



Town of Strafford Arts & Events Council – A Master Plan Subcommittee

MEETING: ARTS & EVENTS COUNCIL- A SUBCOMITTEE of the TOWN OF STRAFFORD PLANNING BOARD

MEETING DATE: February 15, 2024, 4:30-5:30pm (Meeting Two)

MEETING PLACE: Hill Library

COMMITTEE:

Chair: Susan Ryan (603-321-0163 = cell phone or text) (SuzRyan1@Gmail.com)

Committee Members: Kaitlin Witcher LaBreck (Kaitlin@ProfoundRealEstate.com), Daniel Dupee (Bowlakerentals@yahoo.com) via Facetime)

Absent/Excused: Cristyn Black (CristynBlack@gmail.com), Risa Winter Ceskavich (Rceskavich@Gmail.com), Kelly Kilgallon (Kelly@Taphousemedia.com),

MINUTES

Call Meeting to order at 4:27 and introduction of newly attending members. All present voted to unanimously approve meeting minutes from 1/25/24 meeting. Council member **TO DO's/Follow-up are noted in red** below.

Committee members reported out on contacts made based on assignments distributed in the 1/25 meeting.

Kaitlin contacted the Fire/Police Department, BLCOA, BLCC/Grange (including Christmas in Strafford organizers) and obtained their list of activities planned for 2024. The fate of/State of Lakeside Players is a that they have disbanded as attendance was an issue and recruiting talent for shows was challenging. Kaitlin will find out if they were a 501c3 and if that still exists. **Susan volunteered to talk with Sue Higgins about what equipment (sound and lighting) may still be available at the Grange/Community Center.**

Susan contacted or reviewed the following: Library has an excellent calendar online. Women's Club has been contacted (Carol Cooper, Jane Roberts and Lucinda Kerivan) and should be back in touch with their calendar of events. For Churches, Sue Higgins supplied information for the Bow Lake Baptist Church (via Kaitlin). Pastor Muzzey supplied information for 3rd Baptist Church and Crown Point Baptist has yet to respond. Susan is scheduled to meet with an owner of Bow Lake Inn (Carol) related only to Farmer Market.

Risa was to contact the Garden Club, Historical Society, and Schools in town as well as Coe Brown. She was absent from meeting so her report out was deferred. **Susan volunteered to contact Linda Hartman in regards to the Garden Club and Kaitlin volunteered to reach out to Jessica Alamazon for school updates.**

A full **calendar** of all the information obtained so far is attached to these minutes.

Planning Board Update includes there being a meeting for Sub Committee Chairs to provide updates on 2/20/24 at 6:30 meeting to be held at Town Hall. **Susan will inquire about any town-based funding at that meeting along with events insurance. Gain insight on how to promote this Council and gain support perhaps via a Facebook page, town website or other means. Susan will also present the mission we developed for this**

committee and review how this committee appears to fall under various parts of the Master Plan to obtain some clarity on that. During the meeting the Council reviewed the attached document that represents the various places and verbiage used to describe this Council so that we could arrive at the Councils Mission Statement noted below. That said, the Council will bring to the Planning Boards attention that it's not clear where the Council resides within the Master Plan and while Community Character seems to be the intended location, Economic Development has the specific language referencing Arts & Culture.

Council Mission Statement:

Much productive discussion was held regarding the mission of this committee. Insight into the intent of the Council based on the Master Plan was pulled directly from that document (see attached for **Mission** source information related to that). The arrived at mission statement for this Council is as follows unless otherwise directed by the Town Planning Committee in the upcoming meeting on 2/20/24:

“Enrich community connections by expanding local arts and culture through community events, activities and programs for residents of all ages.”

Arts & Events Council Meeting Schedule:

It was determined that future recurring meetings will be held on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 3-4:00 at the Hill Library and Susan will continue to publicize these meetings on Facebook and as the Planning Committee deems appropriate.

