



**Lexington Arts and Crafts Society, Inc.  
Minutes of Board Meeting  
August 17, 2021  
3pm (Zoom)**

**Board Members Present**

Katina Leodas  
Molly Nye  
Wayne Davis  
Diane Gordon  
Lauri Hugentobler  
Alison Lauriat  
Christina Gamota  
Michael Lawson  
Jenn Bergantino  
Louise Hara  
Nancy Cornelius  
Nicole Mordecai  
Peter Bain  
Victoria Nessen  
Matthew Siegal

**Guild Observers Present**

Steve Goldstein (Photographers)  
Sue McFarland (Painters)  
Carolyn Reckman (Woodworkers)  
Alison Lauriat (Ceramics)  
Wilda Ward (Decorative Arts)  
Casandra Goldwater (Metalworkers)

The meeting was convened at 3:00 pm and conducted via video-conference and chaired by Katina Leodas, Chair of the Board of LexArt.

**1. Approval of June 22 Board Meeting Minutes**

Steve Gordon noted that Jessie Zhan should be added to the attendees

Upon motion by Peter Bain, seconded by Matt Siegal, it was:

**VOTED:** That the Board of Directors hereby approve, subject to correction of names, the minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting held June 22, 2021. *Adopted unanimously.*

## **2. Finance Report (see attachments)**

Mike Lawson, Treasurer, said that his reports were part of the meeting materials package and included a Cash Balance Report. He added that there was an August PayPal transfer of \$43,000 not included in that report. Next meeting he will have quarter to quarter comparison of expenditures against the budget for the board to review.

## **3. Development Report (see attachments)**

Wayne Davis, Development Committee Chair, highlighted a few items:

LexArt has received two grants

\$67,000 from the Mass Cultural Council

\$6,000 from Mass Charitable Mechanics Association

The next big Development event is a Donor Appreciation Reception on Sept 18: it will include a Gallery Viewing followed by Reception at the Gamota house. Board members are invited, not inviting partners of board members due to Covid restrictions. Katina mentioned invitations have gone out, looking for RSVP's by Aug 31

Wayne reviewed the Major Donor Program's history, beginnings, reason for undertaking (a more robust fundraising effort). The program had been put hold on it to allow Strategic Vision Planning groups to get their work done over the summer. He is now engaging with consultant Diane Reeman to restart the training.

Wayne distinguished 3 types of campaigns

- Specific financial objective and timeline

- Ongoing appeal (annual, seasonal, etc.)

- Major Donor Program - focus efforts on select group of potential donors, develop relationships with them over time for multiyear support. LexArt never done this before - will resume. Fundamentally, the board's task will be to engage potential donors, over the course of multiple conversations/interactions, about three priorities for LexArt.,

Discussion on proposed 3 priority areas for Major Donor Program:

- Diane Gordon said that the community aspect is missing. Katina asked for more clarification of "community". Diane pointed to the mission and wondered how that would appeal to the greater Metro West arts community.
- Matthew agreed with Diane; public and community engagement should headline each of the three blocks, this should be a priority of wordsmithing. For the education

component, he would like it to reach a spectrum of underserved audiences. It should also highlight that we are trying to use gallery programming for outreach and engagement. New technology should drive new audiences as well.

- Molly Nye added that we must believe in our program in order to ask for money, this makes a big difference.
- Alison Lauriat feels it is a bit dry, she would like to see more specifics and more excitement in the language.
- Jenn Bergantino reinforced that this is about the outside community not about the LexArt, she also would like to include the notion of historically bringing and preserving craft as part of celebration of human spirit. She asked what else was considered, are there any alternatives?
- Wayne replied that he did not recall but can say that these have not changed since February and the “community” aspect runs through, and is a result of, the focus on the three priorities.
  - Education has been at core of LexArt since the beginning. A more professional, expansion of educations offering and reach are needed for survival of the Society.
  - The Gallery as the 2nd priority is an incredible asset - people continue to visit and be amazed - we need to use it to max to leverage everything else we are doing.
  - Regarding New Technologies, this is careful wording of boring infrastructure stuff that often gets overlooked but is vincredibly important - it includes people, hardware, software, and building to allow us to reach new audiences where they are.
- Diane Gordon said that this is an adequate roadmap but it is still not direct enough line to the community and perhaps we need a visual or other method to make the link. She said the gallery is the new center piece but there is so much more people need to be aware of, a landscape of activity including the parking lot sales, outside classes, and outside organization outreach. These are all part of our community arts programming.
- Wayne further explained that these are the funding priorities we need help with over the next 2-3 years vs. “this is everything LexArt represents”.
- Matthew Siegal answered “what else was considered”. He said that upgrading facilities was dropped - he felt that it was not appropriate for LexArt to ask donors for that.
- - He cited his own community and engagement activities inserting himself with local town and arts organizations including the Lexington streetscape committee, Chamber of Commerce, etc. Matthew then spoke about using the gallery as a tool for outreach and engagement by opening it for use by the community. LexArt held the Lexington Race Amity show recently and the gallery space was freely given for that but we can't afford to continue to do this for free. He desires to have local organizations underwrite these exhibitions in the future.
- Casandra asked if it would be more engaging and exciting to link each of these “ask blocks” to LexArt goals. Katina asked Cassandra to work with development committee to make it more exciting.

