

Warner Retailers meeting, May 23, 2012 at 8 AM at Runner Stone Mkt & Café

Cheryl Johnson Blais (the Maples), Nancy Ladd (Library), Martha Thoits (Church), Donna Fischer (Queen Bees Knees), Stephanie Hertzog (Velvet Moose), Kay Steen (art supporter), Carolyn Beverly (Mary Kay), Carolyn Bullock (MKIM)

Wrap-up for “Spring into Warner 2012”

General consensus was that the crowd was happy but not buying a lot. Possibly the heat and break from rain was keeping some people away (but great for ice cream sales!). The happiest presenter-participants were those who were interested in networking and being sociable while promoting the arts (which as Kay will tell you is why this was started in the first place). The happiest and most plentiful visitors were those with young children, and buyers of food and plants. A few said there were not enough vendors +/- or activities.

Comments and reports:

Musicians played for free and enjoyed it. One got three gigs booked by being there.

Preschool – “made contacts with future preschool families” – very happy with it.

Indian Museum had many people come early for the W.I.L.D. program to tour the museum (they were half price that day but not pre-announced). 50 attended WILD.

Church sold more meals (\$150 profit) and bake sale items (\$85) than they expected.

Library: good story time, $\frac{3}{4}$ local. Book sale: almost nothing. Movies: 2 families @11

BookEnds: Jim Mitchell scholarship booksale outdoors: made \$200.

Farmer’s Market was “average” but sales varied a lot. They noticed that the FM was not mentioned in many of the ads (Shopper, radio eg.). Next year Jennifer thinks they will confirm participation sooner and may even pay for additional ads to increase the cross-awareness. Some vendors e.g. Emma Bates’ gluten free baked goods did very well. **KCPA recitals:** Same as last year at first but attendance faded out for later events.

WHS: Great sales day at Barn – possibly not really due to SIW.

NHTM/ Fireman’s museum: no report received yet

Tie-die: D-I-Y t-shirts were a hit. Pre-made items less so - she will return at WFFF

Janice Cutting fabric arts: “gave out a lot of cards and networked a lot” – enjoyed it.

Ditto for Jennifer Carson (author and doll creator) and another fabric art person.

Jamie Murray Photography: Low sales, but fun to have local people see his work.

Some vendors especially those away from the center area had no sales and little traffic.

One ceramic vendor left at 10:30 am because of the small crowd. Jewelry near Town Hall did business, jewelry vendor by NHTM had no sales.

Wagon rides: Brian did round trips from in front of Town Hall because there were no incentives to get off at multiple stops. Perhaps next year the “wagon stop” should be in Post Office parking opposite

Church, to get people to walk down the street and get them closer to Brookside vendors and Church activities. Also Horse / wagon trailer to park?

Artists inside Velvet Moose building also had varied success. It was noted that they did their own advertising and were organized rather last minute. They had a banner. It is hoped that they will participate as a part of the whole event planning next time.

Brookside: very light traffic at FFF office but chatty. No sales for Mary Kay. Vendors outside – no business.

MAYFEST concert had 100 people, mostly teens, excellent music, BBQ sold well there.

Improvements to make for next year:

Need a consistent IDENTITY and message for ads and vendor recruitment.

Is this a family fun day, a crafts event or an art event? A celebration of art or a market opportunity? Mixed messages lead to disappointment or wasted effort by vendors.

Origins are as a multi-age art appreciation and participatory day. This seems to meet public needs, but must be communicated better when seeking participants (and visitors).

At one point standards were set high for selecting participants.

Written instructions for vendors? One vendor was looking for the Maples at setup time, expecting to set up there. One was looking for the “registration place” but knew which section he was supposed to set up in (same person left early).

Special vendor needs: Warner River Organics always needs water for his plants (at the Library- we provided it). Musicians often need electrical outlets. We should ask vendors on the application whether they need water or electricity.

