YAA Board Meeting Minutes – July 23, 2021

Submitted by Betsy Cromley, Secretary

1. Roll Call
    a. Present: Tom Merriam, Maryse Newton, Glen MacWilliams, Helen Burns, Betsy Cromley, Scott Blanchard, Torbert MacDonald, Taryn Myers
    b. Absent: Todd Bonita, Dede Cadieux
2. Approval of minutes from 6/16/21, 2rd edition sent by Betsy. Incorporation of a few corrections. Helen moved, Glen seconded; all voted in favor.
3. GOVERNANCE Self-evaluations as required by our Governance document: should these by posted for public or kept private? Board prefers keeping them private. Many members have sent in their self-evaluations to Tom.
    a. Committee Chairs should send Betsy their one-paragraph Committee Chair job descriptions ASAP if you have not already done so. Betsy will circulate them at next Board Meeting.
4. Use of our building by violinist and others. Need a policy for others using our space, which we agree can be positive. Fee for using the building? Make links to other organizations that will include their being able to use our space inexpensively.
5. Letitia Moore Trust grant program. Now accepting applications (on line) for Scholarships to college art students. One received so far. Helen will ask Mary Harding to serve on a scholarship committee.
6. Vision for YA future at the Blinn property using Torbert's Green collaboration proposal. Tom met with Town manager and selectmen to discuss fate of Blinn property on Rte. 1. Visits to site were made and will again be scheduled for Aug. 3 at 2pm
    a. Town was amenable to coalition of several non-profit organizations with Green intentions to take on the house and land, raise funds to renovate and create a green gateway to York.
7. Committee updates:
    a. Taryn reports that Summer Camp on track with 11 campers and 2 junior counsellors.
    b. Jeff Werner concert on track; selling tickets on line and at YAA.
    c. Art in Park: Scott reports that we are very short of exhibitors—now have 18. We have asked intern Sarah to gather contact info of other craft/art fairs and galleries where AIP could give out registration flyers to boost participation.
8. Town Steering Committee asked YA to hold an event publicizing their climate change initiative. We declined, but do lean towards inviting artists in the gallery to exhibit art work on a theme of climate change in 2022: TBD. Maryse will consider as Show Chair.
9. Advancement Committee—Helen reports on her ongoing contacts with fund-raiser Alyssa.

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10. Update from strategic Planning Committee: They refer us to their memo listing main goals—to fill out the Board, establish a Capital Plan, establish collaboration partners, and expand marketing.
11. New Business:
    a. Helen is staying in touch with Alyssa Wright, the fundraiser.
    b. Dave Mazur will exhibit his photos on the Artist's Wall and wants to run one or more photo workshops at that time.
    c. Memo from Glen dated July 14 will serve as the agenda for our next meeting.
    d. Next meeting to be held at the Gallery on August 3 at 1pm, followed by a visit to the Blinn property at 2p.
12. Betsy moved to adjourn at 10:50, Helen seconded; all approved.

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ATTACHMENTS

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BACK CASTING EXERCISE – T. MACDONALD

The year 2026 finds the York Art Community in a position to influence the wider community in ways that were inconceivable when our strategic vision was adopted on August 24,2020. The key to our current status began humbly enough when in early 2021 we formed the first in a series of strategic alliances with the York Land Trust to lobby the Board of Selectmen on the disposition of the Blinn Land and building at the entrance to the York Beach Connector Road.

The BOS at the time was mired in legal limbo over the illegal clear cutting of the Blinn Land and former Police Station site, which along with the unresolved status of the Connector Road at Route One, created a political, economic and legal miasma with no easy exit. By partnering with the York Land Trust and York Garden Club, the YAA was able to persuade the BOS that our proposal to jointly take title and manage the creation of the Blinn Arboretum and Sculpture Garden was the best way to get the State of Maine to amnesty the Town from its many Site Location of Development permit violations.

This solution was consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan for the area – The Green Enterprise and Recreation Zone, and led to community wide support for our new partnership to help lead York into a new era of Green tourism characterized by outdoor activities by day paired with an enhanced art and music and local organic food by night.

This new Green Tourism theme resonated deeply within the business community, starved and anxious after the long Covid shutdown. This of course led to the widespread adoption of Selectman McGlaughlin's proposal to permit food trucks and resulted in the local food boom we currently enjoy.