- Jenn Bergantino said that Matthew had just described a very compelling vision but it is not captured here in the three points. She thinks it is wrong to be too specific to the Nye Gallery
  - Wayne and Katina stopped the discussion and felt that it was a very helpful exchange of ideas and will tap Victoria Neessen for help editing these priorities.
- No vote needed at the time.

#### **4. Executive Director Report (see attachments)**

Matthew provided written report with the pre-meeting documents which reviewed the following:

LexArt's mission language was revised and he hopes it is adopted and get it broadcast to the public.

The Executive Committee has tried to give back coordination and management of classes to the guilds - but mid to long term LexArt will need a staff person for this job. This will bring professionalism and a much wider scope to our Education program. Education means more than just classes on how to make things but it also should encompass history, appreciation, etc.

The Strategic Planning process is progressing, he is waiting for all groups to finish their work and will provide a report at that time. The report will include input from a subgroup (including Wayne Davis, Peter Demuth) assembled to answer questions of - who are we?, why do we matter?, and where do we see ourselves down the road?.

Finally, the Executive Committee has agreed that many changes cannot wait for adoption via the Strategic Planning process, and has asked Matthew to make some short term recommendations on certain issues, including the organization and structure of LexArt, and the use of building space in service of the missions and goals.

Discussion:

- Molly noted that nothing was said about touring the building. She feels this is important way to excite the public about LexArt, to let them know that there are working artist studios amongst the banks and hairdressers of Lexington center. Tours should be a priority to any visitor.
- Katina wants more activities outdoors to bring attention to the Society
- Diane Gordon really liked Matthews notion of expanding the Education role to include helping people understand what they are looking at. She confirmed that she didn't know about LexArt, beyond the Metal Guild, before being asked to join the board and she likes the idea of tours.
- Katina has been welcoming all students prior to their first class with a small introduction to LexArt and an offer of a tour.
- Casandra mentioned that she gives tours while gallery sitting, people always accept. More of membership needs to become tour guides and cheerleaders for LexArt.

- Matthew confirmed that Cassandra is LexArt's biggest cheerleader. He notes that many of our own members have never seen the whole building because most barricade themselves in their own guilds with locked doors. *In fact, tours have limited value if people are met by locked doors, no introductory classes, and multi-year waiting lists.*
- Peter Bain and Christina Gamota would like tour training which would include history and future and specific details on our arts and machines and space.
- Wayne pulled back the focus and noted that tours are but one aspect of what is at the heart Matthew's report; LexArt's outward community focus. This is reflected in that language will be Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals language to be voted on today on. It represents shift in the behavior of organization from inwardly serving members to outwardly serving the broader community.
- Diane Gordon said that the new vision values and goals do reflect outward focus but do not clearly indicate that we are making a big shift, It may be implied but it is not obvious that this
- Katina said that she also feels something is missing in the mission language. She stated that we are making an explicit change that will cause big convulsions and we should be explicit about it.
- Matthew countered that the "shift" language needs to be aimed at internal audience. This missions / vision language is an external message. He stated that he has been unambiguous about his goals to have LexArt serve the community. However, he reiterated that he still doesn't know what the best vehicle of communication with membership is...or how to communicate the shift to membership. In any case, this language needs to be brief, concise, and unambiguous.
- Diane brought up the new inclusiveness norms for operating in boards across the country and how that shift in operations is stated implicitly to ensure compliance and new operating method.
- Casandra, citing 20+ years of membership, feels this language is a sufficient clue to members that change is here. LexArt has never had such a clear and defined set of orders to embrace the outside community.
- Matthew agrees that we need an internal roadmap/framework that shows LexArt how to be more equitable, inclusive, diverse.

