

UNOFFICIAL DRAFT SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF
MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
ADVOCACY COMMITTEE**

TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2020

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL OFFICE
10 ST JAMES AVENUE-3D FLOOR
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

The meeting was called to order at NOON

Committee Members Present

Troy Siebels, Co-chair of Advocacy Committee (phone)
Sherry Dong, Co-chair of Advocacy Committee (phone)
Nina Fialkow, Chair, Mass Cultural Council
Marc Carroll, Vice Chair, Mass Cultural Council
Susan Leff
Matthew Keator (by phone)
Victoria Marsh
Jo-Ann Davis (as guest)

Other Guests Present

Tracie Konopinski, MASSCreative

Staff members present were

Anita Walker, Executive Director
David Slatery, Deputy Director
Bethann Steiner, Communications Director
Jen Lawless, Operations Director

The co-chairs of the Advocacy Committee called the meeting to order and referred to the Open Meeting Law Statement:

Please note that this meeting is an open meeting of a public body subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. A notice of this meeting together with the agenda was posted on Mass Cultural Council's website 48 or more hours ago (excluding weekends and holidays).

This meeting shall be open and accessible to all members of the public except at such times when this body has voted to go into closed executive session under the Open Meeting Law.

Please note that this body has invited the staff of Mass Cultural Council and other invited guests to participate in today's meeting

Mass Cultural Council welcomes members of the public to attend its meetings. Under the Open Meeting Law, however, this is not a public hearing and public testimony will not be taken. Individuals may not address the meeting without permission of the chair.

Draft minutes of the open session of this meeting shall be kept and shall be posted on Mass Cultural Council's website no later than 30 days after the meeting provided that such minutes shall not be considered official until they have been approved by this body in open session. Individuals asserting a violation of the Open Meeting Law may file a complaint with this body within 30 days or with the Attorney General's office thereafter.

Troy and Sherry asked for approval of the minutes of the December 18, 2019 meeting. Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was

RESOLVED: that the Advocacy Committee approves the minutes of the December 18, 2019 Committee Meeting in the form presented to the Committee at its March 3, 2020 Meeting.

The co-chairs asked Anita Walker for her report as Executive Director.

Anita noted she had been spending a lot of time at the State House meeting with legislators thanks in large part to our new Communications

Director, Bethann Steiner and asked Bethann to describe the recent advocacy efforts.

Bethann referred to the advocacy plan that was circulated in the meeting materials, mentioned our starting place in H2 (the Governor's budget) and our new case statement *Power of Culture* and referred to the one-page "Budget Ask" She mentioned that we are hoping that Council members will use these resources to help them reach out to their hometown representatives and senators.

Jo-Ann Davis mentioned that she thought the materials were excellent.

Bethann reported that the Joint Ways & Means Committee Budget Hearing occurred on February 24th and Anita testified along with some constituents. Representative Schmid stated at the hearing that the Council was really "punching above its weight."

The House and Senate Chairs of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development helped us develop our strategy to ask for a \$2 million increase this year and stand ready to file any necessary amendments to get the Council's appropriation up to that level.

Bethann briefly outlined the budget process and timeline and mentioned how important it was for Council members to reach out to the local legislators and we hoped to develop a schedule of regular communication schedule.

The Committee discussed this point generally and asked Bethann if she could please provide some outreach communications that Committee members could use. Troy mentioned that it was important for members to report back into Bethann with any feedback they receive from their legislators.

The Committee discussed having Bethann draft a joint email from Sherry and Troy as co-chairs of the Advocacy Committee to all of the members asking them to participate in advocacy activities.

Troy then asked Tracie Konopinski to report on MASS Creative's activities. Traci indicated they had been focusing on "in-district" meetings with legislators as well meetings with leadership and arts leaders.

Advocacy Day will occur every other year. MASS Creative, in addition to the Council's budget is also focusing on the following bills

- Percent for Art program
- Procurement relief to make it easier for communities to procure public art.
- Establishing a dedicated revenue stream for the arts.

In related political news, Troy announced that the Hanover Theater will host a debate between the Democratic senatorial candidates and will be permitted to insert an "arts question" into the debate and asked for suggestions.

Susan Leff mentioned that the payment in lieu of tax (PILOT) issue is a huge issue for nonprofits in Boston. Anita mentioned that this has been an ongoing issue for many years and that The Boston Foundation had been advocating against. Its very hard on arts organizations who tend to be far more financially fragile than other taxpayers.

Matthew indicated that he had been in contact with his state legislator to advocate for the Council.

Anita mentioned the coronavirus issue that staff is monitoring. Currently there has not been any official instruction on cancelling events or wearing masks. If the crisis caused these things to occur, it could have a particularly harsh effect on the operations of arts organizations. Nina asked if staff could put out a statement of best practices and highlight what the state is saying. Staff indicated they would

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned