There was a meeting of the above referenced committee on Wednesday, March 30, 2022, at 3:30PM via a Conference Remote Meeting.

Committee members present were Robert A. Firger, Leslie Mills, Amanda Roy, Vice Chair, and Elizabeth Lane, Library Director.

Robert W. Ike, Stephen Richmond and Stanwyck Cromwell were absent.

Community members present: None

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 by Amanda Roy

**Old Business:**

Utility Pole Project at Farmington River Park

Bob Firger stated that he reached out to Sharon Mann and hasn’t heard back but will try again. He mentioned Paula Jones who also works with Sharon Mann on the CEEC and both attended our committee meeting in February and that he can try to contact her as well. He also mentioned that the CEEC (Center for Environmental Energy), a group which allocates funds to the town of Bloomfield from the Hartford Foundation did a tree planting with a grant from the foundation. He also mentioned that they have applied for a grant for the Utility Pole project, and we are still waiting on to hear on their progress.

Electric Vehicle Spaces Project

Amanda Roy stated that she reached out to Stephanie Bahramian who had a conversation with the town manager and that she will call her to follow up on what kind of support she needs from the commission.

Bob Firger stated that we did not write up a formal resolution for the Electric Vehicle project as we did for the Utility Pole project and maybe the commission should work on this, as well as using the resolution to reach out to the West Hartford Arts Commission. He added that he met with Chuck Porcy(?), the chairman of the West Hartford Arts Commission and mentioned that Stephanie Bahramian is working on this project for Bloomfield and that it would be good to collaborate with West Hartford. Chuck Porcy(?) agreed any they would be eager to collaborate with us and neighboring towns.

Elizabeth noted that she also was involved in the conversation with the town manager and Stephanie Bahramian and that there is hesitancy being the first to begin the project because we are just in the initial stages and still working on how to fund it.

Bob Firger added that amounts to fund the project are minimal except for reserving grants for the
artists. Amanda added that she will touch base with us after she gets in touch with Stephanie Bahramian.

**New Business:**
Censorship Policy

Amanda Roy brought back the discussion the commission had in previous meetings about censorship and the need for a statement concerning freedom of expression and what it means the commission and for the town.

Bob Firger stated that it would be an outstanding policy to set in place to inform the public, that as a commission we are open to listening to concerns and opinions but are not inclined to allow for shutting down projects or events created by the commission. He asked Elizabeth Lane for some input on censorship policies implemented in libraries here and around the country.

Elizabeth Lane pulled up the Bloomfield Public Library policy on their website. She stated that the policy has elements of the American Library Association guidelines for intellectual freedom and censorship. She added that they spoke to parents and guardians about decisions on how to speak to their children about their feelings and impressions about books offered in the library. She also noted that there is a process on the website for people to state their impressions or critiques which could be an example of the process the commission can use for our censorship policy.

Bob Firger stated that could be a great place to start with producing a policy for the commission and to keep in mind that comments submitted would be after a work of art has already been produced and installed.

Amanda Roy commented that she has done some research and found that the ACLU mentions freedom of expression for art and entertainment that is focused on arts education. She added that she will find the link and share it with committee members.

Elizabeth Lane stated that commissioning work in the future we should think about public opinions and work out how to proceed when there are strong opinions against commissions and if we should have public forums to hear what people are feeling and thinking.

Bob Firger agreed with the idea of public forums to get a feel for what the community thinks about a censorship policy and what they might feel about art installations around town.

Amanda Roy commented that including the community is a good idea and maybe having the community recognize a piece of art for an award, like a People’s Choice Award. Amanda added that we could get a draft of a Censorship Policy document on the Google Drive site to look over and add to.

Bob Firger added that it might take a few months to get a public forum planned and we should set up some guidelines for what our mission is, that we would not support a project or work of art that is demeaning to any group for example.

Elizabeth Lane stated that she created a policy breakdown in Google Drive in the Google folder.

Public Art Policy in review

Amanda Roy asked if there was a reference to freedom of expression in the policy.

Bob Firger stated he didn’t recall any mention of freedom of expression in the policy and that there should be a broad disclaimer on how we will not discriminate based on orientation category.
Elizabeth Lane stated that she is concerned about the strong opinions in Bloomfield and thoughts of things that are not appropriate, traditional or didn’t fit in with the town fabric, based on certain feedback she has received.

Bob Firger added that there is a strong religious tone in town and The Economic Development Commission is authorized by the state to have one CBD dispensary in town which would be a huge revenue generator and legal, and there will be dispensaries opening in surrounding towns. He added that there are religious groups in town that are against this and believe that they don’t meet our standards or morals, which may be something that comes up with the arts installations and events that we may plan in the future.

Elizabeth Lane added that there are people who hold onto the idea of Bloomfield as a traditional town, and there were some people who were not happy with the murals and want Bloomfield to be as nice as possible, that including people in what we decide to do will help connect them to our mission.

Adding new members

Bob Firger stated that he had reached out to Lee Goode, a resident at Duncaster, who oversees the galleries there. Duncaster has a large artist community and he asked whether she or any other residents would be interested in joining the commission. He also stated that he would inquire at Seabury for any residents interested in joining. He also added that Stephanie Bahramian approached him and asked for help with a town fair that is being planned to take place regularly during the summer, and if the commission can have a table set up to advertise our existence and purpose, and let people know we are searching for artists and commission members.

Amanda Roy asked if there is an approval procedure for printouts.

Bob Firger stated that he doesn’t think there is any approval process, and the town council should allocate a small budget for our operations.

Elizabeth Lane stated that the commission can go to the council and the town manager with a request for funds.

Bob Firger stated that we will add this to the agenda.

Leslie Mills added that the Bloomfield Congregational Church is having a Coffee House Music Night on April 8, at 7:00pm. She also asked what the Church could do to sponsor or collaborate with the commission and how that would work, and that it is still a work in progress.

Bob Firger added that the director of development for the town, Jennifer Valentino Rodriguez is involved in the arts and that we should set up a meeting with her to discuss what we are doing so that and what her interests are.

Elizabeth suggested that we invite her to our May meeting and maybe give a presentation on what her arts role would be.

Other Business: Next meeting Agenda
Censorship Policy
Utility Pole Project
Future meetings:
Our next meeting is on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at 3:30 PM

Acceptance of the Minutes: minutes from March 30, 2022, will be added to next months meeting as there was not a quorum available to approve.

Public comment: None

Other comments:
Amanda Roy stated that she attended the Americans for the Arts Summit, an arts advocacy group, and she would put together some resources that she thought would apply to what we are doing on the commission and send the links through email.

Adjournment: Meeting ended at 4:20 pm, adjournment was not voted on as there was not a quorum.