#### **4. Additional Votes**

4.1. Through the ongoing Strategic Planning process a diverse committee has developed new statements of Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals for LexArt. (See meeting materials) The Executive Committee believes that these statements describe an organization that LexArt can become. We believe that the attainment of this Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals and the expression of these values in our daily operations will promote the successful continued existence of the organization.

Upon motion by Diane Gordon, and seconded by Mike Lawson, it was;

**VOTED:** The board approves the adoption of these new Mission Vision Values and Goals statements to replace current and previous statements. *Adopted unanimously.*

4.2. The Executive Committee believes the health and financial viability of LexArt is heavily impacted by decisions on who can become a member and when, and how space is utilized. The Committee believes that these decisions can and should be made by the Executive Director pursuant to guidelines approved by the board. The Committee has directed the Executive Director to develop plans and sets of guidelines for how we will make these important decisions on membership and space allocation and to present those plans to the Board at its next meeting on October 19th.

Upon motion by Molly Nye, seconded by Mike Lawson, it was;

**VOTED:** The Board approves the Executive Committee's directive to the Executive Director to develop plans for his decisions on membership and space allocation. *Adopted unanimously.*

4.3. Based on input from the Executive Director the Executive Committee believes that LexArt will need to employ or otherwise engage additional personnel to support the organization's revised Mission and vision statements. The committee has directed the Executive Director to develop an optimal staffing plan for LexArt that includes the number of employees, skills, and hours required. and to present that plan to the Board at its next meeting on October 19th.

Upon motion by Molly Nye, seconded by Rachel Rosenblum, it was;

**VOTED:** The board approves the Executive Committee's directive to the Executive Director to develop and present to the board a staffing plan for LexArt. *Adopted unanimously.*

4.4. The Development Committee has requested that the board support its proposal to pursue a Major Developer Program with a vote.

Upon motion by Nicole Mordecai, seconded by Rachel Rosenblum, it was;

**VOTED:** The Board accepts the report of the Development Committee and endorses its plan to develop and execute a Major Donor Program that emphasizes LexArt's funding priorities for supportive education, gallery programming, and new technologies. *Adopted unanimously.*

# Pre-Meeting Materials

LexArt Board of Directors Meeting  
Tuesday, August 17, 2021, 3:00 – 4:30 pm  
AGENDA

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/7818629696?pwd=NjBwWVR4bHpGUGN6SkdsSjZnZ1g4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 781 862 9696

Passcode: Sparks!

Call in (phone): 929 205 6099

1. Call to order
2. Approval of minutes from June 22, 2021 board meeting
3. Reports (see attachments)
  - A. Finance
  - B. Development
  - C. Executive Director
4. Proposed Board Votes



**Lexington Arts and Crafts Society, Inc.**  
**Minutes of Board Meeting**  
**June 22, 2021**  
**3:00 pm (Zoom)**

**Board Members Present**

Peter Bain  
Peter Demuth  
Molly Nye  
Jenn Bergantino  
Diane Gordon  
Louise Hara  
Lauri Hugentobler  
Rachel Rosenblum  
Matthew Siegal  
Nancy Cornelius  
Katina Leodas  
Susan St. Maurice  
Wayne Davis  
Victoria Nessen  
Leslie Sargis  
Nicole Mordecai

**Guild Observers Present**

Steve Goldstein (Photographers)  
Sue McFarland (Painters)  
Carolyn Reckman (Woodworkers)  
Alison Lauriat (Ceramics)  
Wilda Ward (Decorative Arts)

The meeting was convened at 3:00 pm. The meeting was conducted via video-conference and chaired by Katina Leodas, Chair of the Board of LexArt.

**1. Elect Peter Bain at Secretary**

Upon motion by Wayne Davis, seconded by Matthew Siegal, it was:

**VOTED:** That the Board of Directors appoint Peter Bain as the Secretary of the Board. *Adopted unanimously.*



## **2. Approval of April 20th Board Meeting Minutes**

During the April meeting the board elected officers, determined the body of executive committee, resolved to find a clerk, and set a meeting schedule. Nicole Mordecai mentioned there were some names xxx'd out on page 2. Wayne Davis suggested we go to the meeting recording to identify the omission and correct the minutes.

