

AUBURN'S HISTORIC & CULTURAL SITES COMMISSION

Meeting minutes from January 11, 2023

Auburn Public Theater, 8 Exchange Street, Auburn, NY 13021

Present: R. Bradley, Dr. R. Burgess, B. Chabot, A. Daddabbo, D. Gottschalk-Fielding, C. Kasper, J. Kline, K. Kuhl, D. Lamb, C. Mason, Rev. P. Price, G. Sears, J. Waller, A. Wilson, K. Wise Gosch, J. Wrench

Excused: C. Eidel, J. Giannettino, D. Stankus, K. Walker

Absent: Rev. P. Carter, K. Hill, S. Kline

Guests: K. Grindstaff

Call to Order January 11, 2023, at 9:05 a.m. by B. Chabot. The mission statement was read by J. Kline.

Approval of Minutes

B. Chabot noted that K. Grindstaff was mistakenly omitted from the list of present guests when reviewing the minutes, then asked for a motion to accept the October 12, 2022 minutes as amended, and the motion was made by K. Wise Gosch and seconded by J. Kline. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Finance Report

C. Kasper presented the Finance Report. Details about the advertising budget line were broken down to elaborate inclusion in the Rev Theatre program, the 55+ Magazine Fall edition, the Auburn Public Theater program, WRVO and the Skaneateles boat show program. Memberships will be marginally impacted by the increase of \$5 with FLTA and possibly with Skaneateles Chamber, which is rumored to cost \$140 rather than the expected \$125. Expenses for the Passport to History program have yet to be incurred. The Special Projects line has been exhausted. Much of the fulfillment budget remains; the cost thus far has been used to ship boxes of Auburn guides and other relevant materials to partners, most notably the Empire State Plaza welcome center in Albany. Funding for the Pride rally in June will be incorporated towards the end of the fiscal year.

B. Chabot asked for a motion to accept the finance report as submitted, and the motion was made by D. Lamb and seconded by K. Wise Gosch. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Committee Reports

Tourism Strategies

Site Director Reports:

J. Waller and A. Wilson presented an update for the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park. No official partnership agreement was formulated between the Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. (HTH) and the National Park Service (NPS); though HTH remains a legislative partner. No onsite tours will be conducted at the 180 South Street property except for special arrangements. The properties on Parker Street, particularly the church, will be the focus for NPS. Recently a plaster test and wall stenciling were conducted at the church with a hope to be open in time for Juneteenth or at least by September for National Underground Railroad month. Town Hall meetings will be arranged to gather neighborhood feedback and support. A temporary ranger is being sought to replace newly retired Ranger Kimberly Szewczyk, with more rangers expected to be hired by May. In 2022, approximately 3,000 visitors participated in the Harriet Tubman walking tours and onsite tours, which NPS rangers and staff led 2-3 times weekly during the peak season. A conservative estimate for visitation at the new site this year would be approximately 15,000 visitors. Transportation offices will be conducting a feasibility study from Washington to consider mobility to the different sites and address the parking issue. Options may include temporary street parking, a shuttle service on a set schedule, or to work with a partner wherein NPS would provide vehicles for another entity to operate and maintain this fiscal year. New staff will be trained at the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, which saw approximately 34,000 visitors in 2022, about 80% of the Pre-COVID figure from 2019.

D. Lamb stated the Quilts=Art=Quilts exhibit at Schweinfurth Art Center wrapped on January 8, 2023, and in the last two weeks saw roughly 100 people per day. Annual reports are forthcoming. The Quilting by the Lake workshop will be rehomed to Cayuga County in 2023, though new locations are still being sought.

A. Daddabbo stated the comedy show at Auburn Public Theater on January 7, 2023 was sold out. The organization's fiscal year has just changed from September-August now to align with the calendar year.

