

Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC)
February 2, 2017 – Arts and Culture
Minutes

In attendance: vice chairman Bette Brunswick, Rick Milliard, Peg Poulin, Alyssa Bouthot, Nathan Johnston, Dave Precourt, Tim Leary, Neil Schuster.

Staff present: Bill Mann, Kathy Connor, Meghan Doyon, Bob Hamblen. Also in attendance, presenters Leslie Rounds, Dyer Library/Saco Museum, and Tammy Ackerman, Engine.

1. **Announcements** – next meeting will be March 2, topic: Transportation. Bette: two meetings this week of interest: the Economic Development Commission, and a joint meeting with Biddeford of the Councils, Planning Boards, and Comprehensive Plan Committees.
2. **Minutes of Jan. 19, 2016 meeting.** Motion by Rick to accept the minutes of Jan. 19 as submitted, seconded by Tim, and so voted, 8-0.
3. **Speakers and Q&A**
 - a. Leslie Rounds, Director, Dyer Library and Saco Museum. Leslie has been with the library since 2006. Dyer Library has operated since 1889 in the Deering mansion, which was built in 1869. The State issues a report in May about libraries; a copy was circulated. Dyer Library has one of the highest circulation rates in the mid-group libraries. Dyer has about a \$750,000 budget, together with the Saco Museum. The children's section of the library has the fourth highest attendance of all libraries in Maine, about 10,000 annually. There is programming for infants and toddlers, and skills taught that will be needed when ready for school. The young adult area is busy. Two meeting rooms exist, at which groups such as a knitting group and a LEGO club meet. There is a computer room, and wi-fi in the building and parking lot. The computer room sees a lot of group home use. The Maine History Room is upstairs, which includes a collection of historic newspapers. There is a microfilm reader, but it is not working.
The attic has been insulated. There are four oil furnaces in the library, one in the museum. A closed loop geothermal system will be completed by June. The phone system is failing. The brick building needs re-pointing, paint, and parking lot maintenance. Several collections are not accessible. The first camera made in America is part of the Museum's collection. There is a curriculum for schoolchildren at the Museum. The Museum stages 4-5 exhibits per year. The Museum has become a needlework center, with two shows in the recent past.
"We are broke," said Leslie. About 60-70% of the budget comes from the City. Biddeford's MacArthur Library has a budget of over \$1 million annually. Dyer is not on the Minerva system, instead, gets book loans from others. The cost of Minerva is a few thousand dollars a year, but, other costs total about \$30,000 a year. There are six full-time staff persons, and several part-timers. The library gets free children's and young adult's books. The hallway has become the Young Adult collection.

Circulation has decreased over time, as with other libraries, at about 150,00 a year now, down from a high of 160,000.

What other projects would we tackle if funding were no problem? More children's programming; do about 203 programs a year now. More adult programming, too, but costs are generally prohibitive. Relationship with the schools are strong, with many classes coming weekly, or every other week. With T.A.? Not enough. Many states determine prison needs by identifying the number of fourth graders who can't read. Dyer has about 14,000 card holders.

Tammy Ackerman, of Engine, a creative economy organization. Commerce follows culture. The "Milling About" event was held in 2007 and 2008. Before Engine was established, Tammy called the Franklin Street Art Space home. In 2009 Engine was founded, and has occupied various spaces on Main Street. Various mill spaces have been used for exhibits. Engine took over the Art Walk, and continues to operate it. In December, 2011 Reny's donated the Marble Block building to Engine, which has benefitted to date from \$400,000 in Brownfields grants. Tammy has been a participant in the Biddeford River Walk process, and is excited to see outdoor spaces used for public art. She would like to challenge the cities to do more with that.

4. **Adjourned** at approximately 7:05 p.m.

Next meeting: March 2, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

###