Upon motion by Rachel Rosenblum, seconded by Lauri Hugentobler, it was:

**VOTED:** That the Board of Directors hereby approve, subject to correction of names, the minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting held April 20, 2021. *Adopted unanimously.*

## **3. Approval of May 18th Electronic Vote to Approve the Budget.**

The FY21-22 Budget was agreed upon by an email vote from the Board. Wayne Davis suggested that the sitting Board formalize this vote.

Upon motion by Molly Nye, seconded by Susan St. Maurice, it was:

**VOTED:** That the Board of Directors hereby approve the May 18th vote to approve the FY21-22 Budget. *Adopted unanimously.*

## **4. Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Mike Lawson reviewed the content of the reports included with the board materials; profit and loss at end of fiscal year, balance of accounts. The materials also included a *preliminary* accountant finding - not yet finalized (waiting on Weavers Guild report). He then offered to include anything more in his report that board would like to see. Katina flipped the question and asked, considering his experience with non-profits, should we be reporting anything differently in any of the reports?

Mike responded that, in cooperation with Matthew, we should be presenting budget updates to the Board of Directors on a quarterly basis with variance analysis. He would also like to address how we hold restricted accounts and proposed to invest cash assets more aggressively. Such an action would result in an Earnings Report.

Leslie Sargis concurred with Michael about quarterly reporting. She noted that the Management Report should have recommendations to the board. Mike Lawson reminded the Board that the Report was preliminary.

Matthew Siegal reminded the Board that it did pass a budget that was contingent upon quarterly reviews. Katina Leodas highlighted the importance of reviews since we are projecting a deficit.

Katina asked Mike about difficulties getting Signatory Approvals changed for our multiple cash accounts. She noted that new regulations, a labyrinth of guild accounts, and the number of of

LexArt signatories that change every year makes this a messy process and a headache for both the banks and LexArt.

Michael said that the Signatory change process has been slow and difficult but that TD Bank has been very accommodating, Brookline Bank less accommodating, The Vanguard signature forms have been sent out. He feels there are way too many signatories on guild accounts and proposed having just one from each guild.

## **5. Development Report**

Wayne Davis decided to hold off on further activity with Diane Remin's major donor campaign pending completion of the strategic planning progress. He expects it will restart in early-mid August, allowing the campaign time to get into gear before the Annual Giving season. He stated that the Development Committee should also get started planning the Annual Campaign (a separate activity not directly part of Diane's work)

Wayne told the Board that it was time to plan the official celebration for the Molly Nye gallery and the major donors. The party date is set for September 18. The official gallery show opens on September 12th. Alison Lauriat and Christina Gamota are planning the party. The party agenda is to start in gallery and move over to Gamota household. All board members welcome. There may be a capacity limit so Guild Observers may not be invited.

## **6. Executive Director Report**

Matthew Siegal, Executive Director, offered to provide a full written report prior to the board meetings going forward, and he hope it leads to lively discussion.

### *Strategic Planning Exercise*

Matthew reminded the Board that we are in the midst of a strategic planning exercise and he is very happy with the results of the Mission / Vision group, and reviewed the new mission language. Katina charged all board members to bring the mission to their guild. It was suggested that it should be on the website and included on printed material, Lauri Hugentobler will make it happen.

There are three other strategic groups in process; membership, guilds, financial; they should be guided by new mission statement. Each has had two meetings so far, quite a few more expected to be needed.

Matthew stated that if we don't get the strategic planning process right this time, he does not believe LexArt will survive. He doesn't think tweaks to the organization will suffice. He encouraged the Board to conceive of our "Ideal Art Organization" and make it happen, to be as

imaginative as possible. He stressed that there is no need to protect anything that is currently in place and that the organization needs significant change to thrive and expand.

Katina Leodas asked for a “tweaking” example. Matthew cited the Finance group getting caught up in discussion of the minutia of organizing classes around guilds and work space. He said that talk was frustrating and unproductive because the group stayed mired in the existing rules / make up of LexArt rather than explore imaginative possibilities for LexArt as a new, inclusive community organization.

### *Gallery*

Matthew reported that State of Clay is over and it was- great show with excellent sales and was well received. He said that working with the organizer was wonderful.