Parking: Clear advance instructions about where each group should park after setup to leave space for visitors (suggestion: lower Depot Street area). Ask if they need handicapped or extra large parking space. Farmer’s Market told their vendors to park at Simonds school (Nancy’s suggestion). Did this cause any problems for the PTO sale that we did not know until later would be there? It was also not anticipated that the Firemen would block off all the NHTM parking, so that was shown in error as parking on the map. Another symbol intended to be for Mt. Kearsarge Rd. looked like a Sugar River Bank location. Communicate better next year! Find a better place for the Horse trailer – he got penned in and could not get horses out. Suggestion: lower parking, or Post Office (near wagon stop), or at MKIM. Next year: MESA building parking? With wagon ride shuttle?

ASK businesses in advance if they can provide parking for selected vendors. Use SIGNS on ground as well as on Map.

Map/ locator/schedule: get them out earlier, and give copies to ALL participants and businesses. Ask businesses whether or not they want their **bathrooms** listed on map. (Resulting increase in foot traffic can be good or bad). Library and museums are happy to do so, maybe Brookside wants to use it as bait? Velvet Moose does NOT want to be shown on map as having a public bathroom.

Wagon Stop sign(s) and trash containers needed.

Sunflower flags: were out of stock when ordered. **Stock up now!** Contact Cheryl.

Business participation and “sponsorship”: Nancy provided a draft 2013 participation form expanded from the previous years, making two different forms for artists/ performers, and for businesses and nonprofits. She feels there are many ways in which businesses can and want to support the event without feeling they must either pay money or do nothing. The form provides a way to find out: It includes possible provision of lawn space, parking, water, electrical outlets, poster display, emailing PR to client lists, sponsoring a performer, hosting displays or activities, bathrooms, etc. The group agreed this was worth pursuing. **A summary of the finances** is also needed, to identify costs.

Nancy provided a draft of a form requesting feedback from all participants and also businesses on Main Street. The group suggested adding questions about advertising. Nancy will send it out for more comment after making that change. Possibly it should be made into an online feedback form. **PLEASE GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK!**

Other discussion topics:

Next event is Holiday Shopping Tour (December 8?)

(when to start PR? July 4, Tory Hill Author progs, WFF Festival? all?)

Suggested “summer project”: BROCHURE(s)?

The group looked at Town business brochures from Henniker, Contoocook-Hopkinton, and New London, and agreed it would be a good thing to have one for Warner.

Features wanted: simple map, listing of businesses with brief description (probably alphabetical not by type of service), each one would pay to be included.

Carolyn (MKIM) suggested including “things to do”, and or trails for hiking and biking.

Cheryl said she has a comprehensive listing of links to area activities for visitors on her B&B website, and her visitors find it very useful for planning their trip. Nancy said Dan Watts has included some area features on the Warner website.

Possibly this would be a separate publication, similar to Henniker’s booklet of trails etc. Nancy agreed to ask various Town groups about assisting with this: Parks and Rec, Con. Commission, bike enthusiasts, etc. The group wondered if KACC has any funds to contribute to publishing, (as visitors who remain in the area will spend more at local businesses), Cheryl also suggested selling ads or listings to fund it.

(followup: Nancy found out the Conservation Commission had prepared a map of trails for the recreation section of the Warner Master Plan. It MIGHT not have landowner permission for posting on the web, as much of it is based on Snowmobile trail permissions. Also, the NE Bicycle Association(?) has maps of trails in the Mink Hills for mountain bikers)

Next meeting: NOT SET – no urgency; anyone can call a meeting if they have sufficient interest in moving ahead on a brochure or enough information is gathered about recreation maps.

Wow, what a lot of notes from one meeting! Congratulations on reading all the way through to here!
MANY thanks are due to all who helped with or put up with the Spring into Warner event, especially Cheryl who did most of the vendor coordination and many forms and ads, and MKIM who did a lot of early press releases, and Dan Watts for website postings.

Nancy Ladd

Note-taker.

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