

**Exeter Arts Committee  
Meeting Minutes for May 16, 2018**

**DRAFT**

**Meeting Called to Order: 6:35pm**

**In Attendance:** Kathy LT, Darius T, Anne S, Karen D, Dean S, Kelly N., Irene H., and Karen N

**Absent:** John M.

**Guests:** Natasha S. and large group of TEAM members/supporters

1. Bruce Jones (Exeter) asked if he could film the meeting
  - Anne said he could as long as everyone was aware of it
  - No one objected
2. April Minutes
  - Added Natasha as guest
  - Approved, all in favor as amended
3. Sandwich boards
  - Dean ordered a new sandwich board from Signs of Our Times. It has Velcro/removable inserts so it will be more flexible. Cost was \$180 and should be in within a couple of weeks
4. Display panel maintenance
  - Darius found adjustable feet that can be put on each leg of the tri-panel displays and adjusted to stabilize the displays where the floor is not flat. Expected cost about \$140 for 24 of them. We should have them in a couple weeks.
  - No update on repairing the carpet on the panels
5. New steps in application process
  - Karen D relayed that the Russ Dean has requested that the committee provide copies of all applications, with notes, after they are finalized to Sheri, and that all dates and events (overall show and specific openings) be entered in a shared Google calendar that Sheri has access to
  - Karen D has set this up and everything is current
  - Moving forward we need to remember to do these steps as well
6. June event weekend – updates
  - Comedian is booked for Friday June 8<sup>th</sup>, just waiting to confirm the time
  - Magician is booked for Saturday June 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am
  - Darius is set to do 70s disco evening on Sat. June 9
  - Jazz group is booked for Sunday “brunch” June 10 at 11am
  - Natasha shared the poster she designed, which was well received
  - The poster and rest of marketing will be done as soon as there is confirmation on the time for the comedian
  - Karen D will set up the volunteer sign-up sheet in the shared drive

7. Fall shows
  - Sept. Abstracts/Oddities – co-chairs are Kathy and Karen N
  - Oct. Textile show – co-chairs are Irene and Dean
  - Dec. Holiday show – co-chairs are Karen D and Kelly
  - Agreed to start thinking about/working on these shows to stay a few months ahead
8. Update on theater production for Sept?
  - No update as John M was absent
9. Exeter Literary Festival
  - Karen D has been attending the meetings on behalf of the committee
  - The festival is scheduled for April 5-7, 2019. The EAC has reserved the Town Hall 1<sup>st</sup> floor for the event on Sat-Sun April 6-7, 2019
  - The group asked the EAC to consider a literary theme or connection for whatever show is in the gallery at that time.
  - Derek Haddad (Exeter) said that he was hoping to do a Steven King themed escape room in the Town Hall 1<sup>st</sup> floor on that Friday night
    - Karen D clarified that TEAM has the first floor reserved for the Fri night, so that's totally up to TEAM
10. Having meetings in Novak room and/or recorded
  - Anne S. said that this was a new question brought up at a recent BOS meeting. She looked into it and the committee can still meet in the gallery and could arrange to have them recorded there
  - Dan Chartrand (Exeter) repeatedly “urged” the committee to meet in the Novak room and to be recorded/streamed
  - The members/supporters of TEAM all urged the committee to meet in the Novak room and raised issues including more space for visitors
  - Jim Faber (Exeter) said it would be helpful to have committee member names, which we could do in the Novak room
  - Enna Grazier (Exeter) raised the issue of transparency and letting people know what is going on through meeting minutes, admitting she would not watch a video
    - Kathy stressed that all EAC meeting minutes are up to date and filed in the town offices, so anyone can request them and read them
  - Karen D asked Anne if the BOS was mandating that all town committees and commissions be recorded/streamed or if the art committee is being singled out
    - Anne said that there is no mandate to move the meeting or to record/stream it and that the EAC is not the only committee that does not record meetings
    - Karen D pointed out that at the BOS meeting there was a lot of talk of making everything fair and equitable across the board and it was equitable to require the EAC to change meetings if they aren't requiring all committees/commissions to do this
  - Karen D expressed a concern with having effective meetings in the Novak room because of the size of the committee and the difficulty of having a true conversation if we are spread out in a long line instead of working in a circle and having open discussions the way we do now. It was suggested that the Wheelwright room might work in this regard.

