

Winchester Cultural District Commission meeting minutes, Sept.24, 2026

Committee members in attendance:

Lara Green-Kazlauskas, Chair

Steve Larson, Secretary

Theresa Cannavo

Debra Jablonski

John Noone

Stacy Whitman

Not present: Annie Trépanier, Mimi Madden

Advisory Board Member present:

Virginia Shultz-Charette

BoS Liaison: Kevin Bishop (non-voting), not present

Presenting Guest: Steph Burr, DRSO from NWCT Arts Council

New CDC member Theresa Cannavo was introduced. Studio at Whiting Mills. Heirloom chairs. Intro about Whiting Mills. Studios are working studios. Events. Community spaces. Art display.

DRSO presentation. Steph Burr.

Began by sharing the application checklist.

There is a pre-made application template available.

Benefits. State hosts meetings of CD's from around the state. Peer partners. Share what works.

Fox 61 reporting. Have a cultural assets list. Develop. Shared marketing - Winsted cultural organizations collaborating together, Winchester CDC collaborating with other CDCs and state.

Improved marketing within Winchester and outside of Winchester.

The 1st CD was dedicated in 2021. Torrington was 2nd.

How long does approval take? approx 6 mo to a yr.

CT Office of the Arts. They have a paid position for someone to run the CD program.

Cultural assets need to be in a walkable area, but then part of the application can list other assets nearby.

We would get whole page listing about our CD on CTVisit websites etc. Western Board of Tourism. Becoming a Partner.

Eventually there could be advocacy to the state from CDCs for more benefits/funding. Getting our designation relatively early can help us have a say in how the program develops.

As a municipal council we might be able to apply for certain grants (if we became a 501(c)(4) like Torrington's CDC, that could make us ineligible for some grants that can only be given to 501(c)(3)'s or municipal organizations).

The program is modeled off of Massachusetts' program.

Lara: question about local arts education. She contacted Gilbert & K-6 and got a very good outline from Gilbert about what they do but nothing yet from K-6. Steph said it's not essential if the schools don't get back to us.

Further resources to consider:

Community College. Arts related classes and events.

Stacy will help get us in contact with them.

Various event spaces in town mentioned.

AMP

Gilbert

Whiting Mills, Laurel Room and smaller lounge. Often don't charge rent. Policy about ticketed events varies.

Various churches.

Soldiers' Monument outdoor plays.

The Green.

AMTL

Theresa asked if we had talked to our state rep and senator.

Steph said that Stephen Harding (state senator) would likely be very enthusiastic and helpful (not necessarily needed for the application itself since that is not a political process.)

After the application goes to the state and they have reviewed it, we organize a "walk-through" lasting about 1 to 2.5 hours, not visiting all locations (simple route), but planning a small number of stops. Then we do a presentation of the application. Torrington showed a video, but we aren't required to have one; but see below re how we could possibly get one done for free.

Invite people from other CD's.

Will probably have to be during a weekday.

If we get our application in during the late fall or early winter, the walk-through would likely be scheduled for the spring.

Stacy. question about "Supporting section/reference in municipal Plan of Conservation and Development..." etc. town should have this but we need to investigate.

Steph thinks that we might need to organize another public input meeting since public input from the earlier work was several years ago. We did have public comment time in the June 2026 meeting, so even though it was a small group of people that might be sufficient. Doing another public comment event might be a good way to spread the word about the CD and its benefits, identify other cultural assets, etc. Any communication should make it clear that the CDC wants to be as inclusive as possible so that any cultural organizations or businesses don't feel left out.

Lara asked for volunteers to go into the lists that Annie made and fine tune them. Stacy has already worked on the events list. And added some comments and questions.

Stacy will look at events further after 2 weeks or so.

John will look at the historical list in collaboration with Virginia.

Theresa will look at the artistic spaces, museums & businesses (including restaurants).

-add Awecast (NewDayGroup)

Stacy moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting. John seconded. Approved. 6-0.

John talked about Albert Petrunti possibly willing to do a video for us for little or no cost. He did a video for the EDC to market to try to get more businesses to come to Winsted.

[Win Win Community - EDC](#)

[Awecast – Digital Video Production and Content Creation | Connecticut](#)

(newdaygroup)

Discussion about spreading the word about the CDC. At events like flea market. etc.

Garden club? Is there one in Winsted?

Deb moved to adjourn. Steve seconded. Approved 6-0.