

# Maplewoodstock Meeting Minutes 2024-10-16

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Wed, Oct 16, 2024, 7:00 PM EST In Jamie's basement.

Minutes submitted by Jim Robertson ([james.c.robertson@gmail.com](mailto:james.c.robertson@gmail.com)). Apologies if I've misstated anything. Corrections and additions welcome.

## Housekeeping:

<https://maplewoodstock.worldwebs.com/>

If you want to skim this document, look for these "Action Words" in ALL CAPS:

DECISION  
ACTION ITEM  
CONSENSUS  
QUESTION  
EDITORIAL  
GUIDING PRINCIPLE

## Participants:

1. Jim
2. Jamie
3. Gary
4. Kevin
5. Brad
6. Tarquin
7. Amy Biasucci
8. Susan

## Guiding Principles:

EDITORIAL: Some of these principles have been long-ago adopted. Others I've tried to glean from more recent conversations. They can be discussed and debated.

1. The best possible free two-day music and arts festival, of and for the community.
2. Free of causes, politics, statements, platforms, overt commercialization, etc.
3. Better, not bigger.
4. Commitment to disability, inclusion, and accessibility.

5. Commitment to respecting the Park and the environment (e.g., trash, recycling, etc.) within our means to control.
6. Focus and intentionality on perfecting a limited number of things is better than trying to do “everything” in a slapdash manner that “weighs our average down.”
7. Something borrowed, something blue, something old, and something new. A smorgasbord of offerings in music, arts, and food that is diverse and not “one note.”
8. Recognize what/when/why we should do it ourselves and what/when/why we should hire out and be “Directors and Producers.”
9. A “Barefoot Aesthetic” – this is a festival orchestrated by your friends and neighbors where you can CONNECT with your friends and neighbors (and meet NEW friends and neighbors) on grass and blankets barefoot. (I cribbed this principle from Amy; but that’s what I do – listen for the best nuggets and then memorialize them.)

## Agenda:

1. CAVEAT: Although we tried to adhere to the agenda, there were several divergent conversations and threads of thoughts that Jim has tried to capture and “park” into the Minutes as best possible.
2. Map:
  1. Jim shared a map from Fiverr.com ahead of the meeting via the <https://maplewoodstock.worldwebs.com/> Committee Private Forum.
  2. DECISION: The map was accepted as good to use for brainstorming and plotting.
  3. Because the map is accurate to scale, we can use Google Earth to measure actual distances.
  4. Jamie’s 2024 map was pretty accurate with regard to “bubbles” for vendor spots.
  5. Thus, we can use the new “2025 Jim map” as the “base” and then overlay for versions of final maps for public (web/brochure) or private/targeted (vendor plotting, band load-in, etc.).
  6. DECISION already made: no retreat from the East Field. Lean into it. Maximize the Amphitheatre for attendees. Keep Food and Arts vendors on the East Field.
3. Review the roles/responsibilities we discussed last time, and any conversations that were held with the people we considered for engagement. There is a separate document that Jim does not have access to, so this is an ACTION ITEM for Susan to (a) update that spreadsheet/grid or (b) share it as an editable Word, Excel, or Google file. COMPLETED
  1. Danny is up for whatever pre-event, but wants to still be free on the weekend for photos. Our biggest needs are shadowing Kevin this year to take over Food Vendors in 2026. ACTION is that Susan will talk to Danny about shadowing Kevin for food to see if he is up for it.
  2. DECISION: Stick with Rick for 2025 stage/sound; consider more bids for 2026.
  3. TQ talked with Brian, and he is IN for leading Arts Vendors. And, he can pick who he wants to work with. QUESTION: How much do we want to have Brian into our monthly meetings?

4. Arts: Amy has ideas for a public mural on a building side or train underpass. Amy also got together with a CHS teacher for ideas (e.g., Teacher mural, student gallery, etc.). ACTION ITEM: Jim will kick off Goals and Objectives conversation; and set up a “Coffee Klatch / Happy Hour” meeting with some of the others (Amy, Tom, Marcia, John/Ben, Kerry, etc.). ACTION ITEM: Amy will set up an “interest meeting” in her classroom for CHS teachers to see who might be interested or connectors.
5. Amy is our best “in” to the CHS community after several years of failed stops-and-starts with engaging with this well of talent (teachers and students).
6. Arts should be categorized thusly:
  - i. Festival aesthetics (e.g., stage decor, signage, grand gestures, lighting, entrances, etc.).
  - ii. Public art (e.g., murals, showcase/gallery, participatory event, etc.). Could be before, during, and after the festival.
  - iii. Merch designs for annual t-shirts and other revenue opportunities (e.g., engage with the local arts folks to source designs).
  - iv. Financing (e.g., Barbara helping us with grants or corporate donations); this topic will be punted out to the Finances category with Brad, as the assumption is that the specifics of what will be funded is a detail to fill in later. ACTION ITEM: Jim to connect Brad and Barbara. DONE via email on Oct 18, 2024.
7. Jim is still leading the Arts discussion with Amy.
8. Let’s be respectful of the work Marcia and Tom have put into the dark blue stars and comets banners and stage decor. Better to ask their opinion on “something elevated” for 20th festival than “declare” we want something different. EDITORIAL: Jim says, the stage decor is great and fresh; put our efforts elsewhere.

