

Camden Opera House Committee Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2013

In Attendance: Kate Bates, Susan Dorr, Judy Godwin, Kerry Hadley, Maryanne Shanahan, Don White

Meeting called to order at 5:08PM

Officers, Committee composition:

Susan Door indicated that she prefers to work in capacities other than as chair going forward. After discussion, Maryanne Shanahan indicated she would assist as chair. Kate Bates prefers to work on special projects. Judy Godwin will consider where she might have the best impact; she continues to be interested in seeing third floor project completed. Last year she did the Opera House holiday window displays, which Kerry hopes she will continue. Susan will be recording secretary and work on projects, which currently includes Annual Appeal.

501c3 application:

The application is working its way through the Maine state government; hasn't yet gone to the federal level. The name has been registered. Emily Lusher, a volunteer who has been working with Windjammer Weekend and helped them with their application, has come forward and offered to help, as it is a cumbersome process that takes time and knowledge to accomplish.

TIF Funds/ Street level box office/Needs Assessment

Despite an enthusiastic response from the group charged with selecting the project for TIF funding, the group won't distribute to COH until a needs assessment has been completed. COH provided the requested information for the needs assessment in a timely way but the consulting group has not as yet completed the assessment.

Fundraising

Kate is interested and willing to help raise funds via grantwriting (as she already has!) and will help on the Annual Appeal. Discussion regarding the purpose of the Annual Appeal: is it for operations or for capital improvements? The message will be that funding will support the mission of the COH, which is to enhance the cultural presence in Camden and the community. Although the Friends non-profit has not been completed, individuals may make tax deductible contributions to the municipality. Kate and Susan will sort through tax rolls to develop an initial list, also names of those who purchased seats in the auditorium during the renovation campaign in the 90's. The letter and list will be ready for members to review at the next meeting.

COH Manager's report: Summer recap by COH Manager

Biggest successes: Don Campbell Band from Portland with a Dan Fogelberg tribute; Arturo O'Farrell from BCC (though still not audience numbers desired) Also hosted a Boston area comedian, Friends of Appalachian Trail and an Outward Bound exercise. COH also hosted many small meetings and several large internal company conferences. CCT production of 'You're a Good

Man Charlie Brown', attendance around 100+/- each night. The production was staged on multiple weekends. Maine ProMusica - booked a date for a summer concert then cancelled due to lack of sponsors. Everyman Rep Theatre - extremely professional, off-Broadway caliber production of Rabbit Hole - good attendance despite tough content, approximately 85 per night. Kerry had encouraged them to only book two weekends instead of three, which spread out their audience.

Research done and a website vendor chosen for complete website upgrade. Ticket software companies researched that will allow subscription sales and donations on the website. Grant completed with Maine Community foundation to supplement OH minimal marketing funds to complete website redo. Will know in November if received.

Marketing enhancement/strategies: Thanks to Judy's suggestion, a weekly ad is being placed in "movie" section of Free Press showing upcoming events at the Opera House. A coop ad with CEDAC will appear in November Maine Biz Magazine to promote COH for meetings. The town manager, Pat Finnegan, suggested hosting a luncheon for meeting planners to promote the COH campus for multi-day, multi-room events. COH can work with planners to cooperate with lodging venues. Maryanne would like to create a public relations/marketing work group.

The concept of the committee working each month in smaller groups and reporting back was discussed as a means to get more done with the minimal resources at hand. Maryanne will put thought to the areas for discussion at the next meeting. Kerry will determine whether there are restrictions on membership in such groups. (She has since determined that a subcommittee needs approval by the Select Board and must be comprised solely of Camden residents, whereas a work group does not and may draw participants from any area.)

Meeting adjourned at 6:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Dorr,
Secretary