

# LOWELL COMMUNITY FESTIVAL AND EVENT PLANNERS RESOURCE GROUP



Mosaic Lowell

November 1, 2023 Meeting, 6:00 pm, LTC

More than 30 people attended, and the meeting kicked off with round-robin introductions.

## **Festivals/Events/Nonprofits Represented**

- Lowell Kinetic Sculpture Race
- Resident/interested volunteer
- Points of Light
- Wedding Planning
  - o Hidden Battles Fundraisers
  - o Cornhole Tournament
- Entrepreneurship Center at CTI
- Coalition for a Better Acre
  - o Block parties
  - o Community cleanups
- Fresh Beets (Kerouac Park Food/music events)
- Lowell Senior Center
- Fundraisers
- Lowell Folk Festival
- The Town and the City Festival
- Jack Kerouac
- City of Lowell – Cultural Affairs and Special Events
- Centralville Food Truck Festival
- Mosaic Lowell
- Salsa in Lowell
- Lowell Litter Krewe
  - o Cleanup and Concert Series
- Eastern Bank Foundation
- Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association
  - o Gala
  - o Other Events
- Mill City Grows
- Lowell Film Collaborative
- Scribbles Studio
  - o Live Painting
- Boston Black Joy Day
- Photo event at Western Avenue Studios
- Afro American Community Collaborative
  - o Juneteenth

- Fundraisers
- Southeast Asian Water Festival
- Mary Scott Mitchell Foundation
  - Black History Month Ball
  - Fundraisers
- Lowell City of Learning
- Brazilian Community
- Music and Music Production
- MAPS (Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers)
  - Brazilian Flag Raising

## Resources and Challenges

After introductions, attendees were asked to share challenges they encounter. That evolved into a conversation about possible solutions to those challenges. The following notes are not in chronological order, rather, they've been grouped by topic. Collaborative fundraising was also proposed by a topic, and benefits and challenges of this approach were also discussed. Coming to the group does not mean committing to a particular solution – these are all early ideas, and different festivals might gravitate toward different approaches. Our goal is to create the space to talk about these possibilities, share possible solutions with one another, and network.

- **Need for physical resources such as tents and space to store them, could we start a Library of Resources?**
  - Need pop-up tents, tables, etc.
  - Storage in general is a challenge
- **Some need office space. Are there Shared Coworking Spaces?**
  - Need space to meet with clients or funders
  - Groups might not have normal office
  - Possible spaces for meeting:
    - Greater Lowell Community Foundation
    - City Hall
    - University of Massachusetts Lowell
- **Volunteers are very hard to recruit year after year! What possibilities are there for a Volunteer Corps?**
  - Hard to find volunteers
  - Dealing with burnout
  - Lowell Litter Krewe
    - One way to get volunteers is to have events every single week
    - Provide calendar of opportunities for LLK volunteers to volunteer at
    - Creates a fun, can-do atmosphere
  - Possibly create a “festival volunteer corps” who volunteers at weekly festivals on the regular?
- **Planning Committee Volunteers are another need!**
- **Nonprofits might work in isolation, and there are forces encouraging them to isolate. How can we reduce isolation through Continued Meetings?**
  - One challenge is that nonprofits don't want to share volunteer/funder/resource lists because it is advantage
  - Shared skills go
  - Go from scarcity to abundance model?
  - **List of Nonprofits to collaborate with?**
    - Belinda has a list

- Creative Ground/Mosaic list
- **Transportation and Parking are both challenges for some! How can we help each other with a Bus and Driver for Festivals and/or Satellite Parking for certain festivals?**
  - SEA Water Festival particular problem
  - Traffic at Sampas Pavilion creates backups over bridges
  - Not enough parking at Sampas Pavilion
  - Acre Family Child Care (not sure why I wrote this?)
  - Shuttle Busses too small for LKSR, need to move lots of people at once, not 12
- **Fundraising is a challenge and takes time away from planning festivals. Funders have to work with small festivals individually and don't see the big picture. Could some similar festivals band together in a festival series? How else can we share resources about fundraising?**
  - Tactics for fundraising:
    - Can print banners for sponsors and put them in tents
    - Corporate Menu
    - Sponsor tiers with rewards
    - Create a small donor class for smaller businesses
  - Combine a few existing festivals for a Festival Series and Fundraise for It
    - Group connectivity helps foundation grants
    - Split work
    - Provide collective resources to multiple folks
    - Challenges
      - Festivals ask for different amounts
      - Match asks to asks?
      - How written/who is coming to ask?
      - Show you are working together
    - Be able to share relationships with funders, different festivals have different relationships
    - Funder/project speed-dating

### Next Steps

The final part of the meeting was discussing next steps for the group. Everyone was excited to meet again, but the form of the group will depend on how many become regular attendees.

- Agree to meet more
- Suggestion to split into groups
- Maybe one meeting with breakout rooms
- Depends on how many people are still interested in second meeting