



Rochester City Council

Community Development Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Elaine Lauterborn, Chair
Donna Bogan, Vice Chair
Tom Abbott
Jeremy Hutchinson
James Gray

Meeting Date:	Monday, September 9, 2019	
Members Present:	Tom Abbott Donna Bogan James Gray Elaine Lauterborn	Members Absent: Jeremy Hutchinson
Guests/Staff:	Julian Long, Community Development Coordinator Anthony Ejarque, Rochester Opera House	

Councilor Lauterborn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Motion was made by Councilor Bogan and seconded by Councilor Abbott to approve the August 12, 2019 Community Development Committee minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT	There was no public input.
ROCHESTER OPERA HOUSE – Summer Music Series	<p>Councilor Lauterborn stated that there is general support on the City Council for a summer music series and that there are currently summer concerts held at the Rochester Commons. Mr. Ejarque presented a brief proposal on an indoor summer music and theater festival, to be held at the Rochester Opera House and hosted by the City of Rochester. Mr. Ejarque stated that an indoor festival would distinguish itself from neighboring communities' summer events and also be less expensive than an outdoor series.</p> <p>Councilor Lauterborn asked about existing summer shows at the Rochester Opera House. Mr. Ejarque stated that these were produced by an outside producer and not the Opera House itself. Currently the Opera House is not interested in producing summer theater for charged admission. Mr. Ejarque added that he thinks a family-friendly musical theater show would be an especially good choice.</p> <p>Councilor Lauterborn suggested that the city could start with a single show and see how it performs. Mr. Ejarque agreed that starting with a single show and growing the program from there would be a good approach. Councilor Lauterborn asked if the City of Portsmouth's summer series is run by the city or by an independent foundation. Mr. Ejarque stated that Portsmouth partners with an organization for its series and owns the land where the series is held.</p>

	<p>Councilor Bogan expressed support for the proposed summer series, as it will build on downtown renovation projects and the upcoming opening of new restaurants. Councilor Abbott asked whether there would be a way to tie together the existing or additional outdoor arts events with indoor events. Mr. Ejarque suggested that the City Hall Annex courtyard and John Shaw Park would be suitable locations for outdoor events.</p> <p>Councilor Gray asked whether the proposed summer series would be eligible for CDBG funding. Mr. Long replied that he did not think it would be eligible but could conduct further research to provide a more definitive answer. Mr. Long added that he would also be happy to look into other grant funding sources that might be a good match for the event.</p> <p>Councilor Lauterborn asked when the funding would have to be secured in order to produce the series for summer 2020. Mr. Ejarque replied that it would have to be January 2020 in order to secure royalties. Potential funding sources discussed included Rochester Rotary Club and Waste Management.</p>
<p>FY 2019 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT – Review and Approval</p>	<p>Mr. Long provided an overview of the draft Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report. All activities met or exceeded goals for FY 2019, with the exception of the Rochester Housing Authority’s Charles Street permanent supportive housing project. The RHA project was placed on indefinite hold due to lack of gap financing.</p> <p><i>Motion was made by Councilor Gray and seconded by Councilor Bogan to accept the draft FY 2019 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report.</i> The motion passed unanimously.</p>
<p>AUGUST 2019 HUD SITE MONITORING</p>	<p>Mr. Long provided a brief overview of the HUD site visit from August. Overall HUD found that the City of Rochester was in compliance with HUD rules and regulations in most respects but that HUD had suggestions on improvements for the city’s grant applications, quarterly report forms, and other such documents. Two areas of greater concern identified were the eligibility determinations for the Rochester Community Center tennis court lights project and SOS Recovery Center.</p> <p>Mr. Long explained that he has provided to HUD a more detailed narrative justifying the eligibility analysis for the Community Center tennis court lights project. He added that he is still coordinating with SOS Recovery Center to obtain income documentation for HUD but that it might not be deemed acceptable by HUD. The FY 2019 SOS Recovery Center activity was classified as benefited “presumed low-moderate income clients” based on adults with disabilities, as all SOS Recovery Center clients are adults with substance use disorder. However, during the HUD site visit, HUD informed city staff that further substantiation of disability beyond substance use disorder diagnosis is required for this presumed client benefit classification.</p>
<p>PROGRAMS REPORT – CDBG Projects, Other Grant Projects</p>	<p>Councilor Lauterborn asked about the first round of public hearings for the FY 2020-2025 Consolidated Plan and FY 2021 Annual Action Plan drafts. Mr. Long explained that as the first public hearings take place before the draft plans are posted for public review, there is no first reading before these public hearings.</p>

