit at the table for a municipal project and said it was a great idea to have someone from Art-Speak or an Arts Committee be on every committee.

There was a discussion regarding a possible Arts Ordinance, the use of a possible percentage of municipal projects for Arts/Culture, and how might would fit into the City's budget. Councilor Pearson answered more of the Task Force's questions.

In response to Mr. Welsh's question about rating the goals on a scale of 1-10, Councilor Pearson gave the following response: Preservation (6); Space (4); Youth (8), Business (10); Marketing (8) and Agency (10) and described her reasoning for each rating.

The Task Force thanked Councilor Pearson and she stated that Mayor Prentiss has her contact information if anyone has more questions.

Mayor Prentiss asked Task Force members to review their notes, think about the conversations from this meeting, review the Portsmouth Culture Plan and the American's for the Arts Packets so we can discuss at the June 19 meeting.

4. **Future Agenda Items:** Not discussed.
5. **Next Meeting Date:** **June 19, 2018, Dana House**
6. **Other Business:** Not discussed.

7. **Adjournment:**

A MOTION was made by Robert Welsh to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM.

The MOTION was seconded by Karen Zook.

** The vote on the MOTION passed (10-0).*

Respectfully submitted,

Dona Gibson
Recording Secretary