Further partnership with the York Garden Club led to the creation of the now famous plantings of native trees, shrubs and flowers along the entire extent of the Connector Road culminating in the Edible Forest landscape at the Blinn Arboretum and Sculpture Garden.

The Blinn House was reformulated as a classic New England farmstead – house, breezeway and barn modernized as gallery/reception/solar green house complex, matched by a solar themed building and community center at the former Police Station site.

The State-funded pedestrian overpass over Route One was a natural next step and we partnered with Scott Eldredge and the York Water district to create a pedestrian pathway to Chases' Pond and the Agamenticus Wilderness Reserve. We next partnered with the Mt. Agamenticus Steering Committee and created a system of cabins throughout the Agamenticus where artists, musicians, teachers and health care workers were granted wilderness scholarship residencies for meritorious community works. The lodge atop Mr. A. was then reformulated as an art and music locus with proceeds from the concerts and art sales financing the cabin system. An expansion of the Blinn Arboretum and Sculpture Garden, centered on the sculpture of the late Sumner Winebaum, further enhanced the mountain summit.

Thus it came to be that the YAA, by creating strategic partnerships based on our aesthetic and ecological values and goals, came to be known as the progenitors of the Green Tourism movement now sweeping New England and the nation.

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July 15, 2021

Memorandum

To: YAA Board of Directors

From: Glen MacWilliams

Subject: Torbert Macdonald's Backcasting – Green Coalition

When the Board reviewed our backcasting exercise, we agreed that Helen's was the clear vision for the in-house gallery and Torbert's was the long view, consistent in part with the Board's adoption of Tom's Vision. Tom recently spoke with the Town Manager and members of the Select Board about the possibility of YAA using the former Blinn property identified by Torbert at the new Route One entrance to Short Sands Road. Tom's Vision and Torbert's backcasting were discussed and everyone seemed to like the idea. The York Land Trust was also in favor of Torbert's backcasting, which supports YAA's ability to form a coalition to move the idea forward.

Tom and I walked through the former Blinn residence and associated land this week. The residence is a monumental building. Though it was incomplete when the town acquired it, and it has not been protected in years, the building remains a masterpiece of design and construction. It will require significant costly repairs and alterations to use as a commercial enterprise and the land, several acres, can easily support Torbert's vision.

A YAA initiated Green Coalition, including the Town, Land Trust, Garden Club, and others, may have the creative energy needed for the Green Enterprise Recreation Zone to transition from the misused landscape, abandoned building, and underutilized place it is now to the green tourism destination envisioned by Torbert. Much work will need to be done to organize and finance the venture. It will take a dedicated YAA Committee to oversee and interact with the community to accomplish the Green Coalition and perhaps of equal importance, to assure the coalitions success enables YAA to simultaneously maintain and improve our in-house goals.

Advancement Plan

Confidential

THE YORK ART ASSOCIATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN COMMITTED TO VALUING, PROMOTING, AND SUPPOTRING THE VISUAL, PERFORMING, AND LITERARY ARTS BY PROVIDING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR MEMBERS AND OUR COMMUNITY.

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1.0 CURRENT SITUATION AND PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The York Art Association experienced a revenue shortfall in 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID 19 Pandemic. The Board voted to close the gallery for the entire season or until it was determined to be safe to return to in person visits. Budget needs going forward are projected to rise as the building needs to achieve compliance with Federal and Local mandates around the COVID 19. As a further consequence of closing, Art in the Park, the Association's largest fundraising event was held virtually with only three artists participating.

The loss of an Executive Director early in the year also contributed to the loss of revenue but played a role in cutting expenses. Gaining badly needed revenue is difficult when there is no staff to work in this area; most of its staff is volunteers. Currently there are no Board Members or staff who have expertise in the area of fundraising.

The York Art Association will be looking for the greatest increases in support from individual donors, foundations and business relationships. This plan aims to build a successful campaign in order to turn around revenue losses.

Key Development Strategies

- Increase Membership
    - As we continue to fulfill our purpose and mission, we will want to consider new ways to engage the existing membership and bring in new members. The publication of our new website enables existing and new members to better understand how our organization works and how we may begin to use our Association to our advantage.

    - Our gallery and store have been the primary place of commerce. Now we have an opportunity to expand virtually through our website that will take commerce to a new level. It's here that we may focus our membership strategy. Member artists and artisans want to be recognized for their creativity; because we all know that art and craft has value, they also hope for financial reward.