K. Wise Gosch stated Cayuga Museum will undergo some building remodeling prior to reopening for the season on March 1. A fundraising fashion show will be held in the Carriage House Theater on Sunday, March 26, 2023 in support of the new 'Fabrication' exhibit for 2023. J. Kline is coordinating this limited-ticket event. The perennial prison exhibit will be reinterpreted.

B. Chabot stated Seward House Museum will reopen on March 1, 2023 for the season when a new exhibit highlighting Judge Elijah Miller, the Auburn Prison, and criminal justice reform will be unveiled. The April First Friday celebration will commemorate the official reveal of the new exhibit as to not be overshadowed by Brave Brews events for the March First Friday and subsequent weekend. That Saturday, March 4 will see the return of the 'Real Housewives of Cayuga County' specialty tours, to be offered three times that day. The DRI project to renovate the barn and carriage house for historic preservation is out to bid.

R. Bradley stated the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War is approaching and planning for events and marketing is underway. Themes of 'not over', suffrage, rights, and abolition will be highlighted. NPS will explore 'unfinished' and 'remixing the revolution' themes in their educational efforts.

The Site Director Strategic Meeting was held on Monday, November 7, 2022 at the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center.

C. Kasper relayed details about conversation from the Site Director Strategic Meeting. A 'One Pass' was considered, either for all the sites together on one ticket or a select combo modeled after the collaboration between Cayuga Museum and Schweinfurth Art Center. The idea is currently in the development stage with a trial run being planned for November. The next meeting will take place on April 3, 2023. The Committees work plan will be presented for approval at the Commission meeting on April 12, 2023.

Marketing

Marketing Committee

A meeting will be conducted on January 24, 2023 at 2PM in the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center (ERHC) for the 2023 edition of the Auburn guide with Michelle Bowers from The Citizen and other partners. Updates to site partner copy and pictures will be addressed, as well as removal of Harriet Tubman Bicentennial (HT200) content. Pricing to print the guide with fewer pages will be explored. ARPA funding will be used to cover costs, per C. Kasper.

Brave Brews event details are currently being sought from sites so promotion can advance soon.

Market NY Campaign

Lisa Krebs from TGW, who presented at the October Commission meeting, provided the November report, as seen in the packet. C. Kasper relayed that a new tourism driven video with perennial content is in development, to be called 'Meet me in Auburn' and is modeled after similar promotional materials with Boston and Illinois tourism influences, respectively. Break the Ice Media (BTI) will focus on community engagement to educate partners and frontline staff.

C. Mason stated 2023 is the final year of a 3-round of grants available through December. ARPA funding reports were requested; please send 2022 event and site visitation attendance data to J. Giannettino for presentation at an upcoming City Council meeting and for grant documentation.

LaLew and TGW, who collaborated on HT200, will again assist us this year with LaLew overseeing the Juneteenth events' promotion.

Auburn NY Visitor Guide 2023

Quantity of 2022 guides remaining of original 10,000 pieces from May 2022: 5400 pieces = 27 boxes. Price quotes for a smaller print quantity will be requested of Jacobs Press through the mouthpiece of Auburn guide producing partner, The Citizen.

2023 Programming

Brave Brews March 3-5

TGW will promote the second annual Brave Brews Festival. The Pink Boots Society founder will be involved. Programs are listed on the website and sponsors are being sought. First Friday programming for

March 3, 2023 is in development and sites are encouraged to incorporate female performers in their events. The Fire and Ice Festival on Saturday, March 4, 2023 is a ticketed event striving to sell 600 tickets like last year; so far, 250 tickets have been sold. The Real Housewives of Cayuga County specialty tour at Seward House Museum returns with three tours this year to last year's two tours in response to the strong interest. More details are available on their website.

Harriet Tubman Week March 10-15

Harriet Tubman Week officially launches on Thursday, March 9, 2023 with a proclamation being read at the City Council meeting that evening at 5PM. A ceremony will be held at ERHC on Friday, March 10, 2023 at 2PM featuring a book talk with author, Clarence Lusane. Sites are encouraged to participate in the week of festivities. Rev. P. Price shared information about a partnership with the Harriet Tubman Liberation Foundation and the NAACP hosting the 2-day long 'You Matter' Women's Conference to be held on March 10-11 in support of women's health.

