



# CROMWELL CREATIVE DISTRICT

Town of Cromwell - Mayor's Office, Attn. Cromwell Creative District  
41 West Street, Cromwell, CT 06416

[www.cromwellcreativedistrict.org/](http://www.cromwellcreativedistrict.org/) [cromwellcreativedistrict@gmail.com](mailto:cromwellcreativedistrict@gmail.com)

## Meeting Minutes (Teleconference)

February 20, 2021

9:00 am

**Call to Order:** The teleconference was called to order at 9:03 am.

Present: James Demetriades (JD), Ann Grasso (AG), Rosemary Matus (RM), Joan Pendleton (JP), Joan Foose (JF), Joan Bent (JB), Katie Daigle (KD), Jean Rill-Alberto (JRA), Susan Sundell (SS), Kaya Anderson (KA), Agnie Mena (guest from Central Connecticut Community Women's Club)

**Approval of the Agenda:** JB moved that the agenda be approved; RM seconded. All in favor; motion passed.

**Public Comments:** Jean Rill-Alberto, a new member, introduced herself as an artist from Middletown, a friend of AG; she is interested in being involved in any arts organization; submitted art for the CCD virtual coffeehouse. Art is her full-time job; her greeting cards are available at Whole Foods in Glastonbury. Susan Sundell, also a new member, moved to Cromwell in September after 20 years in New Hampshire; she is AG's next-door neighbor and sees CCD as an opportunity to get involved in the community. She is willing to help the treasurer. Agnie Mena is current president of Central Connecticut Community Women's Club and has been invited to speak about a fundraising opportunity.

### Chair's Report (James Demetriades):

1. The request for funding has been submitted to the town; vote at next Town Council. CCD was created by the town, which now wants to clarify the organization as quasi-private, quasi-public; confusion about the organization's name will also be addressed at the next Town Council meeting.
2. Community grants are available through the clearinghouse Front Door; grants are sponsored by Walmart and other organizations. CCD has applied for a

*Rethink How You See Cromwell*

Cromwell Creative District is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization

Walmart-sponsored grant. For purposes of grant applications, CCD is a 509(a)2 organization, public charity.

**Vice Chair's Report (Ann Grasso):**

1. It is rewarding to watch CCD grow and to have members assume leadership roles. Growing capacity is imperative for the health of any organization. If each member brought in one new member a year, it would be a geometric explosion and broaden both our talent base and our reach.
2. Thayer Talbott is the grant coordinator for the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. This is the first year CCD applied for a grant and while it was denied, she offered all applicants the opportunity of having a one-on-one phone discussion with her. The information she provided was very helpful.
  - a. Due to Covid, most grants were offered to nonprofits requiring money to remain afloat.
  - b. Murals are absolutely funded. She said CCD's application was extremely professional (with thanks to Julie Petrella) and the specificity in the application was noted by the reviewers.
  - c. In the sustainability area, she listed the importance of how any project relates to the larger community, particularly in the area of economic growth and inclusive discussions. She was enthusiastic about the concept of Business Associates and partnering with other nonprofits and civic organizations in the ask to be included in the Town Space Assessment study.
  - d. She said the reviewers are "ordinary people" selected for their competence in community; they are not grant professionals. They are gifted with understanding community needs; and the more inclusive CCD's programming, the more likely it is to be reviewed favorably.
  - e. Leadership training and growing membership: the Foundation does offer assistance in these areas. She will keep CCD abreast of leadership programs and said the best way to grow membership is to ask people to do specific tasks. This seems less burdensome than signing up for an unknown. CCD is already doing this.
3. CCD is on the right track and is now "seen" as a viable organization. Kudos to all of us who have worked so hard to remain visible in this unusual year of Covid.

**Treasurer's Report (Mark Gagner, not in attendance)**

Balance in CCD checking account: \$3138.26

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Membership (Joan Foose, Interim Chair)

JF just getting started in temporary position.

### Publicity (Katie Daigle)

Main push for month is promoting coffeehouse.

1. Print Media
  - a. *Rare Reminder* now running an ongoing ad to gain CCD membership; also posted ad for CCD Membership Chair; continued press for coffeehouse event; *Cromwell Chronicle* has committed to running CCD interviews monthly when space permits.
  - b. *Cromwell Life* has agreed to feature CCD interviews when space permits.
2. Social Media
  - a. FB posts about Coffeehouse reach about 2600 people between various Cromwell groups; CCD FB page has 11 new likes this month; Facebook event created for Virtual Coffeehouse so that people can mark themselves as "going" or "interested."
  - b. Coffeehouse advertising and call for Membership Chair posts on Instagram.
3. Website: Carin Bernard continues to make improvements to visuals, organization, and ease of use. Donation levels have been updated, interviews uploaded, coffeehouse ad front and center.
4. Other Projects
  - a. Updating brochure—goal is to allow it to be used for the next several years. Changing "upcoming projects" to "projects" in general; updating donation levels to match website; removing CAA and noting 501(c)3 status; updating map to match website; updating goals/mission wording.
  - b. Twitter: account never started though referred to in brochure. Consensus that it is not a good social media platform for organizations like CCD.
5. Mark DiPaola suggested a collaboration between CCD and Peaceful Chaos Yoga. A column/blog called My Peaceful Place would have brief interviews with performers and artists from the coffeehouse (and others) about what inspires them, other questions. Yoga is a meditative process that helps increase creativity—would link with CCD's mission. Could be linked to CAA with poetry slam. KD will follow through.