4. Muwid:

1. TQ is heading the music direction, Mostly for headliners, but with typical input among Kevin, Jamie, and Gary on the local band selections. DECISION: TQ lead, with Jamie, Kevin, and Gary.
2. Jim will run the usual Jan-March public band applications. Purposefully not a decision maker.
3. An idea was to NOT require bands for 202t to have to submit a \$25 application fee. That application fee of 110 (approx) bands does fund the \$150 per band honorarium. DECISION: No change for this for 2025, Continue the \$25 band application fee; continue the \$150 band honorarium.
4. ACTION ITEM: how does the music selection address our 20th festival? We need a STRATEGY.
  - i. Ignore our 20th festival? CONSENSUS is NO. Celebrate it in some aspect.

- ii. Go big with a known name-recognition act? Our voting suggests YES, as there is a strong correlation to spend more money for a “known name” headliner to help celebrate our 20th year.
- iii. Look to the future with up-and-coming bands that we think will hit mainstream next year (aka, “you saw them first at Maplewoodstock”); this is not a binary decision, as we have (by schedule) two “Headline Acts” (Sat and Sun) and (by default) two “Featured Acts” right before them. So, it is a chess game of slotting into those slots Something Borrowed, Something Blue, Something Old, and Something New.
- iv. Go totally “back to the roots” of “Greatest Hits” and “take a bow” Dad bands.  
EDITORIAL: this idea seems to have taken a weak purchase as it might be a flaccid approach to our 20th festival..
- v. Since DECISION is for TQ to lead, with Jamie, Kevin, and Gary – that strategy is up to them.
- vi. EDITORIAL: Nothing should be more paramount than curating the best line-up of music to present to our attendees. And, there is a formula of “Something Borrowed, Something Blue, Something Old, and Something New.” Meaning: a bit of rock, reggae, and R&B; a bit of SOMA, but also Jersey City and Brooklyn and Asbury Park; a bit of that garage band down the street from you, and a bit of that band you heard on WFUV; and a dash of salsa, country, disco, rap, etc. Maplewoodstock is not a “one note” party.

5. Merch: Jim and TQ to talk offline with how to approach 2025 (theme, select artists).

- 1. We have had successes (in the past) and failures (more recently) with open submissions.
- 2. We have had mixed results with doing it ourselves.
- 3. Mike Choi is a friend and go-to, but we cannot keep asking him for favors nor should we be limiting ourselves to his singular talent.
- 4. Do we lean into 20th Festival theme for merch? Do we want to amplify what we already present (e.g., the comets and stars dark blue stage background)? Do we want to give a nod towards our original orange and yellow “glow paint” banners (BTW – which Jim still has in storage and will mention to the Arts SubCommittee by way of perhaps using them to make Public Arts or limited edition skirts or scarfs)?

6. Brad on financials:

- 1. Brad: if we replicate the 2024 budget to 2025 (with about 6% inflation of costs), and increase headliners from \$22K to \$50K, we would have \$10K for arts stuff (with a \$10K buffer in the bank to carry over to 2026).
- 2. We need a big runway for corporate sponsors – where it makes sense. Need to know WHAT we want to do for 2025 and HOW MUCH it would cost to increase.
- 3. QUESTION: What is our appetite for a “Home Depot Cooling Tent” or a “Verizon Stage” in exchange for financing? DECISION (long ago): we are a festival **“of and for the community.”** So, “Budweiser Beer Garden” does not feel “of and for.” But, “Verizon Weekend Wi-fi” could feel

a bit more “of and for.” Certainly, an “All Clear Plumbing Water Station” feels “of and for.”  
CAVEAT: we don’t want to cannibalize our local and long-time sponsors. EDITORIAL: These binary yes/no lines are difficult to define, but to paraphrase the words of Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, “We should know it when we see it.” If we make a decision that goes beyond the “of and for” GUIDING PRINCIPLE, then we need to revisit that GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

4. ACTION ITEM: Jim will connect Barbara Heisler with Brad to explore grant-writing explorations. Likely through MAEP. As I already reported: Barbara is semi-retired and eager to help us out and get involved in the fundraising within the non-profit zone. She has done this for arts organizations and has personal contacts with people in decision roles at several NJ-based corporations (e.g., PSE&G, Jersey Mike's, Johnson and Johnson, Prudential, etc.) who have line budgets baked in to support local organizations. We just need the right pitch -- which she can help us with. She is a fund-raiser / development professional. She could perhaps come to our November meeting to speak with us for 15 minutes about how she might contribute -- perhaps a sub-Committee. Since these corporations need a long lead-time, we would need to decide to give her some charge by December at latest.
5. A point of conversation that swiftly passed by, but I want to call out in the notes is “Capital Expenses.” To what extent do we want to grow our inventory of stuff vs. pay annually to have it supplied and installed? Clearly, we rent stage and sound; and we have purchased coolers and lawn chairs. And, our new storage unit is already stuffed. ACTION ITEM: we need more clear guidelines about our Capital Assets – how, when, why do we purchase vs. rent?
7. Jill Cruscuolo was invoked by Jamie at 8:08 PM. Amy was confused, but then indoctrinated into the traditional inside joke. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2koW9JgLLA4>
8. General thoughts Jim gleaned from his notes of the meeting (with a bit of EDITORIAL):
  1. Deciding on Goals, Objectives, and Vision for 2025 informs much of how we will proceed (e.g., budget, band selection, new initiatives, merch, etc.).
    - i. We will emphasize our 20th Festival, but to what extent does that drive our otherwise primary goal to present the best free music festival of and for the community?
    - ii. We want 2025 to be “Special,” but not at the expense of our GUIDING PRINCIPLES.
- 9.
10. Lastly, the next meeting is scheduled for Wed, Nov 13 (IN pattern of “Second Wednesday of the month”).
  1. ACTION ITEM: Susan to send an agenda and Zoom link prior. Assumption is Jamie’s basement is available unless Jamie says otherwise (e.g., traveling or sick).

Meeting wrapped up about 9:01 PM.