

## Washington Arts Council- notes

Nov. 15, 2022

In attendance: Michelle Gorra, Kent Burnham, Tracy Liz Miller, Susan Smith, Victoria Rowan, Stephanie Ingrassia, Jane Sarjeant, Tal Fagin, Martha Winkel, Laura Neminski, Steph Burr- NWCT Arts Council

1. Michelle gave a short recap of why we are trying to start an Arts Council and introduced Steph Burr from the NWCT Arts Council. Moving forward people who are interested in volunteering for the Arts Council will need to send a letter of interest to the Selectmen to be appointed to the Council moving forward. [jbrinton@washingtonct.org](mailto:jbrinton@washingtonct.org).
2. Steph Burr shared her experience regarding Arts Councils. First, had we started an Arts Council a few years back there was at least \$20,000 of Federal and State money we would have been eligible for. A goal of the NWCT Arts Council is to help facilitate local councils and facilitate regional work. They want to learn what is important to Washington and help us find resources.

Regionally-Torrington was designated as the second Cultural District in the State and Litchfield just started an Arts Council.

Historically, in our region the arts have been competitive and siloed. The NWCT Arts Council wants to help everyone and facilitate communication.

3. Ideas & challenges that were shared-
  - Placemaking, public sculpture, bringing all organizations together for an event- Michelle
  - Bring theater to town, issue with signs and communicating events- Susan
  - Arts – Reading Room of Revelry, Victoria
  - “more is more”, collaborations and support for all organizations- Stephanie
  - Support for artists, challenge of affordable housing, zoning challenges
  - Theater makers, Tracy and Kent starting new 501c3, CT Theater Exchange, using FGS
  - Stone church in New Preston looking to be a viable venue
4. Cultural Districts-
  - Walkable space in a downtown area
  - No money tied to it yet but the State is promoting the concept
  - Create a committee- could be our council, must have artists on the committee, Washington seems like a good candidate. Have to do asset mapping, form an email list, helps start collaboration. No minimum assets, good for combined marketing.
5. Creating the council-

Steph advised that the council create bylaws to safeguard. Council will be a sub-committee of EDC. Decided at least 6 but no more than 10 on Council. Cultural District needs at least one representative of each of these 6 categories: Town Gov., Arts Council, Local cultural organization, local artists, Artist organization, for profit business owner, local business or chamber member.