## **Nominating Committee (Joan Foose)**

Working on search for permanent Membership Chair. Treasurer nomination agreed upon.

## **CAA Liaison Report (Rosemary Matus)**

1. Brainstorming session held to get ideas for the next year. Plan is to have Facebook page be more active, using open-ended questions to get people to respond. Instagram account will be created.
2. Traveling Bear: will visit businesses throughout town. Contest: whoever finds the bear first will get a prize. Program will commence once bear is dressed, publicity is ready.
3. Monthly topics include:
  - a. March: National Theater Month
  - b. April: Virtual National Poetry Month
  - c. May: rock scavenger hunt (in collaboration with other town groups); another contest
  - d. June/July/August: Farmers Market once a month
  - e. October: National Arts Day
  - f. December: support for Holiday on Main, perhaps caroling

## **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Coffeehouse: Twenty-six submissions received (art and acts); script created and sent to Michael Bradley. Concerns about audio quality if different people do transitions; microphone quality varies. Michael Bradley will handle all for consistent quality.
  - a. Files took up too much Dropbox space; problems transferring to Google Drive, but will be done as soon as possible.
  - b. KD did publicity and posters, created FB event. YouTube link to be posted Friday.
  - c. Event can remain live indefinitely.
2. Kickstarter/Murals—discussion delayed until March meeting.
3. Fundraising idea (KA): Outsource fundraising by using Cromwell High School students needing community service hours. Donations could be solicited door to door or in some other way; would help get CCD's name out into community.
  - a. AG: would bring students to awareness of the importance of volunteer work; might grow membership
  - b. Student energy helpful.
  - c. Would need to formalize leadership issues; KA could help; student liaison to coordinate.
4. Audio Tour: JD and Rich Donohue having hard time getting houses to respond; Rich wants to go door to door.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Nomination of Treasurer: The nominating committee offered the name of Mark Gagner as Treasurer to fill the position until the next election. JB seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.
2. Luminarias: Agnie Mena from Central Connecticut Community Women's Club (CCCWC) presented the idea of joining other community groups to sell kits for luminarias. It would be both a fundraising event and a way to celebrate community during the holiday season. Would be an evening to come out with the family and see the lights.
  - a. Idea came to CCCWC from Simsbury Women's group, which has been doing it for ten years. Church groups, student groups, others can help put the kits together (AG suggested Covenant Living volunteers).
  - b. The more kits sold, the better the impact, the more profit.
  - c. JD asked for info sheet so that CCD can review all aspects and discuss; attendees enthusiastic about idea. Information sheet will be sent.
  - d. Other CCCWC projects: Women of the Year (nominations due April 30); and scholarships for graduating seniors continuing their education (applications due April 1).
3. Interviews: Volunteers needed to conduct and write interviews of local artists and businesspeople to be published online and in local press; starter questions available; add your own. Contact AG if interested.

## **Approval of Minutes**

JF moved that the minutes of January 16, 2021, be accepted; JB seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

## **For the Good of the Organization**

JF proposed CCD create a sensory patch at the Pierson Park playscape, with footprints, squiggly lines, etc. Would be a project #inthedistrict. Consensus that this is worthwhile project.

## **Adjournment**

AG moved that the meeting be adjourned; KD seconded. All in favor; motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 10:34 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Pendleton, secretary

## To-Do List

All members:

1. Contact AG if you are willing to write up interviews.
2. Offer ideas to AG about community needs and ways to help, both during this shutdown and afterward, as well as ways to keep CCD strong.
3. Think about family and friends who might be interested in joining CCD and recruit them. There is a new Friends category, which indicates support for the organization but not active membership.
4. Keep track of your volunteer hours for CCD and report to treasurer at the end of the month.

All officers and committee chairs: Send a brief summary of what you will say at the monthly meeting in advance to the secretary.

JD: Schedule strategic planning and programming meetings.

KD: Follow through on collaboration with Peaceful Chaos Yoga.

KA and others: Follow through on possibility of CHS students helping with fundraising, etc.

Mural groups: Timelines; sketches for business approval and Kickstarter; recruit additional members

### Future CCD Meetings

Meetings for CCD in 2021 will be held on the third Saturday of the month at 9:00 am by teleconference while Covid-19 restrictions are in place.

#### 2021

March 20

April 17

May 15

June 19

July 17

August 21

September 18

October 16

November 20

December 11 [second Saturday]

## **Future CAA Meetings**

Until further notice, meetings for CAA in 2021 will be held on the first Monday of the month at 6:00 pm, as a Zoom call: Phone number: 1-646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 998 0261 9219, Password: 990451

### **2021**

March 1

April 5

May 3

June 7

July 5

August 2

September 13 [second Monday]

October 4

November 1

December 6