



Steering Committee Meeting Notes

3:00 – 4:00 PM

September 14, 2020

Present: Michele Bailey, Sally Blanchard-O'Brien, Amy Cunningham, Carolyn Frisa, Carrie Cleveland, Tom McMurdo, Rachel Moore, Rachel Onuf, Ben Rose, Joseph Watson

What do we want our working goals/projects to be in the coming year?

COVID-19 Documentation

Some committee members were inspired by the project VSARA is doing with a local photographer to take outdoor family portraits, combined with a questionnaire, to document their experiences during the pandemic. This project harkens back to the 19th century when this kind of portraiture was common. There are other photographers in Elmore and Marlboro who do front porch projects that could also be tied in. VACDaRN would facilitate the collecting of materials in appropriate repositories and would not become a collecting agency itself.

Trainings

Committing to trainings could be a good way to give something to VACDaRN members. We need to think about what audiences we would be reaching, and we may want to reach out to members to hear what content they want. The Vermont Arts Council did a survey of the Creative Network recently and this data could be useful to VACDaRN. There are also lots of materials already available out there, webinars and tools, that we could promote and help support the use of rather than developing completely new content – a lot of people out there have “option shock” and this could be a good way to help members navigate useful resources. Many committee members felt that individual artists are one group who are usually unprepared for disasters and they should perhaps be a priority for VACDaRN to make sure they’re not falling through the cracks. Carrie/CERF+ would be happy to work on a training geared for artists, since they’ve already developed a lot of this type of content, though specifically for craft artists. Amy and Michele can support this project.

Collecting Stories of Artists Active in Community Recovery

There are many stories out there about artists helping in community recovery after disaster, and case studies about disaster recovery that could be promoted and shared. This aligns with one of the original top ten priorities that were developed by the Network Organizing Group and presented at VACDaRN's launch last September. The 10th anniversary of Irene is next year, which is a good opportunity for us to get active and to collect stories about artists helping their communities recover.

What could we do to prepare for another Irene?

If we knew that another Irene was coming for us, who is the most vulnerable? What concrete action steps could we take to assist people? Everyone has some kind of vulnerability, but individual artists came up again in this context because they are often under prepared. We already have a lot of content on our website, but perhaps we need to translate it into more directed workflows to help people take the first steps. September is National Preparedness Month, and it's a good time for VACDaRN to be more active. One particular action that would be good for cultural heritage people to take if they knew a storm is coming would be to connect with the local Emergency Management Directors. This is a potential social media campaign we could take on.

Listserv

We've previously had discussions around starting a listserv and we feel it could be useful for allowing VACDaRN members to interact with each other. This ties in with another top ten priority from last year's launch. The Department of Libraries is looking to change their listserv platform – they will do research into options and report back. The co-leads have also discussed trying the platform used by the Vermont Curator's Group: <https://groups.io/>.

Cultural Asset Mapping

We want to build a map of cultural assets around the states that can be aligned with flood plain maps or forecasted storm trajectories to identify which cultural resources are most at risk. This is something the VHRP and the State Historic Preservation Office have been talking about creating this GIS layer for some time. Once the tool exists, VACDaRN can use it for research, statistics, and analysis that could be presented on our website. We could consider trying to link to (or repeat certain information in) the Creative Ground directory (<https://www.creativeground.org/>), and consider how to incorporate economic impact statistics for the creative sector collected by VAC into the data we provide on the VACDaRN site.

Choosing Priorities for the Coming Year and Next Steps

COSTEP-MA said in their talk at the last meeting to pick and commit to low-hanging fruit and/or projects steering committee members were committed to working on. Bearing that in mind, three categories rose to the top:

1. Training/Education, especially for individual artists. [Working group: Carrie, Michele](#)
2. Communications, which includes developing a listserv, social media campaigns, and building a presence in the lead up to be active during September/Preparedness Month next year.

Collecting stories and sharing experiences among VACDaRN members could be a component of the communications plan. [Working group: Sally, Tom](#)

3. COVID-19 Documentation, which is a longer-term initiative. [Working group: Amy, Carolyn, the Rachels](#)

These categories will become working groups. Steering Committee members should identify what they're interested in, where it best aligns with these goals, and consider which working group to join. The working groups will meet independently to clarify what they wish to achieve, and the entire steering committee will meet again in two months.

Just because there is extra room! From Mary Margaret's 9/10/2019 presentation

Top Ten: VACDaRN Network Actions

- Offer hands-on “real world” training in responding to emergency scenarios
- Provide list of required and desired trainings and how to get them
- Provide a virtual space in which organizations can share plans, policies, and procedures and where resources can be promoted
- Create an Emergency Management primer/glossary and tips for connecting with local emergency management directors (EMDs) and regional planning commissions (RPCs)
- Share information about grants, loans, and fundraising ideas
- Promote the use of risk assessment checklists and processes (like THIRA: Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment)
- Identify partner organizations for mutual benefit and support
- Facilitate peer-to-peer mentorship
- Sharing/saving community wisdom: tell our stories and offer opportunities for others to tell their stories of disasters
- Identify regional point people for the network