

Ridgefield Arts Council

Monthly Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2009

Committee members in attendance were Nancy (Baldwin) Andrews, Alison Greeley, Ruth Wilder-Feldman, Carolina Fernandez and Kay Mayr.

Auxiliary member in attendance was Suzanne Enser-Ryan.

Minutes:

January minutes were approved as amended.

Treasurer's Report:

Ruth will process expenses and provide an update at the next meeting.

Status of Matching Grant Funds:

Nancy reported that she has reached out to discuss the matching grant fund issue with Rudy Marconi and will provide us an update when they meet on the issue.

Board Positions:

Nancy reported that Allison Stockel has stepped down from the council but will remain an auxiliary member and continue to work on the Film Commission. She introduced two candidates for an open position on the council.

Ryan Bell works in advertising and has lived in Ridgefield for one year. Working with the Arts Council would be his first foray into serving on a town / municipal board. He was educated at Syracuse and has a background in advertising and information design. He has experience in art design, direct marketing, interactive marketing and consumer marketing. He shared a portfolio with the group.

Paul Gervais is the owner of Building Blocks art supply store in Ridgefield. After a number of years working in the corporate world (IBM, American Express), Paul decided to open his own business. He has extensive project management experience, organizing and executing large projects. As a small business owner, he has established unique and mutually beneficial relationships with a number of businesses in town. He attended one of our forums and was interested in hearing more about the work we were doing.

Jillian Elliott has contacted Nancy regarding the position, but was not in attendance at the meeting.

Guest:

Marion Roth, Executive Director of the Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce, joined the meeting to introduce herself and update the council on her recent activities. The Chamber applied for and was awarded a tourism research grant through the CCT. The first step in the process is to conduct research on who comes to Ridgefield and why. With that information, the town can move forward to develop a tourism marketing campaign. Marion expressed a desire to work together, collaborating on attracting more people to Ridgefield.

Ruth inquired about the RAC hosting a table at the Chamber events; Marion responded that all members will be given that opportunity and that we could join the Chamber. Ruth inquired about whether the town was a member; as a committee of the town government, we would fall under their membership. Ruth agreed to look into it further.

Marion agreed verbally to allow us to post a link to the Chamber's website on our site; we will reciprocate.

Nancy invited all guests to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Website Update: Stan Madaloni & Ruth Wilder-Feldman
Committee: Alison Greeley, Nancy Andrews

Ruth reported that she had received an incredible response to our ad for an independent contractor to assist with the maintenance of the site (made possible by the CCT grant) through June 30, 2009. After conducting over twenty interviews, Ruth extended an offer to Deborah Linke, who was present at the meeting and introduced herself. She has extensive background in sales and marketing' client relationship management is her forte. She will begin work immediately and will be meeting with Ruth on the website and Alison on the contact database.

Forum Series: Concert Producers:

February 3, 2009, The Ridgefield Theater Barn, noon
Kay Mayr, Alison Greeley and Ruth Wilder-Feldman

Alison, Kay and Ruth reported on the Forum.
In attendance were:
Allison Stockel, The Ridgefield Playhouse
Jeremiah Miller, The Ridgefield Playhouse
Wayne Leiss, The Ridgefield Theater Barn
Susan Dumont-Bengston, The Ridgefield Chorale
Daniela Sikora, The Ridgefield Chorale
Sarah Miller, The Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra
Gina Wilson, The Western Connecticut Youth Orchestra

Key Takeaways:

- Appreciated the opportunity to hear from us and voice their suggestions; all agreed that periodic gatherings of this sort would be beneficial
- Would like to see the Arts Council act as a link between arts organizations and local businesses, 'brokering' discounts or package deals
- Are willing and interested in exploring 'package' deals and advertising; willing to cross-promote
- On reaching seniors (those who may not rely on the internet for information), there was general acceptance of the idea to develop printed schedules, but concern voiced about moves away from print. It was suggested that we reach out to Founder's Hall and look into the 'Gold Card' first.
- Would like to see RAC have a table at all festivals, events, etc.; offered to allow us to participate in the ones that they run (i.e., Shakespeare in the Park at the Playhouse); will also furnish us with their literature to distribute at our table
- Would like to see an informational arts kiosk in town
- Offered to print our ad in their programs (requires follow-up)

Annual Networking Event: Carolina Fernandez
April 30, The Aldrich, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Carolina reported that the Aldrich has agreed to allow us use of their facility again for this event. She will send emails to individuals regarding help. Ruth will look at our finances and prepared a budget for the event.

Nancy reported that John Cusano of the CCT will attend and speak. Carolina will contact him to discuss the details; we will ask him to discuss Ridgefield as a cultural destination.

Behind the Scenes Award: Nancy Andrews
May 20, 2009 at the Community Center

Nancy reported that Rudy Marconi is not available on May 20. RAC members agreed to reschedule the event for May 28.

Nancy will prepare nomination letters and send them to local arts organizations. She inquired about whether we need to add any additional organizations from last year; Ruth directed her to the website, noting that SPHERE and the Ridgefield Historical Society could be added.

LAA Conference Date: Nancy Andrews

Nancy inquired about the date for the mandatory conference in March. Alison reported that she has had no additional word from John Cusano of the CCT. Alison will follow-up.

LAA Grant FY2010: Alison Greeley, Nancy Andrews and Ruth Wilder-Feldman

Alison, Nancy and Ruth will meet separately on Thursday at 11:00 am at Nancy's house to discuss the grant application in further detail. The preparatory grant application is due on Monday, February 23.

Press Release Page: Carolina Fernandez

For discussion at the March meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Checkov Summer Festival: Nancy Andrews

Nancy reported that there is a group meeting to plan a weekend festival this August (tentatively August 14 – 16th). Rudy Marconi has asked Nancy to attend the planning meeting. She will attend and report back to the council.

Email Newsletter: Alison Greeley

Alison reported that she is having trouble developing something that will not just be another email that gets deleted. She suggested that we use the email tool to email constituents when there is noteworthy news.

Someone suggested looking into an RSS feed, which notifies users when you update content to the site.

Ryan also added that he had looked at the site and thought we could 'hide' some tags under our flash content to enhance our response on search engines.

Arts Event: Suzanne Enser-Ryan, Alison Greeley, Noelle Carr, Meg Collins-Stoop

Suzanne provided a brief overview of a potential 'Arts Day.' Alison distributed a one-page draft of a project outline. The committee agreed to discuss in more detail at the next meeting.

Approved at the March 3, 2009 meeting.

Writers and Authors Forum: Carolina Fernandez

Nancy suggested that we plan another forum. Alison will discuss separately with Carolina.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 3, 2009** at **8:00pm** at Town Hall.

Recorded and submitted by Alison Greeley, Secretary