    - There are millions of e-commerce websites. The most successful offer an array of products and services. We may be more attractive to our membership as allied artists and artisans. How will YAA develop these kinds of alliances? For example, we currently have an alliance with framers on our website. For graphic artists, this is a reasonable alliance. For YAA, it's only one of the vast numbers of potential alliances that can expand our membership and our capacity.

1. Linkage, alliances, collaborations, and shared needs are the connectivity of art and culture. Develop relationships (memberships) with businesses that have related needs. Do they provide products or services that are used by artists or artisans? Do they want artists and artisans to use their products or services or do they just want to develop good will in the community?

2. How many businesses want to ally themselves with fine art and craft? Are they builders, designers, chefs, writers, actors, musicians, in addition to painters, poets, photographers, and sculptors, etc.?

3. Fine art and craft may be the ultimate goal for members. They will decide who is a fine artist, who is a fine artisan. We may be art jurors. We may be the folks who provide entertainment or dinner.

- As our membership strategy evolves, so does our ability to serve our members. What appears now to be a small community art association may become the regional art and culture center envisioned by President Merriam. It can happen with the leadership of YAA and the support and buy-in of our community.

    - Expand the website to give more specific information on ways to give
    - Consider an annual appeal letter to the membership
    - Increase exhibits both in-person and virtual, thereby maximizing revenues
    - Ensure there is sufficient staff to support and implement plans safely
    - Actively search for a part time grant writer to assist with foundation grants
    - Create attractive corporate sponsorship opportunities
    - Keep "Art in the Park" as an outdoor venue following COVID 19 guidelines
    - Implement effective marketing and communications plan
    - Plan a specific fundraising event and market it actively
    - Consider launching a capital campaign

Board participation, in making lead gifts and requesting support from prospective donors, is key to the successful implementation of the plan. Members of the Board will be actively engaged in the fundraising campaign. This level of involvement must be

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continued and new board members willing to participate must be brought on to the board.

2.0 Strategies and Action Plan

Strategies	Key Action Items	Timeline	Assignment
Increase Membership	Undertake annual membership campaign in the new year.	2020	
	Offer special introductory package to attendees at activities		
Expand the website	Create a dropdown menu under donate that explains ways to give. Within the dropdown include planned giving explanation.	2020	Taryn
Annual Appeal Letter	Written by the President on behalf of the Board and sent to all members and other acquaintances of the Board.	2020	Tom & Full Board
Increase Exhibits	Announce exhibit schedule well in advance and make sure staff is in place to intake, outtake, and serve as host/hostesses. May be by appt. only	2020	
Actively search for a Grant Writer	Put up job description on website. Advertise where necessary. Budget for part-time salary.	2020	Full Board
Corporate Sponsorship	Create strong recognition and branding opportunities. Offer attractive packages as determined by the board	2020	Full Board
Art in the Park	Start working with vendors early in the year. Offer some incentives. Exposure on Website.	2020	Scott
Marketing and Communication Strategies	Develop a strong marketing campaign to promote events and exhibits much earlier than usual.	2020	Full Board
Fundraising event	Could be an Auction. Could be opening night at Art in the Park. Entertain new ideas.	2020	Full Board

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Capital Campaign	Consider a specific purpose and name accordingly. Develop promotional materials and get the word out.	2020/2021	Full Board

3.0 Sources of Revenue

3.1 Foundations and Government Support

With the help of a Grant writer the York Art Association could be applying for grants to support specific programs and exhibits allowing the Association to give a better experience to the community we serve. Examples are summer camp,

Artist classes, kids classes….collaboration with the schools.

Over the coming years, grant funds will be identified and sought.

3.2 Membership Dues

Membership Dues are the backbone of any institution and extremely important for the YAA. We must increase our membership, thereby increasing revenues. Renewal requests must be watched carefully and followed up with a phone call or email reminder.

3.3 Business Support

Corporate sponsorships could be developed. As the York Art Association creates more visibility, these sponsorships could be very attractive. YAA should market these opportunities to help offset costs.

3.4 Individual Donors

Individual Donors could provide significant funding. Perhaps this is where a Capital Campaign would be very useful. Individual gifts will be solicited through the following methods:

Major Gifts

Membership

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Program Sponsorship

Events

Art Sales

Classes

4.0 PLANNED GIVING

The Advancement Committee will develop language to post on the Website addressing planned giving, what it is and how to execute. The Advancement Committee may also develop a simple brochure to include in mailings.

5.0 REVNUE PROJECTIONS

Should be developed by The Board, Treasurer and Accountant with an eye to implementing some of the steps required to raise funds.

