

**Craftsbury Freedom and Unity Task Force
Meeting Notes: 9/12/23**

Present: Suzie Houston, Jeannine Young, Daniel Solomon, Wendy Turnbull, Carol Ceraldi, Bru Mille, Susan Clark via Zoom
Note taker: Bru

1. Approved Aug. 21 meeting minutes

2. Event logistics
Which space is best for first event: Library, Academy, other?
Child care; Food; Chairs; Other?

Library as event space:

Susan C.: We can probably use the library as long as we have fewer than 99 people
Do we think we will have as many or more than 99?

Suzie H. thinks we will get around 60 people and that the library is a great space for it, and will allow us to break into 4 smaller groups as needed. This is the space with the best acoustics, people are accustomed to coming here, it is the most welcoming.

Carol: It's a cozy environment!

In terms of room set-up, Suzie notes we could move the book cases into the children's room.

Wendy checked with Susan of the library and there are 75 chairs on site. Often at other Craftsbury meetings people are also happy to stand if needed. But if we need more than 75 chairs, we could borrow them from the church.

Jeannine asks if we have all the white boards/flip charts we need? Susan says she and Rebecca will provide them.

Action: Bru offered to check with the church to see if we could borrow chairs if needed.

Childcare: Bru reported on her discussion with Matt (Craftsbury Academy principal). The Booster Club is not very active, so would not want to organize childcare as a fundraiser. The Honor Society is forming but won't be organized to supply childcare in time.

Child care is important to making events inclusive. Carol pointed out that organizing child care for the fall events is a dry run for organizing child care for March, 2024 Town Meeting.

Bru suggested our committee's members can be the childcare providers, but Suzie & Susan think the committee members need to be present for the event. Susan noted that there may be grant funding to support hiring someone who doesn't live in Craftsbury, so that we aren't asking residents to choose between participating and helping with childcare (especially since child care volunteers are often women).

Action: The group formed a subcommittee for the question of providing childcare for the two fall events - Bru & Suzie volunteer for this.

Food: Every committee member can bring some cookies or cake. Bru can bring lemonade and a dispenser.

Action: Wendy will create an online sign-up list for what food everyone will bring.

Remote Participation:

Susan: Are we going to offer Zoom participation in the fall events?

Suzie: We would rather not but Covid is surging. It's complicated but maybe we should offer it since people asked about it for town meeting.

Jeannine raised the issue that with Zoom it's hard to hear and you need to be able to hear everyone. Bru suggested all Zoom attendees are muted and use the chat, and a dedicated facilitator conveys the things people are saying. Susan said this is how they handled it in Peacham, and she offered to connect the group with the person who staffed the Zoom link at those events.

Jeannine doesn't think it's fair to ask Michelle, and Daniel agrees she should be part of the discussion, not a facilitator.

Susan thinks that bringing an outside person would help, so that the person isn't a Craftsbury person who would like to participate. Suzie will look for an outside person that might be willing to staff the zoom. Susan will also check about college students who are interested in facilitation. The school board owns an Owl.

Action: Daniel and Susan form a Zoom subcommittee to work on the issue.

3. **Outreach and Publicity:**
Updates: Are we reaching diverse audiences?
Poster printing and distribution plans
Front Porch Forum plans
Emails to various groups?
Youth involvement?
Other publicity

Outreach & Publicity Updates

Wendy handed fliers out to the Housing committee event. Jeannine gave fliers out to the Cemetery Committee.

Suzie thinks it could be a good idea to put them in the food pantry to give out the 1st week in Oct. Everyone agreed.

The posters should go up around town in early Oct. Suzie mentioned we should hang posters at the school as well. Can we send the flier to all the parents through the school?

Susan reminded the group that recruiting young people to participate in the event would be great. Local junior high, high school (or Sterling) students would add good ideas and also having young people in the room reminds grown-ups to be on good behavior.

Action: Bru will reach out to Cora about outreach to parents/school, school has an email list and could send a pdf of the flier. Suzie will reach out to the 5th grade teacher and come into class to discuss this meeting, and invite youth participation.

Wendy & Carol will make a list of places to hang posters.

Daniel reported that he had a sort of Meeting In A Box of one, a long conversation with one local tradesman who was working at his house who saw many of the issues as locals vs. newbies, old-timers losing out, and that people who represented his point of view would be cycled off the select board and that it's inevitable. The individual shared that he has a young employee that doesn't even want to vote. The concern is that he won't even come to the fall events, because he doesn't feel like he has a voice. The concern is that the people we most want to include in the conversation will not participate. Daniel noted that he appreciated the quadrant (polarities) activity because it showed the benefits but also overuses of different types of participation, which might help people hear each other.

Jeannine added that many people in town don't use the internet or a computer.

Susan agreed that it is clear from talking with Craftsbury residents and leaders that there are people in town who increasingly feel shut out, including long-time residents who are seeing many changes. This is a statewide issue and while we won't easily solve it, it is important to frame our conversations so that these concerns can come out in this event. In Peacham there was a group that wants to go door-to-door to speak to people, to gather information and help bridge divides.

Daniel suggested that maybe we could show some of the Historical Society videos at the meeting (maybe make short, 3-minute edited clips?), to help represent long-time residents even if they do not attend.

Front Porch Forum (FPF): Susan suggests each week leading up to the event (or more often) someone different from our task force posts about it.

Bru suggests that FPF posts should be full of information and provocative, but not so provocative that the people that come are closed minded and not open. How can we frame this in a way that is inviting and challenging without being polarizing? Jeannine asks if Susan can offer some suggestions for such sentences? Susan will resend the set of five questions we worked on, and the questions that were in the initial materials about this workshop proposal. Bru noted we should be sure to include a link to the Craftsbury website event page with every FPF posting.

Action: Susan will send some proposed language for FPF postings and people can personalize them. Wendy will make a list of who is posting when.

4. Workshop II (Nov. 5th): What action areas might be of most interest for second event?

Susan gave an explanation of what the event will be: It will be smaller breakout workgroups (perhaps four, depending on people's interest). Example, one group might work on practical changes to town meeting, another on democracy throughout the year, a third could work on adult civic education ("Operators Manual" etc.) and a fourth could work on youth civic education. Other possibilities might be ideas for bridging divides in the community, creating pathways for people to take up volunteer or leadership roles, etc. These are just some ideas on what may come out of the first meeting.

Daniel requested that we make it possible for people to get to work on more than one issue.

Suzie noted that involving people is hard. But using FPF to issue an open invitation to town people to join committees was a recent revelation, and seemed to work.

Susan will send a link to the *Bethel Operator's Manual*, and will bring copies of *Middlesex Operator's Manual* to our next meeting.

The group approved the description Susan wrote for the website, so Wendy will give to Michelle to add to the web page.

Next meeting: Tuesday 10/3 6:00-7:30 pm.