

ACTON BOXBOROUGH CULTURAL COUNCIL (ABCC)

Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2020
7:33pm
REMOTE MEETING

Present: Sharon Garde; Aparna Ramasundar; Judy Romatelli; RYANNE FLYNN; Jin Yang; Sheila Hanrahan; Joan Rubin-Deutsch; Karen Myers

Absent: Priya Eramath-Murali

Public Attendees: Hongbing Tang; Maria Paunescu (prospective new members)

Opening Chair Sharon Garde opened the meeting at 7:38 pm.

I. Regular Business: Ms. Garde opened the meeting via Zoom. Due to the COVID pandemic and as per Town of Acton guidance (announced 3/13/20), ABCC has suspended in-person committee meetings and large public gatherings.

I.1. Public comments: Ms. Tang and Ms. Paunescu expressed their interest in joining the committee.

I.2. Review/approve meeting minutes from August 3, 2020: Ms. Yang made a motion to approve the Minutes from August 3, 2020. Ms. Flynn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

I.3. Treasurer's Report: Ms. Hanrahan presented the Treasurer's Report (screen-shared by Ms. Garde). Reimbursement requests for 25 MCC grants totaling \$9125.00 have not yet been submitted: these funds are being held in reserve. The current MCC balance is \$1509.65. Some of these events may have been postponed or cancelled due to COVID. Funds totaling \$500 for two unpaid Boxborough grants were returned to the Town of Boxborough on June 30th as the events (the Boxborough Harvard Fair and the Senior Center concert) were cancelled. The FY21 awards of \$1400 from the Town of Boxborough and \$2000 from the Town of Acton were credited on July 1st. The total ABCC balance is \$4409.65, including interest earned and a credit for two unpaid MCC FY19 awards totaling \$700.

Ms. Garde indicated that there are no deadlines for requesting project extensions. The committee may follow up with any awardees who have not contacted ABCC by year end.

Ms. Garde motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report as stated; Ms. Ramasundar seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

I. 4. Film Sub-Committee Report: Ms. Yang provided an update. Acton TV does not track the number of viewers. It is also not possible to get a specific number of online viewers.

The films are still available on line. There is a link on the ABCC website.

The Film Sub-Committee is deliberating its format for FY21. CMWIRE2018sub-committee does not plan to meet in September and may offer only a short film series in FY21. The Film Sub-Committee is deliberating its format for FY21. The sub-committee does not plan to meet before December and may offer only a short film series in FY21.

II. New/Special Business

5. Requested changes in grant projects due to COVID-19 precautions

Ms. Garde shared a list of new requests:

2034/30170 Dan Du. Mid-Autumn Festival Celebration: This project will move to an online format, for presentation on October 1.

2045/35802 Janet Schwartz. Release your Inner Artist: Project will change from an in-person event at the Acton Library to an online venue sponsored by the Boxborough Library on January 7.

2046/37326 Sharon Chaitin-Pollak. Sky & Korn Original Music Community Concert: This project will not be offered on line; grant award will be declined.

Ms. Garde moved that the committee accept these changes as presented. Ms. Flynn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Garde will follow up with these awardees.

6. Consent for Chair and/or Treasurer to approve program changes independent of the committee meeting: As per recent email from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), individual councils may vote to allow the chair and/or treasurer to approve requested programmatic changes without having to bring forward for full committee review. This change would allow for timely response to awardees requesting changes during COVID as the committee only meets monthly.

Ms. Garde made a motion to approve the following committee recommendations: 1) Requests for basic changes (e.g., project date; transition from a physical to a virtual venue) may be approved by the chair and/or treasurer; 2) All other programmatic changes must be brought forward for committee vote.

Ms. Rubin-Deutsch seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Potential new Boxborough member Hongbing Tang: Ms. Tang introduced herself. She has created several ABCC-funded projects including the China Garden project at the Arboretum, as well as programs held at the Acton and Boxborough libraries. She is an adjunct faculty member and registered landscape architect. Ms. Tang also has served on the Boxborough Planning Board.

Ms. Tang may continue to apply for ABCC grants. Ms. Garde explained the conflict of interest protocol in place for committee members.

8. Potential new student member Maria Paunescu (Acton): Ms Paunescu is a freshman at Acton Boxborough Regional High School and was recommended by ABCC member Judy Rubin-Deutsch. Ms. Paunescu's interests are writing and the performing arts; she has performed in community theater during junior high school.

Ms. Garde explained the volunteer process for Boxborough and for Acton members. Ms. Paunescu may also be able to receive high school community service hours for service on the ABCC.

9. Grant cycle dates for this year: Contingent on state funding, we anticipate that the application timeline will be roughly a month later than last year's schedule:

Oct 1, 2020: Application Funding Round opens

Nov 16, 2020: Application deadline

Feb 16, 2021: Final report due to MCC

10. MCC Request for Council Priority Updates: MCC has suggested that cultural councils update their publicly posted Council Priorities to reflect COVID-19 precautions. These changes need to be updated on the MCC website and the ABCC website by October 1.

The committee reviewed the ABCC website and made the following revisions:

- We acknowledge the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on projects submitted to ABCC for grant

review, and encourage creative approaches to address COVID precautions.

- Applicants requesting funding for a live event must include date and venue confirmation with their application. For a virtual event, the application must include hosting and/or sponsor details and confirmation, including date or date range.
- In-person performance/exhibits must specify alternative plans to address any potential changes in town/state COVID-related restrictions.
- If town/state safety guidelines change prior to the event date, applicants must submit any changes in their project to ABCC for approval prior to the event.

Ms. Garde made a motion to share these updates with MCC. Ms. Myers seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Website and forms updates by Oct 1: See item 10. Ms. Garde will send requested information and forms to MCC.

12. West Acton tree project: There has been no follow up to this presentation from the community at the August meeting.

13. Future meeting schedule: Our meeting schedule will be revised as per the new application timeline:

Strike November 16 meeting
Add December 16 meeting

14. Additional Topic: ABCC officers: Ms. Garde will serve one more year as chair. Ms. Hanrahan is ending her service as Treasurer this year. Ms. Flynn is considering filling this position. Ms. Myers will continue in her role as Secretary.

15. Additional Topic: Google analytics: Ms. Yang has been tracking ABCC website “hits” since March using Google Analytics. There was a peak in hits during the month of March and in early July.

III. Consent Items: No consent items

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 9:20pm.

Documents and Exhibits Virtually Used During this Meeting

- 8.3.2020 ABCC Meeting Minutes
- FY20 List of Grant Applicants
- Website: ABCC Priorities
- Google analytics charts

Next meeting: 10/5/2020

Respectfully submitted by:
Karen Myers
Secretary
Acton Boxborough Cultural Council