



Brett Stanciu, Zoning Administrator

April 26, 2022

Dear Brett,

I would like to thank the DRB, our neighbors, and other community members for attending the site visit on Saturday, April 23, 2022. It is important to me to hear feedback from our neighbors, so that we can respond by looking for creative solutions that find balance in these challenging times. Art centers have been faced with particular challenges during the pandemic. The very essence of our mission, to bring people together, has become complicated. Witnessing the hardship the pandemic has had on our healthcare workers and community has had a personal impact on all of us at HCA. The challenge of navigating how to serve our mission while also not contributing to the problem has been continually on all our minds. For a brief period this fall, HCA opened for a limited number of indoor events before canceling the rest of our season and moving to outside activities. This spring we have opened for a limited number of performances indoors. Like many venues, we have seen a sharp decline in attendance for indoor performances - on average, a 50% drop in patronage. These numbers are similar to reports we have heard from our colleagues at other venues in the state and across the border in New Hampshire. This has created a financial hardship for the entire sector.

Steve Gonyaw, who many of you met on Saturday, has worked hard to connect with sound engineers and designers to develop a stage and sound design that would create the least amount of sound bleed from the HCA property. We strongly believe this will eliminate the reverberation from the building experienced by Julie Brochu last summer.

In response to the discussion on Saturday and the desire to find an agreeable balance, I would like to amend the original proposal I submitted to the DRB with a reduced number of requested performances with amplified sound to five events from June through August held from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. With some of our other performances that include multiple days and traditionally lower attendance, we are able to better create social distancing for those that require it. The performances we are requesting to hold outside would allow people who are not able to attend indoor events the opportunity to engage in arts/community events and allow us to reach a capacity needed to support them. It would also allow us to provide a safer alternative to musicians who prefer to perform outdoors, as they can't be masked onstage. We are pleased to have the opportunity to bring acclaimed, nationally touring artists to the community and would like to share these performances with the widest audience possible.



The dates and descriptions of performances HCA is requesting are as follows:

East Coast Inspirational Singers on Saturday, June 18 | 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm - A celebration of Juneteenth weekend with one of New York City's premier gospel ensembles.

Della Mae on Friday, July 15 | 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm - A Grammy-nominated, all-woman bluegrass string band.

Bassel & The Supernaturals on Friday, August 5 | 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm - A band capturing the Syrian-American experience.

Lakou Mizik on Saturday, August 13 | 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm - A collective of Haitian roots musi

Session Americana on Friday, August 19 | 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm - An ensemble of musicians playing music from the American songbook.

In partnership with Back Roads Readings, HCA would like to again host a series of three poetry readings in the tent and is requesting minimal sound amplification in the form of a vocal mic. I attended all three readings last year and there was no sound bleed outside of the tent. The reading schedule: Dan Chiasson and Toussaint St. Negritude on July 10; Bianca Stone and Sharon Olds on July 24; Brad Kessler and Jay Parini on August 7 | 3 - 4 pm for all readings.

Thank you,

Keisha Luce
Executive Director, HCA

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