

Camden Opera House Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
November 4, 2013
Tucker Room - 5 PM

Present: Kate Bates, Raymond Brunyanski, Susan Dorr, Judy Godwin, Kerry Hadley, Marc Ratner, Maryanne Shanahan, Select Board liaison Don White; visitor Emily Lusher

Meeting called to order by Maryanne at 5:00 PM

Minutes: Minutes from September 9 meeting accepted.

Introductions of new members: Kerry introduced Marc Ratner to the committee – Marc has produced concerts at the Opera House, and has been an advocate within the community. Marc spoke briefly about his background in music promotion in Los Angeles; and as owner of Mishara Music, an indie music label based here in Camden, where he and his family moved for quality of life.

Inaugural Annual Appeal: Kate Bates reiterated the goals of an Annual Appeal – simply, to enhance the annual operating budget. Because this is the appeal, no income target has been set. It was suggested that a great start would be full participation by committee members. Kate distributed letters and a list that she, Susan Dorr and Kerry reviewed of primarily Camden residents. Committee members added notes of encouragement to specific letters. Kerry will work with a team of volunteers later in the week to complete the mailing.

Managers Report:

Events:

Two major last -minute Memorial Services during the week following PopTech. With KH away on family sick leave, Dave Morrison did a tremendous job.

PopTech: Attendee numbers softer than last year, conference days reduced to, Thursday and Friday; fewer speakers. Aim was to model actual attendance, which dropped every day after first day in past years. Saturday allocated to fun events throughout the Midcoast instead. Discussion ensued regarding competition with similar types of conferences, TedX and market saturation.

Camden Conference ticket sales well underway, 55 sold on the first day, according to Emily. Anticipate repeated strong attendance and/or sell out. *Food and Water* is this year's theme.

CIFF: Increased attendance; Camden Opera House was designated a sponsor this year to recognize the subsidy we provide to the event; organization is maturing, hiring professional staff. Great attendance, CIFF loves the COH space. Raymond mentioned overlap in dates with Cellardoor's Vinfest and efforts to move dates to avoid same occurring next year.

Old Business:

Guest Emily Lusher attended to share her expertise applying for 501c3. After two years obtained official status for Windjammer Festival Weekend. She indicated that before all federal papers can be filed the OH committee must be clear on the purpose of the group, the bylaws and the cost of approximately \$800 to apply. Emily has offered to assist and will provide boiler plate bylaws to the committee as a starting point for discussion. She noted, as we know, that donors to Opera House may already receive a tax write off due to our municipal tax status.

Old Business (continued)

Kerry recently received signatures and will send the form to the state; once approved, the federal forms may be filed, which need to include by-laws. Kate Bates stated that a Friends group should grow from a motivated group wanting to achieve a goal, not the reverse. We shouldn't embark upon this process without some engaged people.

New Business:

Workgroup Concept:

The committee addressed the concept of workgroups as a means to expand and extend the capacity of the work and goals of the Opera House and Opera House Committee. Members made clear their commitment to *advisory* responsibilities and their capacity to assist the Opera House Manager in their agreed-upon role as advisors and in performing limited, short-term projects with a clear beginning and end. Given other commitments, no one is able to effectively double their commitment to the Opera House by assuming oversight responsibility for a workgroup on an extended basis. There appeared to be broad consensus on this issue. By reinforcing the definition of the committee as advisory and their belief that the Opera House Manager must clearly define limited, short-term projects, the committee effectively agreed that the goals and objectives of the Opera House staff and committee must be reined in and contained, because without working committee support or expanded volunteers or adequate staffing, the capacity to implement these goals does not exist. Members are willing to be asked or told to perform certain functions or complete limited projects, but they recognize their limitations, and therefore the limitations on what can be achieved by the Committee and the Opera House staff.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Dorr, Recording Secretary; supplemented by Maryanne Shanahan, after Susan left at 5:45 PM.