New Business:

Citizen suggestions for **Events and Activities** submitted to Susan by Cindy Lavigne, along with other suggestions by Kaitlin, Daniel and Susan as noted in the attached. These will be the basis for discussion at the next meeting on March 21, 2024. Daniel offered to contact Lebanon NH Town Arts contact to become educated on how they approached building up Arts and Events in their town. Kaitlin offered to contact BNI about the same. All members will consider other like sized towns we could contact to see how they approached activity building.

5:27 Adjourn

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Events and Activities Ideas List,
- 2) Calendar of the currently scheduled events in town, and
- 3) Mission source information



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1) EVENT and ACTIVITIES IDEAS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION:

- a) Air National Guard Helicopter Display Day (Rochester did this) Touch a truck too?
- b) Bingo and Beers night
- c) Cardboard Boat Races
- d) Children based events
- e) Christmas Tree Decorating Contest (donate after to less fortunate?)
- f) Community Cookbook
- g) Concerts
- h) Cooking Classes- vary culture and types of courses
- i) Cultural Food Day
- j) Dating Game Show- Dinner Date nights
- k) Family Treasure Hunts
- l) Farmers Market with music and art displays/sales
- m) Flea Market
- n) Holiday Lights Competition
- o) Ice Hockey Tournament
- p) Ice Sculpture Display/Competition
- q) Karaoke Idol Contest
- r) Local Arts, Crafts, Hobby & Music Show with Food trucks
- s) Meet your neighbor's dinner-Dinner for 4 (couples teamed up with other they don't know)
- t) Music on the Lake
- u) Pet Parade and Beauty Contest
- v) Pie Baking, Pizza or other food contests
- w) Road Clean-up day
- x) Senior based events
- y) Sports competition based events- i.e. three-legged races, most basketball shots, etc.
- z) Skateboarding shows
- aa) Strafford Book of Town Records gathering- i.e. Tallest person, longest beard, oldest truck
- bb) Vendor Fair
- cc) Who's Got Talent Show

2) Calendar:

DATE 2024	EVENT	OFFERED BY
March 23	Easter Bunny	BLCC/Grange
May 27	Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony	Town and BLCC
June 1	Bow Lake Road Race	
June 29	Pancake Breakfast	Fire Dept
June 29	Steak Tip Drive Thru	Bow Lake Baptist Church
July 3	Food Truck Fest, Fireworks	Town and BLCC
July 4	Day at the Dam	BLCOA
July TBD	Chicken BBQ	BLCOA
August TBD	Lobster Cookout	BLCOA
August 31	COGO Golf Tournament	BLCOA at Nippo Lake CC
September 1	Ducks over the Dam	BLCC/Grange
September 1	Loon Aid Benefit Concert on the Lake	Island Mike and Friends (Isla Saunders Benefit)
September 27	Firemen's Golf Tournament	Fire Dept
October 12	Chili Chowder Cook off	BLCC/Grange
October 30	Haunted House Trick or Treat	BLCC/Grange
December 1	Tree Lighting with Santa	BLCC/Grange
December 7-8	Christmas in Strafford	BLCC/Grange
January-December	Private Events and public fundraisers	BLCC/Grange



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3) Mission Statement Source Information: (as distributed to Arts & Events Council in advance of 2/15 meeting)

Source Information for Town of Strafford Arts & Events Council Mission and Goals

There is some lack of clarity on where the Arts & Events Council resides within the Master Plan. References to *ideals* associated with enhanced Arts & Events vitality in town are scattered within The Plan and other documentation related to its implementation as noted below.

Master Plan Vision 2033: Strafford values its distinct rural character and small-town community look and feel. We want the town to grow in a way that protects and enhances our natural, *cultural*, and recreational resources, especially Bow Lake. We envision a thriving small- and home business centric economy, robust community services and programs that serve all ages, and expanded housing opportunities that are broadly affordable to all.

