

Camden Opera House Committee
June 13, 2011
Katherine Aldridge Tucker Room

Meeting called to order, 5:05 PM

Attendees: Kate Bates, Brian Hodges, Development Director, Don White, Dave Morrison, Aimee Deconinck, Bob Williams, Susan Dorr

Presentation by Brian Hodges, Camden Development Director regarding COH growth potential and Grant opportunities.

Brian had discussions with Tom Wilhite, movie producer who lives in Camden regarding ideas that would fit grant criteria and bring projects to the COH.

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Arts in Media offers funding for performance opportunities to get the arts to a broader audience via alternative media channels to benefit many elements of the community.

NEA Art Works 2 - to develop and produce new work and engage the community.

Can fit the goal of completing the 3rd floor - requires working with the COH committee and staff to generate and quantify in-kind contributions to leverage grant monies.

Background on Stu Smith's project on Bay View St - Stu Smith asked for grant assistance through the town to be part of a state bond issue of \$3.5 million to revitalize historic buildings. Smith is proposing spaces at 12 Bay View, formerly Gilberts and the upper 2 floors be restored into a food related business on the ground floor, Bay View Cinema and Marine Museum on the Bay View St. level. The project would be included in a community based application, requesting \$400,000 from the state with a total cost of \$800,000 and due to be completed within 12 - 18 months of the start. Marine Museum and Bay View Cinema would draw people down Bay View St. Kate suggested considering partnering with the Penobscot Marine Museum.

Kerry suggested a high end First Night event that could be funded by a grant and draw people into town on New Years Eve.

Brian suggested sitting down with Tom Wilhite to see if applying for one of the grants is feasible and fits Camden's goals and profile.

Don suggested moving forward to explore our options. It would be worth it to submit a grant proposal in order to get the constructive feedback even if we don't receive the award.

Kate Bates: If we are going to make the effort to fundraise, let's make it for permanent improvements to the COH. Don said we should explore grants that would include funds to rehab the 3rd floor space.

3rd floor has considerable economic development potential with a kitchen, conference space and gallery in the plan. Better bathroom facilities, cosmetic changes and a fire escape rebuild should be in the plan. Committee will explore list of grants in the state that would fit our goals.

Roberta Smith, Town Manager wants an RFP to be submitted after the final plans for the 3rd floor improvements are approved.

Are there Federal grants?

Kate Bates suggests that the COHC needs to get some momentum on the private donor side to show community involvement as we apply for grants. We need to explore every avenue for moving these projects forward. Once we start the ball rolling we need to keep up the momentum and not take 3 years to raise the money.

Don noted that the Select Board will want to see that we are pursuing a significant amount of money. Historic Restoration and Economic Development should be the emphasis.

Minutes of the May meeting were accepted as presented.
Memberships and new member applications are due by June 17.
New officers will be considered in September.

Kerry's report:
Race to Nowhere, very well received, well attended. the film is excellent, the moderator for the discussion not as excellent. Some attendees expressed desire to have an opportunity to gather as a group to begin addressing issues.

Meeting adjourned 6:30.

Respectfully, if tardily submitted, Susan Dorr