6.0 DONOR RECOGNITION

Consistent and effective recognition will help guarantee satisfied donors and their ongoing long-term support.

Sponsor funds are key to carrying out certain programs and events. Businesses that support community organizations will be looked on more favorably by that community. In exchange for sponsorship, the York Art Association will provide the following recognition to donors. Logo inclusion will be provided for no more than six sponsors for any event so as not to dilute recognition. Sponsorship benefits may also be extended to individual donors as an incentive for them to contribute at certain levels. The Board should determine the sponsorship levels and what they include. Bundling benefits with different membership/sponsorship levels could be very effective.

In addition to vigorously marketing The York Art Association to out of area audiences, the YAA should work to better communicate plans, activities and accomplishments to the local community. Good communications are at the heart of building support for the YAA. Since YAA is located in a busy tourist area, the Board should work with the local visitor industry to participate in cost effective marketing opportunities. Communications should include:

Public Service announcements

Website Announcements

A monthly e-newsletter

Event promotions

7.0 COST DETAILS

Additional development costs should be included in the York Art Association Strategic Plan.

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April 14, 2021

York Art Association - Strategic Planning Committee Notes
From: Glen MacWilliams
Present: Merriam, Macdonald, Blanchard, MacWilliams

A. The Committee decided to simplify our task by presenting the following Strategic Goals to the Board:

1. Fill the Board of Directors. New Board members will need to have skills in non-profit management to enable leadership transition and continuity of planning objectives.
2. Concentrate on Capacity Building. Capacity building is an investment in the effectiveness and future sustainability of a nonprofit. ... When capacity building is successful, it strengthens a nonprofit's ability to fulfill its mission over time, thereby enhancing the nonprofit's ability to have a positive impact on lives and communities.
3. Expand Marketing.
4. Develop Collaborations.

B. The Committee discussed numerous parallel ideas that could help make significant improvements to our purpose and mission. The back casting exercises revealed a lot of similarities leading to Merriam's vision, some of which the Board may wish to concentrate resources on in the future. Currently, the Committee is recommending undertaking the above Strategic Goals as the framework for our Strategic Plan. Commitment to these goals will enable the Board to effectively allocate resources, prepare communications with membership and the public, inform advancement, and simultaneously lead to our long term strategic plan.

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July 14, 2021

Memorandum

To: YAA Board of Directors

From: Glen MacWilliams

Subject: Governance - Leadership Transition Again!

We're heading into an uncertain future with YAA. I suspect most of the previous Boards have been in this situation. Leadership transition means risking changes in effectiveness, for better or worse, with our purpose and mission. I hope for better and will do my best these next few months to assure we give the next Board and membership the opportunity to utilize our ongoing careful, and thoughtful work.

In this regard, the most important work we can do is prepare the next Board for leadership. We've had this on the agenda the past couple of months, so the following questions may help move us along:

1. How do we get our Board and Membership more engaged? (Less engaged, Re-engage?)
2. We're struggling with Board and Membership recruitment. What else can we try?
3. Is our committee structure working? How can we reimagine?
4. How can we build more trust and shared understanding with Board, Membership, and Community?
5. What's the Board's role in our next administration?

We've adopted some strategic planning methodology and we've shared our work with the membership through our website. This is a great improvement from past administrations, yet it is not enough to significantly increase the participation of our Membership or our community. Covid effect aside, we really need to reach out more now to our community, forming relationships with sister organizations through their membership, advancing our mission and purpose in collaboration with like-minded

nonprofits, assertively enjoining ourselves with anyone who has an interest in furthering our cause. This means we will need to join their cause too.

Some of our Board members are already doing this and we can learn more about their success from them. We can learn, emulate, and grow our interdependence and in the best way cooperate to share our common values.

Where we stand: We're currently eight Board members short of a full Board. This means that even if we fill every Board position now, in September, when current terms expire, we may lose some of our Board members causing serious deficiencies in leadership.

Let's take whatever time we have between now and September to assure ourselves and our Membership that we intend to fulfill our responsibilities. Ask yourself now if your self-evaluation reveals any shortcomings and how you may wish to make changes to improve your commitment. I believe we all want to do our best and have so far given YAA our time and energy with little compensation except for our mutual love of art and fulfillment of our agreement to do more for YAA. It's been a labor of love for me and I'm grateful for the experience. Please, let's act now to do more that matters.

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