- Dan Chartrand (Exeter) argued that there is a perception the gallery is not welcoming and is EAC “turf”
  - Sharon Marston (East Kingston) asked for an explanation on why security tape was requested during the time TEAM had their Arts.Sustain.Ability event in the gallery? Is this done for any other groups or is it just TEAM Events?
  - Scott Ruffner (Exeter) asked if we respect TEAM?
  - The above questions from Sharon Marston and Scott Ruffner were tabled until later in the meeting to prevent getting off topic
  - Irene expressed surprise at the “turf” comment and pointed out that the committee has had other visitors at meetings with no problems, but this was the first time this many people had ever showed up at a meeting.
- Discussion and disruption from public got out of hand several times and public comment was stopped several times in an attempt to stay on topic and on task
  - Anne had to remind the group multiple times that NH RSA 91-A gives the public the right to be at the meeting but not the right to speak
- There were repeated “urgings” for the committee to consider this, and Karen D pointed out that the public needed to give the committee the time and chance to consider it, as this was a new issue and the first time most of the committee had even heard of it
- Karen D moved that the committee acknowledged the input of the public, that committee members would take what had been heard and discussed and consider the issues, and to table the issue for further discussion and hopeful vote at the next committee meeting.
  - All in favor

#### 11. Alcohol policy

- Karen D updated the committee that as of now, no group, including the EAC, may have alcohol in the gallery spaces, under any conditions, while the town reviews the policies and laws
  - Darius asked if that meant no one could go to the town offices for special exceptions
  - Karen D confirmed that according to her conversation with Julie Gilman (BOS chair) that was her understanding

#### 12. TEAM application to use the gallery May 2019

- TEAM applied to use the gallery for May 3-May 26, 2019, but the committee has already approved the Seacoast Photographers Group to use the space for April 23-May 30, 2019
- Karen D expressed that the photographers had already expressed that they would give up the April dates to free up time for another group is needed/wanted and that the EAC could look at moving some things around to free up more time, potentially opening up April 15-30, 2019 for TEAM
- Karen D also said that June was currently available as well
- Scott Ruffner (Exeter) suggested that the group was Newmarket based, not Exeter, and thus TEAM should have priority
  - Karen D said that the group is Exeter based and has been meeting in the Town Hall, either first floor or second floor, monthly for over 9 years

- Scott Ruffner (Exeter) asked if Karen D was a member of the photography group
    - Karen D said she is and clarified that the group has been using the gallery for over nine years, she's been a member for two years, and that the show is always voted in unanimously by the 8-person committee, so her one vote is irrelevant. She then suggested that Ruffner not question her integrity.
  - Karen D asked a couple of times if TEAM would be open to compromising because she didn't want to ask the photographers to change things if TEAM wasn't going to be open to it anyway, but they made no commitments and did not confirm any willingness to compromise
  - Scott Ruffner commented that the EAC is putting up "road blocks" to TEAM events
    - Karen D corrected and reminded him that the EAC has never put up any "road blocks" to his event
  - It was suggested that maybe the photographers would move their event to mid-April to mid-June and let TEAM have the gallery for the rest of May
  - Karen D moved that they put the application on hold, neither deny or approve it for now, and that she would follow up with the photography group regarding their dates, and then let TEAM know the options for them to consider. The TEAM application would then be revisited and voted on at the next EAC meeting.
    - All in favor
13. Anne mentioned the recent Lottery Day hanging of art in the Town Offices building, how exciting and efficient it was, and that she was glad to participate in that
- Darius mentioned that the majority of attendees this time were new and that there was a great age range in the artists
14. Darius addressed the earlier question regarding his request for the security tapes. He reviewed this history of issues in the gallery that led to the request for security cameras and the problem (no one's fault) with one of the cameras when people were accessing the gallery on Fri April 6<sup>th</sup> when it was closed to the public. This led to Julie Gilman, Chair, Select Board of Exeter and the Town Manager to confirm during the select board meeting on 4/9/2018, when the Art Gallery is closed, the public is not allowed to access the Gallery. Publicly accessible bathrooms are located outside at the rear of the Town Hall building. He explained that he was rechecking the tapes to ensure that everything was working and was not checking up on anyone. Darius brought up the point that the committee, and anyone, can request to see the tape, and that ultimately the committee is responsible for what happens in the gallery.
- Darius said he respects the mission of TEAM for the arts but does not respect the communication/tactics on how the members/supporters of TEAM go about doing things when working with other groups, organizations, committees, etc., in Exeter. You get further with cooperation and respect, you get more with honey than vinegar.
  - The discussion began to devolve into a back and forth, he-said-he-said between Darius and Scott Ruffner
  - Karen D asked them to take the discussion off-line after the meeting.
15. Next meeting Wed. June 20, 6:30, in the gallery

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted by Karen Desrosiers