



MINUTES

September 24, 2014

City Hall Auditorium

Present: William Haygood, Kim Fazzino, Jessica Hodorski, Fiona De Merell, Ed Cannata, Erin Wilson, Jacque Williams, Mike McAllister and Sharon Waagner. Also visitors Teresa Channell and Ed Jaffe.

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. on a motion by Mike McAllister, seconded by Kim Fazzino. On a motion by Bill Haygood, seconded by Ed Cannata, the meeting was open to the public. Minutes of the previous meeting had been read and were approved on a motion by Kim Fazzino, seconded by Mike McAllister.

Ed Cannata presented first drafts of the photos for the two ornaments we have approved for sale. Final approval by Nutmeg Conservatory and UCONN Torrington will be sought and Ed will email the final draft to commissioners for approval. It is hoped to begin selling the ornaments the day after Thanksgiving.

Jessica Hodorski reported that she and Fiona De Merell had been working on plans for the Performer's Expo in April and had selected April 17 for the event. The entire campus will be available so there will be ample space. Invitations will be sent out to educators, libraries, and event planners to announce the event. Jessica is preparing a list of performers, authors, historic re-enactors and others who will be invited. There will be exhibits and tables with information along with a select number of actual performances. ACT has been the catalyst to develop this event and the plan is for it to become an annual event sponsored by the Torrington Library and UCONN Torrington.

Jessica has researched but the date for CT OPEN HOUSE for 2015 has not been announced at this time. It is usually held in June. Once we learn the date, we will begin to work on a Torrington Open House day to coincide with the statewide event.

Jacque Williams distributed copies of his report on the Coe Park Unplugged event which took place on September 20. He has asked that the report be included with the minutes filed with the city. For a first time event, he said it was a great success with 538 in attendance. Jacque especially thanked Teresa Channell and Ed Cannata for all of the hard work expended to present a wonderful event. There were lessons learned which bode well for future events. He also thanked Ed Cannata for the amazing video commercial he produced for Channel 5.

Erin Wilson expressed concern regarding the cost of events for the city, including liability insurance, overtime for employees, and suggested it was time to pass Main Street Market Place over to someone else. She also suggested that ACT might not want to continue sponsoring events. Jessica Hodorski countered that perhaps we would be better suited to become an autonomous group rather than a commission that had to be concerned with city issues. Fiona De Merrell said that we should work on trying to see the "bigger picture" as we move forward. Jacque Williams said that since we had first introduced Main Street Market Place we have seen a tremendous growth in enthusiasm for the city. Hodorski

and Waagner both felt that we had a brilliant city slogan, Its Happening Here, and felt that it is underutilized. We should be promoting this resource. Sharon explained that this year's local businesses had been very disappointed that two blocks while closed to traffic, had no vendors. As the appointed liaison to the business community she fielded many complaints. The lack of activity and crowds resulted in significant losses in sales. The Market Place had been one of the reasons that Torrington Downtown Partners purchased nine buildings out of foreclosure and 20 new businesses had opened in large part due to the success of the event. She added that downtown success stories in CT and beyond always had the city as one the major partners. It would be a shame to lose the event.

Erin said our purpose should be to steer away from event planning and support the arts community, capitalizing on that movement to help growth. She said we should be looking at a study completed by UCONN Torrington and Torrington Development Corporation for guidance as that is what the mayor is considering.

The discussion continued with no decisions made. It was agreed that we need to identify our role and plan for the future. Regarding Market Place, it was also agreed that it could not be handed off without providing information on what is needed in order to be a successful event. Ed Cannata has begun work on an Event Planning Outline which we will help to complete. We also need to decide how to become a resource for arts and culture. Erin suggested that commissioners might consider volunteering to sit on an ad hoc steering committee for creative economic growth. Bill Haygood, Ed Cannata, Sharon Waagner and Fiona DeMerrel volunteered. There will be a special meeting on October 15 at 10 a.m. in City Hall auditorium to discuss MSMP 2014 and to decide if we will continue to be on the Light Up Main committee. At the next regular meeting, on October 29, Steve Criss will be present to discuss the roles of ACT, UCONN Torrington, and the City of Torrington.

Bill Haygood presented information on the possibility of having historic photos displayed on walls within City Hall. He has researched the cost of 18 inch by 48 inch frames that would feature removable photos. Cost of installation would be approximately \$378 plus installation. Cost to change photos periodically would be about \$50 each. He will continue to develop this project and meet with the administration to check on feasibility.

On a motion by Mike McAllister, seconded by Kim Fazzino, the meeting was adjourned at 11:43.