



**CELEBRATE MANSFIELD FESTIVAL COMMITTEE
MEETING**

Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 5:00 PM

Minutes

Attendance: Chair Emily Wicks, Christine Ballestrini, Sarah Dufresne, Andrea Stever-Lennon, Ginny Walton

Staff: Denise Kegler

1. Call to order

Chair Emily Wicks called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

2. Public comment

There were no public comments.

3. Approve Minutes from February 8, 2022

Ginny Walton made a motion to approve the minutes and Christine Ballestrini seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Update on Festival rain alternative

Denise Kegler provided an update from last meeting's discussion of rain alternatives. After reviewing the possible Sunday rain date, the Partnership staff determined that it was not a viable option for this year's event due to a conflicting holiday. Ms. Kegler contacted E. O. Smith High School to request the use of their indoor spaces as a rain alternative and was granted tentative permission. If the Committee would like to pursue a Sunday rain date next year, it would be helpful to review both the Saturday and Sunday dates for conflicts before choosing the official event date.

5. Review site plan draft

Ms. Kegler shared the changes to the site plan draft, specifically the new site entrance and a proposed new location for the HQ booth. Sarah Dufresne suggested that clearly marked exits would also help reduce confusion for participants. In reviewing the plan, the Committee decided to mark three exit points: Royce Circle for Area D, Storrs Road for Area C, and Dog Lane for Areas A & B. These will be marked on the site plan and also shared in communications with participants.

After a brief discussion, the Committee decided that the HQ booth should not be moved because the prior position was a central location within the site and was also near the restrooms.

6. Discuss new initiative for re-useable food service containers

Ms. Walton submitted a proposal for re-usable dishware, suggesting that this year should be a pilot to test the program before a large investment of resources. In the proposal, she reviewed the number of compostable food service items which have been used annually and how many are currently in stock, including plates, bowls, and utensils. She also provided price quotes for several vendors who sell dishware and suggested that some funding may be available through "Plastic Free Restaurants." To clean the dishes, Ms. Walton has made preliminary arrangements with the Mansfield Middle School but details have not been finalized.

Overall, the Committee was supportive of the proposal but several details were discussed in further detail. In regards to washing the dishes, a few alternatives were discussed. Ms. Dufresne

suggested E. O. Smith as a possible location, especially since it has already been reserved as a rain location. Ms. Kegler suggested that a restaurant in the downtown may be able to provide dishwashing as an in-kind sponsorship. And, the Committee discussed using volunteers to assist in several ways including a new volunteer assignment on Monday to help with the cleaning, E. O. Smith volunteers specifically assigned for clean-up in their cafeteria, and an additional volunteer task to deliver the used dishes to E. O. Smith for cleaning. Signage was also discussed, with individual signs proposed for each participating food booth. In regards to communication, early and consistent messaging to participants may help develop support for the project.

While thoughts on the proposal were predominantly positive, the Committee also had a few concerns. Ms. Dufresne emphasized that this year's pilot should be used to gather data and to help determine if the scope of the project is realistic when expanded to the full event. She made the excellent point that this project should not become a burden to one member of the Committee. Andrea Stever-Lennon also pointed out that the return of used dishes may be challenging or confusing for guests. She suggested that the dish-return spots should be very clearly marked and in convenient locations; it may create more confusion if the return bins are next to waste stations. Ms. Kegler asked where the dishes will be stored and Ms. Walton explained that there is sufficient room in the basement storage where the compostable materials are currently kept. This, in turn, led to further discussion of dishwashing because the dishes will need to be washed annually before each event, after a year in storage.

With some details still to be determined, the Committee decided to move forward with the pilot and a few specific tasks were assigned. **Ms. Walton will request sample dishes from the vendors to check for quality and durability. Ms. Dufresne will ask the principal of E. O. Smith if the kitchen can be borrowed for dishwashing. Ms. Kegler will draft an in-kind sponsorship request to downtown restaurants, for help with dishwashing.**

7. Review booth application drafts

The Committee reviewed the Craft Booth application and provided feedback. Ms. Ballestrini suggested that the notice of what is not acceptable should be made bold, to help emphasize the requirements. Ms. Dufresne suggested that language should be added to clarify that the Committee has the right to make final booth determinations. **Ms. Kegler will make these edits before publicizing the craft booth openings.** The Committee also discussed further collaboration with the Storrs Farmers Market. Ms. Kegler explained that because their operating times overlap, we have worked with the Storrs Farmers Market to include them as a Festival activity. However, she will contact them to discuss an increased participation at this year's event.

The Committee deferred further discussion of the application materials until the next meeting. All members will review the Activity Booth and Food Booth applications in advance and will bring specific suggestions for edits.

8. Brainstorm ideas and activities

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

9. Discuss future meeting locations

After discussing the new option for a return to in-person meetings, several Committee members shared that they would prefer to stay digital, if possible. The Committee decided to continue meeting virtually with Zoom in April.



10. Adjourn

Ms. Stever-Lennon made a motion to adjourn and Ms. Ballestrini seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 PM.

Minutes prepared by Denise Kegler