	<p>Mr. Long stated he would coordinate with the City Clerk’s office to schedule these hearings.</p> <p>Regarding the City of Rochester’s ongoing participation in the statewide Community of Action for Lead Safety program, Mr. Long stated that the city’s lead safety action team has considered partnering with New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority’s statewide lead abatement program. This partnership might involve providing CDBG funds as matching funds when a property owner cannot provide the necessary matching funds for an abatement project.</p> <p>Councilor Gray asked whether the Community Action Partnership of Strafford County (CAP) would be interested in running a lead abatement program, as it already conducts home weatherization work for lower-income residents. Mr. Long replied that he has approached the organization about the possibility but that CAP doesn’t seem to have the capacity to take on a lead program at this time. Councilor Abbott added that, with changing lead standards at the state and federal levels, the need for lead abatement is going to increase. Preference for revolving loan fund over grant. Councilor Abbott also expressed a preference for any lead abatement program or partnership to provide funds in the form of loans rather than grants.</p>
OTHER BUSINESS	There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Next Meeting – Monday, December 9, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in Isinglass Conference Room in City Hall Annex (33 Wakefield Street)

Topics – FY 2021 Pre-Grant Presentations Discussion, Projects Program Report

Minutes Attachment: City of Rochester 2020 Summer Arts Festival at Rochester Opera House Proposal

City of Rochester NH
Presents

2020
Summer Art's Festival

At

The Rochester Opera House

(Proposal)

7.24.19

Overview:

The City of Rochester presents a summer season of family oriented theatre and concerts at The Rochester Opera House free to the public and geared to draw City residents and area guests to the downtown.

Potential suggested titles:

Shrek, Wizard of Oz, Alladin, Annie, Joseph, Bye Bye Birdie, Mamma Mia, Oklahoma

History:

The Rochester Opera House has a long history of presenting summer theatre. The Rochester Opera House was the home of Rochester Music Theatre from 1962-1974. After the renovation The Opera House experimented with 7 seasons of summer theatre, 4 years of assorted comedy and concerts, 2 seasons of free "Art's for All" programing and 3 years of kids camp.

Outcome:

The desired outcome is to draw thousands of people to the downtown and create a perception that the City is committed to creating a positive image and a family environment.

Perception vs. Reality:

Despite the fact that the City is committed to improving the downtown the perception that the City is indifferent prevails. Popular opinion is that the city has invested heavily in the outskirts of the community and left the downtown behind. Perception dictates that the City has invested millions on Rt. 11, Rt. 108, Washington St. and elsewhere while the downtown has dozens of vacant and boarded-up storefronts.

Methodology:

The City contracts with a theatre producer to present a family musical for a 5 week run. The show is free to the public with a suggested donation of \$5.00. The producer contracts with area artists and craftspeople and is responsible for all aspects of the production. If desired the City could further engage the producer to present concerts, children's shows etc.

By offering "free" admission the City levels itself with Dover and Portsmouth that also offer free summer programming. The Opera House believes that presenting ticketed (not free) events during the summer is cost prohibitive due to competing free events that discourage individuals from purchasing a ticket.

Outdoors vs. Indoors:

While it would be wonderful to have an outdoor venue the cost of building an outdoor venue could be prohibitive.

Seasonal stage build-out cost example:

Stage on the Commons:

Stage build	16,000.00
Truss for lighting/sound	8,000.00
Lighting rental	10,000.00
Sound system rental PA	22,000.00
Portable dressing room	6,000.00
Power upgrade	15,000.00
Bathrooms (rental)	3,000.00
Secure control booth	9,000.00
Fencing	2000.00
Tenting	4000.00
Parking	?
Insurance	?

Total estimated build out \$89,000.00

The other mitigating factor is weather. Rain or the report of potential rain forces cancellation. Excessive heat and humidity also has the potential to deter patrons from attending. As reported by Seacoast Media Group, the Prescott Park Arts Festival lost nearly \$250,000.00 due to foul weather cancellations.

An in-door festival in an air-conditioned space is unique in the area and could set Rochester apart from the other communities. The Opera House has all of the technical requirements (listed above) to present a summer season without build-out expenses.

Cost estimate:

Show royalty	\$10,000.00
Artistic staff	\$6,000.00
Set build staff	\$4,000.00
Talent	\$20,000.00
Materials	\$10,000.00
Advertising	\$5,000.00
Operating staff	\$5,000.00

Total estimated cost \$60,000.00

Income:

Door donation	10,000.00
Grants	?
Sponsors	?

Support:

This project may be eligible for CBDG support. There may be other Federal or State programs that would support this initiative. The City, through the producer may choose to engage staff to solicit private sponsors or advertisers to further support the program.

Conclusion:

For a fraction of the price that other communities spend on arts festivals or other civic events the City could present an engaging festival using its own venue. Public perception that the City is engaged in the community would be vastly improved. Local businesses would benefit from additional foot traffic in the community.

