

LOWELL COMMUNITY FESTIVAL AND EVENT PLANNERS RESOURCE GROUP



Mosaic Lowell

November 6, 2024 Meeting, 6:00 pm, LTC

This meeting was a reconvening of the group after a Summer hiatus, with a discussion on meeting structure and schedule in 2025.

Festivals/Events/Nonprofits Represented and Attendees

- DIY Lowell - Chris Hayes and Gabby Davis
- Mosaic Lowell - Jes O'Hearn and Laura Tavares
- CASE - Peter Crewe
- Litter Crew - Brad Buitenhuys
- LTC - Adam McCune
- Folk Fest - Lee Vileisis
- Belinda Juran
- By Annie Powell - Bernie Zelitch
- Lowell Celebrates Kerouac - Steve Edington

Meeting Structure

There was a consensus that meetings should take place approximately bi-monthly and be broken up into thirds to include approximately a half hour for a visiting speaker, a half hour for group discussion, and a half hour for networking. Meetings will continue to take place at LTC.

Some of the key goals identified include advocacy, collaboration, connecting to established organizers, recognizing what exists and recognizing how we can support the work others are doing, as well as continually reaching out to local and regional event producers for their inclusion.

Group members are looking for opportunities for activation and collaboration. It would be helpful to structure each meeting with some time for a visiting speaker, time for group discussion, and time for networking. It would be helpful to hear from festival organizers in surrounding communities. It is preferred to have speakers dive into the complexities of festival planning.

Recording meetings for those who cannot attend would be helpful, and work with LTC on this.

Festival Organizer Share Outs

Kerouac Festival

challenge is always funding and scheduling across multiple locations

Need to be ready for unexpected and last minute changes to the schedule.

Having close connections and strong relationships across the city has been key to navigating these challenges

Points of Light Festival

The 2024 Festival was held on the same day as the UML commencement. It did not have too much impact on attendance, but it impacted the availability of detail officers. The other change was hosting in May instead of April.

Weather is an ongoing challenge as an outdoor event, but it is helpful to have connections with potential indoor venues should it be needed.

The biggest challenge is the sustainability of leadership to take on the responsibility of the event, it is all volunteer led.

Folk Festival

The Folk Festival saw attendance numbers in 2024 closer to the pre-Covid attendance, but still struggling with post Covid rising expenses. Growth has been great but sustaining this growth is tough, especially with an event that has so many community partners.

There are concerns now after the election about the future availability of Federal resources, and if individual giving will remain at the same level.

An additional challenge is meeting the expectations of attendees and maintaining the same level of programming.

General city wide challenges:

Sponsorships are down and the new administration may make this worse, last decrease in sponsorships was seen in 2016.

Lack of downtown hotels. Larger festivals that attract regional and national attention (Folk Fest, Water Fest, Kerouac, etc.), especially need this for traveling performers. The city cannot be marketed as a weekend destination without the availability of a hotel.