“Community Character” (page 17):

Strafford is known as the “town with Bow Lake,” a scenic 1,100-acre water body. Though largely surrounded by cottages and homes, the lake, and the Town, have kept their rural charm. Strafford is mostly forested, has only two small stores, and lacks a single traffic light, yet the Town’s population exceeds 4,200 people. The Town lies 25 miles inland from the ocean and is centrally located between several nearby urban areas— Concord, Rochester, Dover, and Portsmouth. While two State roads traverse the Town, Strafford lacks commercial and industrial development; besides residences, the Town contains abundant open space. Over 25% of this open space is permanently protected from development. Parker Mountain, entirely undeveloped, provides a striking backdrop to the Town center and embodies the Town’s rural character. Collectively, these features provide a sense of a largely undeveloped and unspoiled landscape, which most townspeople welcome. Perhaps due to its history as a part of Barrington, Strafford lacks a true town center. The elements are there in Center Strafford—the school, the Town hall and post office, the library, the historical society, and a church, but these lie apart from each other without connecting sidewalks or a binding feature such as a traditional town green. Strafford has several community organizations, including the Garden Club, the Historical Society, and the Bow Lake Community Club. The school provides a ready network for social interaction for children and families. The Town library has excellent programming that serves a range of ages found in the community. However, many townspeople do not engage with these networks, and would welcome additional means to meet, participate, and interact with others in the community. As the Town grows, planning for the protection of Strafford’s rural character, historic resources, and Bow Lake is an important concern. This chapter addresses how residents feel about the state of the Town now, and how its valued qualities can be maintained and enhanced for residents and newcomers, now and into the future.

“Community Character” (page 17/18): KEY TRENDS, NEEDS, CONSIDERATIONS

Many participants in the master planning process shared a similar sentiment: Strafford is a welcoming community where word-of-mouth is often the most effective form of communication. When residents were asked in the Strafford Master Plan Survey what they love most about Strafford, 94% of respondents consider community either very important or important, and 1/3 of open-ended responses included the word “community.” This is strong evidence for the sense of community present in the Town and guiding this master plan update. Many residents moved to Strafford because of the community’s character: residents love the small-town, rural atmosphere.

Strafford embodies classic New England aesthetics, including beautiful rural landscapes, abundant and protected natural resources, vernacular architecture, and historic buildings. The Town is also marked by its agricultural roots, which can still be seen in the rolling pastures and farmland in some parts of the Town. Residents hope to maintain these appealing qualities while addressing future development pressures through effective land use policy that allows space for new housing and enhanced social gathering spaces, while protecting open space, natural resources, agricultural businesses, and classic architecture. The main gathering places in the Town currently include the library, school, and Grange. Residents strongly support the creation of a central gathering space, like a community or recreation center, to offer multi-generational programming as well as a place to gather. Combining a community center with the Town library to share facilities and augment programming is one possible approach identified in the planning process.

“Community Character” Goals and Actions (page 19): Section does not comment on any arts and events goals specifically.

“Economic Development” section (page 22/23) under Goals and Actions. These are also restated on page 36 under Implementation Guide:

9) *Engage in creative place-making activities that support local artisans, build community character, and enhance economic vibrancy*

- A. Identify and promote existing arts, culture, and nature-based recreation opportunities in Town and leverage their use to create other economic opportunities.*
- B. Explore hosting local vendors markets to bring visibility to small business and celebrate their local community.*
- C. Identify public spaces suitable for temporary or permanent multi-use art installations.*

In the Implementation Guide under “Community Services” section (page 26/27) is the following under Goals and Actions:

13) Strengthen community cohesion by expanding indoor and outdoor recreational and *cultural opportunities* with a focus on *creating community events, activities, and programs for residents of all ages.*

Other sources of information related to mission and goals for consideration include:

Hand out from Planning meeting 12/2023

“Community Character” Subcommittees:

- Focus Area #4 : Arts Council- Public Arts/Promotion
- Priority (#4) : Expand arts and culture awareness events

Community Calendar Announcing Various Committee Formation 9/2023

#5 Arts Council

- Community arts/crafts/music/theatre
- Classes, exhibits, displays, events