

# LOWELL COMMUNITY FESTIVAL AND EVENT PLANNERS RESOURCE GROUP



October 1, 2025 Meeting, 6-7:30 pm, LTC

## Attendees

Jessica O'Hearn (Mosaic Lowell), Chris Hayes (DIY), Peter Crewe (CASE Office), Michael Roundy (LKSR), Brad Burgess (Living Theatre NYC), Chris Romero, Joanne Bergamini, Jim Dymont, Chrissy Theo Hungate (The Brush Gallery), Elizabeth (Puerto Rican Festival), Juan (Salvadorian Festival), Kristy Hogan (City Manager's Office, Bicentennial Coordinator)

## Intro Discussion

- Reviewed upcoming weekend events and *Open Streets*.
- Discussed improving connections with UMass Lowell — working directly with professors and student groups was identified as a more effective approach than top-down outreach.

## Bicentennial Overview – Guest: Kristy Hogan

- 2026 marks the City of Lowell's Bicentennial.
  - Official birthday: March 1, 2026
  - Year-long celebration from Winterfest through City of Lights 2026.
- Goal: Establish consistent and reliable arts and cultural programming throughout the year in partnership with local artists, businesses, and organizations.
- City funding will be available to support small-scale activations and recurring events.

## Bicentennial Opportunities

- The City will fund both business and artist components of pop-up events:
  - Example: support for restaurant appetizers + artist performance honorarium.
  - Typical grant range: \$300–\$600 per event.
  - Preference for series-based or recurring programming.
- Winterfest 2026 will open the bicentennial year with a *Cake Boss* feature.
- **Application:**
  - **Contact Kristy Hogan (City Manager's Office) directly with proposals.**
  - **Include:**

- **Type of activity (e.g., live painting, performance, pop-up, exhibit).**
- **Whether you're a creative, business owner, or both.**
- **Any identified or desired business partners.**
- **Proposed budget and funding request.**
  - **Bicentennial-funded programs will display the official bicentennial logo.**
- Existing events may apply if funding enhances or expands the experience.
- Venues: No current plans for Tsongas Center or Taffeta involvement.
- Existing festivals: Expected to continue as usual, though many face challenges covering City fees and reduced public funding.
- Suggestion to advocate for additional City support for established festivals during the bicentennial year.
- Individual artists are encouraged to apply for pop-up or partnership events downtown.
- Events can be ticketed or serve as fundraisers.
- City encourages partnerships that raise awareness of local nonprofits.

## **Branding & Cross-Promotion**

- Opportunity to co-brand events as  
"Bicentennial × (Festival Name) @ (Business)" – potentially on a recurring schedule such as *First Thursdays*.
- Leveraging well-known brands like the Lowell Folk Festival and Lowell Kinetic Sculpture Race (LKSR) throughout the year could strengthen recognition and fundraising.

## **Planned Projects**

- **Festivals & Partners:**  
Identify events or organizations interested in pairing with downtown businesses for bicentennial mini-events.
- Derby Park: monthly events planned during bicentennial year.
- *Town and the City* celebration planned for the first weekend of May 2026.
- Mosaic Lowell, The Brush, and the City of Lowell are developing a monthly ArtWalk series for 2026.
  - Designed to connect artists and downtown businesses through pop-ups, performances, and storefront activations.
  - Awaiting business feedback from a downtown poll before finalizing schedule.

## **Key Takeaways**

- The Bicentennial provides a unique, year-long platform to showcase Lowell's creative sector.
- Consistency and collaboration will be central themes — encouraging repeat programming and cross-sector partnerships.
- Modest City stipends can help seed new activations and sustain existing festivals.
- Aligning ongoing projects with Bicentennial goals will strengthen overall citywide impact.

