

Portland Library Board of Directors
Special Meeting
March 14, 2022 @ 1:00 PM
Portland Library Van Beynum Room

1) Call to Order

Laurel Steinhauser, Chairwoman, called the meeting to order at 1:06 P.M.

Library Board Directors in attendance: Betsy Graziano, Myra Finkelstein, Don Eiler, and Laurel Steinhauser. Also in attendance were Library Director Jan Nocek, Friends of the Portland Library President Maureen Muir, and Librarian Jenn Renk.

2) 125th + 2 Anniversary Celebration Planning

Committee members reported updates on the following plans for the celebration:

Tent – Don reported that he priced out tent rentals and the Lions Club Rental group has a 20'x40' tent that they will set up and pack up for \$400. They also rent tables and chairs for \$5/table and \$2/chair. We need a building permit to put a tent up which will cost about \$26. This permit needs to be sent to the Fire Marshall. The tent will need to be set up on grass in order to safely tether it. There is electricity over toward the police station, but we may need to look into acquiring cables to run electricity to the tent and wherever the music is located. All agreed that Don should book the tent for June 11th. A group should meet separately to walk the parking lot and green, make a plan for where tents should be located, discuss whether to block off part of the parking lot, and determine how many tables and chairs to reserve.

Face Painting – Laurel reported that Ana Ughetti, a local face and body paint artist and library supporter, is interested in setting up a station to offer face painting and glitter tattoos. Her fee is \$300, including a 20% discount for the library, which covers her time and all supplies. Ana proposed setting out a “tips” bucket, which would all be donated to the library after the event. Ana may require one volunteer to help manage the line if there is a good sized crowd.

Fire Department – Laurel reported that Bob Shea indicated it is possible to bring a fire engine to the event and that he is running the idea by his membership.

Bounce House - Laurel reported that Party Time Inflatables, a Middletown company, has several bounce house units available. The larger unit, a bounce house and double slide combination with a basketball hoop, is \$325. The unit can accommodate around 15 children safely. The company will set up the unit ahead of the event and take it down after. It should be set up on grass for safety, and should have a volunteer to monitor children. There was agreement that the bigger unit is the best option. Additionally, Party Time Inflatables rents popcorn machines, snow cone machines, and cotton candy machines for \$50 each. The

committee agreed that it would be a good idea to rent a popcorn machine to be able to give out free popcorn. The company includes supplies with the machine, though we may need to consider purchasing extra depending on quantities.

Middlesex Land Trust - Maureen talked to Chantal Foster from the Middlesex Land Trust and they are interested in being involved. They would be interested in having a tent and talking to folks about their trails and make people aware of what is available. Jenn Renk is looking into geocaching or letterboxing for this summer's reading theme and is interested in collaborating with the Middlesex Land Trust. She will connect with Chantal Foster to see if the Middlesex Land Trust would distribute the geocaching maps as part of their display.

Food – Jan and Betsy had lunch at Melilli's and talked with Sebby. They are required to have running water if they want to scoop ice cream, so he suggested having wrapped ice cream treats or looking into an ice cream truck. Betsy was unable to connect with the Top Dog folks and believes they may have moved to Florida. The committee can look further into food trucks but may wish to consider connecting with a local organization or church to sell hot dogs and hamburgers, sodas, water, etc.

Kearen Enright - Melissa Woodward sent an email suggesting that the committee may wish to connect with Kearen Enright, a local author, illustrator, and wildlife animal rehab specialist, to see if she would like to participate in the event.

Entertainment – Jenn Renk reported that she is looking into entertainment options. She is getting a quote from a couple different roaming entertainers such as stilt walkers or magicians. The committee agreed that it would be good to have a portion of the entertainment be tailored specifically to children, and Jenn has plans to reach out to several music or performance groups she is familiar with to check availability, including Jester Jim, Scott Jameson, and Turtle Dance Music. For the rest of the event, there was consensus that music that is family friendly but not specifically for children would be a good idea. Ideas included the Guilmette family band, another local Portland band, or a Broadway-style singer named Johnny Shea who Jan saw perform at a Lions Club Event.

Friends of the Library – Maureen reported that the Friends are interested in funding performances or activities for the event. Their budget is likely in the \$1000-2000 range. Maureen suggested that the committee should get quotes and make a proposal to the Friends for their April meeting. The committee expressed gratitude for this generous offer.

The committee continued brainstorming about:

Microphone and sound system – Performers will likely bring their own sound equipment. Jan will see what Lynn has available at the Waverly Center that we might be able to borrow for the event.

Indoors display – Jan offered to connect with the Portland Historical Society about creating an indoor display in the Library’s display cases. There was further conversation about an anniversary video that could play in the Library lobby. Maureen offered to connect with Dean Soucy from Quarry View about whether they are interested in participating as well and what that might look like.

Art classes – The committee is still interested in connecting with local artists to offer a couple of different art activities. Brigitte Roy, Pamela Hank, and Art by Ola were all suggested as possibilities and Laurel will connect with them to see if they have ideas about what might work. In addition, there is interest in having a kid craft table with some simple activities like bookmark making or crayon rubbings, and this idea needs to be developed further.

Additional community groups to connect with – Andy Bauer and the Clean Energy Task Force (Laurel), the Garden Clubs (Jan), Dance w/ Miss Alicia (Laurel), Fire Ring Farm (Laurel), Youth Services, the Senior Center

Ceremony – All agreed the ceremony should be brief. Laurel will connect with Naji Chester-Payne, Portland’s poet laureate, to see if he would like to perform a poem as a part of the ceremony. The ceremony should include a brief history of the Portland Library and a resolution from the First Selectman & BOS. The board will invite Christie Carpino and Norm Needleman as well as past Board members. Laurel will get in touch with the PHS a cappella group to see if they would be interested in performing to close out the ceremony. Maureen Muir suggested “This Land is Your Land” would be nice option.

At the next meeting, the committee agreed they should discuss layout for the event, as well as needs around a set up crew, publicity crew (including banners and a printed program), a volunteer coordinator.

3) Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurel Steinhauser, Library Board Chair