

**Brattleboro Town Arts Committee**  
**Special Meeting on Promoting Brattleboro**  
**9-22-15 Draft Minutes**

**Members present:** Kate Anderson (Acting-Chair), Hugh Keelan (Facilitator), Adam Salviani (Acting Vice-Chair), Doug Cox, Angel Francia-Mackinnon (Scribe), Donna Macomber (Selectboard Representative)

**Guests:** Dick DeGray(DBA), Peter Gould (actor/teache/ author) Stephanie Bonin (duo/DBA), Greg Worden (Vermont Artisans), Susan Rosano (ACWC), Danny Lichtenfeld(BMAC), Chris Lanns(BWA), Tiffany Heerema, artist, Lee Ann \_\_\_\_\_, Lissa Weineman (Brattleboro Film Fest), Petey Mitchell ( Mitchell Giddings Gallery) Peter \_\_\_\_\_, Lynn Barrett (SoVT Arts and Living) .

Anderson convened meeting at 4:00 pm in the Selectboard meeting room. It was confirmed the meeting was warned and a quorum present.

**Agenda:** Promotion is a prominent goal in Brattleboro's 2013 Town Plan, and Brattleboro's local government feels that there are opportunities to make better use of our cultural resources to attract visitors, jobs, residents and investment. This Roundtable is interested in listening, and in being an interface for partnerships to be created that are bigger than individual organizational interests. We have invited several parties, and this is a warned meeting open to all. We are committed to revealing results for collaboration that have not been seen before. We would like to learn, with your organization's goals and interests as a starting point, how NEW ideas could emerge that would turn Brattleboro into a magnetic draw, an epicenter. We would like us all to leave this roundtable energized by something we have never seen before, and start to facilitate that into a tangible benefit to the Town of Brattleboro.

**Adam Salviani-** Welcomes visitors and Introduces the purpose of this gathering, stating that we all have common goals; to elevate the arts culture, and to re-start talking to each other and creating strong relationships. Also asks what we, the Town Arts Committee, can do to help that process. " Talk to us."

**Hugh Keelan-** Reviews his 20 years as a Brattleboro resident, and involvement with TAC since it's inception. Adds that this gathering initiated by question from Dick DeGray, noting an umbrella-style of interests, and the desire to create a larger degree of interest in the town, drawing on it's strengths. Develop cross-branding .

**Dick DeGray-** accepted invitation from Anderson to come to a TAC meeting. Comes to this meeting from the Downtown Business Alliance (formerly BABB), with Stephanie Bonin (promotions). Notes islands of interest and the strength in cross-promotion, getting us all together brainstorming, and working toward a wholistic growth. Sees islands of interest, some organization's doing well without cross-promotion but imagines what a real cross-promotion might bring. Think holistically.

**Hugh Keelan-** Shares that TAC cannot take this on 100%, which is why everyone was called together, so we can plant a seed-bed. He says he wants everyone to leave the meeting with an idea of a *new* way to do things, not a better way to do what we've already done.

*"What you are doing already to promote the town?"* (group broken up into clusters of 4/5)

### **Sharing What We Learned:**

- Salviani and Anderson with TAC working on micro-financing for small artists in conjunction with local banks and the town.
- Salviani w/ TAC create Art Show for emerging artists
- Downtown Association has \$5,000 in their budget to promote Brattleboro to the National press.
- There is much promotion going on by individual artists/ little collaborative promotion.
- Need for centralized website to link individual artist websites.
- BMAC has 15,000 visitors per year, but with a limited marketing reach. (1/3 of BMAC visitors travel from outside of 1 mile away) stretch north, stretch south ( i.e. Northampton catchment is 1 million within. 60 miles)
- BMAC is opening the door to potential cultural foot traffic.
- ACWC is working on promoting Gallery Walk beyond our town.
- ACWC is working on throwing an Arts Party for May, 2016.
- Brattleboro was voted #2 in the country for crafts towns, second to St. Petersburg, which has a population of 10-20 times the size of Brattleboro. All happened through a social media effort!
- NECCA holds 3 or 4 weekend Workshops per year designed for visitors and guests. Minimum of 300 with vast majority coming in from out of town/ out of state. These are cultural tourists staying in local hotels and B&Bs, eating and shopping downtown

### **Compilation of a List of Perceived Obstacles**

(see photo)

### **Compilation of "I Wish" List**

(see photo)

*"What NEW idea can you contribute to helping promote Brattleboro?" (group broken up into different clusters of 4/5)*

### **Sharing What We Propose:**

- Creating a committee/initiative to explore other communities who are more successful at promotion and creating a flourishing cultural community. To visit, to talk to town members involved in it's success, learning from them, and using them as a model, of sorts, for Brattleboro. "Who has already encountered this problem and solved it? Why reinvent the wheel?" Communities including Portsmouth, NH, Asheville, NC, Berkshires/Great Barrington.
- Using the energy of individual and spread-out festivals in town to set up a collaborative and cooperative gathering for all of the arts. "X is to the Arts as Strolling is to Agriculture!"
- To tackle the lack of centralization which leads to a dissipated energy, create a "First-Visit" Tourism Department which has it's own space and staff. It would serve as a central promotional body or structure to promote the town. "Brattleboro Tourism."

### **Action Step:**

Everyone was encouraged to share one action step they were willing to take in light of this new conversation about promoting Brattleboro.

### **Meeting Adjourned at 5:30 pm**

Respectfully submitted, Angel Francia-Mackinnon (Town Arts Committee)

Promoting Brand Awareness

ISSUES  
BLAME

- NO "PEOPLE"
- DOMINATION
- Fear of Commitment

- Lack of COMMITMENT
- Lack of Consensus

• WHO is our target? • WHAT are we promoting?  
 • HOW to do it?

- Infrastructure (access, connectivity)
- VT's lack of marketing education
- Lack of CAPABILITY
- Assumptions

- BUREAUCRACY
- Lack of leadership

- UNSHARED info
- WHEEL Spinning
- MISAPPROPRIATED FUNDS
- Value of ART

- DREGGING Collaborative

- UNSTATED info
- WHEEL Spinning
- MISAPPROPRIATED FUNDS
- Value of ART

- Open-minded
- Inclusive
- Pull it together
- Vehicle for social change
- Affordable
- Vibrant
- Inevitable
- Exemplary
- Funded
- Accessible (including parking)
- Loving
- Commitment
- Collaborative
- Functional
- Magical
- Liberative
- Famous
- Festivals