Passport to History

Kate Grindstaff, the Outreach Coordinator at Seward House Museum, will lead the Passport to History Program with Ranger Janine Waller, Gillian Sears, and Dr. Renee Burgess. Planning for the 2023 school program for Auburn's 4th grade students is underway. K. Grindstaff shared details about topics discussed at the first committee meeting of the year. New passport books will need to be printed. According to Dr. R. Burgess, there are 295 4th grade students in the Auburn Enlarged Central School District (AECSD) this year. Sites are asked to offer updates to their respective page in the passport by February 1, 2023 so printing can occur that month. School meetings with teachers and principals are anticipated to occur in March and will be conducted by K. Grindstaff. School trips will be proposed for April and May and a structured schedule will be provided. The point of contact for each of the sites was confirmed and K. Grindstaff will make those connections. A virtual material share is being considered for the benefit of improving access to educational content for students and their families. All students will receive a 'prize' for participation and sites are asked to contribute an appropriate giveaway by May. Amanda Tallcot, a local teacher and co-creator of the Auburn's History coloring book, is seeking grant funding to make the coloring books available to the students.

Auburn NY Pride (June)

A Pride rally is being planned for Saturday, June 24 at ERHC. Some funding is available from the sale of themed T-shirts developed in 2021. Reverend Heary from Westminster Chapel will be approached regarding the interfaith service that occurs this time of year annually. This year marks the 50th anniversary of hip hop, which is being explored as a possible tie-in with this and other events.

Juneteenth (June)

A Market NY Grant in the amount of \$35,000 is available for the purpose of acquiring talent for the month-long celebration and the related weekend. Applications for the grant are due in February. On Saturday, June 17 the Auburn Downtown BID will partner with Rev. P. Price and Booker T. Washington (BTW) Community Center for special programming to include a proclamation reading at ERHC then family friendly events at BTW until 5PM. The promotion of diverse artists is a major focal point. These events run concurrent with I Love NY's Path Through History Weekend. Auburn Public Theater will host R&B Productions comedy that night.

Founder's Day (August 12)

The theme for the day-long event is to be determined by the City. Willard Memorial Chapel is interested in reprising their role as host for Art Flair.

Holiday Traditions (December 10)

Sites are encouraged to share anecdotal stories about the event's return in 2022. Attendance data has been requested.

New Business

I Love NY's Path Through History weekend will occur twice in 2023, June 17-18 and October 7-9.

A solar eclipse event will occur across all of New York State on April 8, 2024. The Rochester Museum of Science has already begun event planning and promotion and cautions of transportation challenges and gridlock surrounding the phenomenon. Our area will be encompassed within the Path of Totality, so tourism partners should anticipate an increase in visitor traffic.

Old Business

There was no old business.

Announcements

New merchandise is available at ERHC, including two logo tote bag styles plus notecards representing the artwork depicted on the new lamp post banners featured prominently in downtown. The original artwork is on display in the gallery at ERHC through January 31.

One familiar chapter is closed as Gavin, and ERHC campaign originator, departs the TGW team.

A new bagel shop will open mid-March at 105 Genesee Street. Today's refreshments, provided by meeting host APT, are bagels made with the same recipe to be expected from the new location.

K. Wise Gosch announced The Rev Theatre is bringing back The PiTCH to Carriage House Theater for the month of April in 2023.

Adjournment

A unanimous vote concluded that future quarterly meetings will be scheduled from 9:00 a.m. until 10:30 a.m., extending the timeframe by thirty minutes.

B. Chabot adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m. A motion was made by K. Wise Gosch and seconded by J. Kline. All were in favor and the motion carried. The next Commission meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, 4/12/2023 at Auburn Public Theater.

Minutes by Gillian Sears