The “Race Amity” show is currently up. This show was sponsored by a Town committee and includes mostly high school art. Although the show is a bit thin, he felt that it was great opportunity to work with town and for the sake of the subject matter. Matthew is hopeful to do black history month show in February, 2022.

The next show will be “Embracing Abstraction”, sponsored by Photography and Painters Guilds, during July. August is quiet but will have first rental of the gallery for one week, and that is a source of income.

In September the “Reflections, Reawakening, Resilience” show will officially open the Nye Gallery. He reached out to other Metro West art organizations to join us in the show. Five other groups agreed to open submissions to their artists. He will assemble a jury committee to select works, perhaps 10 from each organization.

### *Top Near Term priorities*

Gallery shop; Matthew stated that he would like to turn it into a gift shop and for it to become a significant revenue source for LexArt. That means items would have a different price point than items in the gallery itself. Currently it just an extension of gallery. He would like to keep it open even during gallery down time. Further, the shop would carry product outside of handmade crafts; for example, honey from a local farm.

The hard opening for gallery; Matthew stressed that he wants to make it big and successful. He stated that we only get one chance to do it and plans on a great deal of promotion and marketing.

Physical changes to facility; Matthew wants to use the space of the entire facility in a way that meets our mission and maximizes revenue for LexArt, no matter how that space has been “owned” in the past. He feels that different use of space and space allocation will signal that big changes are happening in LexArt. He wants to create storage for guilds that don’t have it and stressed that LexArt must increase value proposition to those guilds without workshops or space.

Expectations and participation of LexArt Board members. Matthew stated that he wants the Board's help in the day-to-day operation of the organization, not just decision making. Currently only half of committees are in working order. He said wants each board member to serve on two committees and understands many are working full-time but he needs our help to conduct the business of the organization. He emphasized that this is not an exclusively "advisory" board, it is a "working" board.

## **Discussion**

Lauri Hugentobler made a plea for help, citing the need to close the gallery this weekend due to lack of gallery sitter volunteers. The cashiering element was discussed and online video training talked about. She will send out links.

Matthew added that he would like to list member volunteer opportunities, beyond gallery sitting, on the website. Katina Leodas mentioned that there are tons of things that need doing within the Education Program alone. She encouraged members to think about matching what they are good at and what LexArt needs.

Katina said that one of the most controversial subjects in LexArt is that the Strategic Planning Process will make major changes to LexArt. For example, the value and role of guilds is being scrutinized. The question of their place in the future of LexArt is being discussed and that makes some members uncomfortable.

She said that the mission statement is also controversial- to become a diverse, welcoming inclusive community - She said LexArt is not that today and if we want to live up to the new mission we need lots of change - one hurdle is guild organization, because they control who can join LexArt and this tends to be an exclusive process.

Matthew explained a vision where there are no barriers to anyone walking in off the street and joining LexArt. He talked about "ladders of learning" where novices can get introduced to various arts through mentors and classes. And he cited the Ceramics guild, which has maximum number of members built into their bylaws, as the opposite of this ideal.

Molly Nye suggested solutions to workshop capacity issues including different level of membership, a full time manager, carrying materials home after class.

Matthew reiterated that he wants to explode the guilds idea of "fiefdoms of space", and to make best use of physical space in LexArt. Diane Gordon was motivated to act and suggested forming a small group to tackle the issue. Carolyn Reckman agreed with most ideas but reminded everyone that we have the 3 strategic groups already in process and asked the group to wait for their recommendations.

Jennifer Bergantino suggested that to support these big cultural changes LexArt need better job communicating the new Mission / Mission to the membership, beyond simply posting on website.

Wayne Davis offered some advice to those leading the working groups; this type of change is hard, it is important not to be negative and alienate membership, to be sensitive to the emotional content of the subject, and to respect the LexArt history. He said that change will be easier if we hold onto the positives of the past.

Matthew replied to Wayne's advice saying the the very guild structure makes it difficult for him to speak directly to the organization. He was told that membership does not read more than one or two lines of an any LexArt email. The annual meeting was attended by only 40 people, half of whom were board members. The guilds control all communication with the membership and he feels this a strong negative.

Carolyn Reckman mentioned that the pandemic has also played a factor and many members have not met Matthew yet and suggested more face to face interactions.

## **7. Nominations & Governance Report**

*Peter Bain serving as clerk. Completed earlier in the meeting.*

*Adding Christina Gamota to the board*

Alison Lauriat, Leslie Sargis, and Katina Leodas spoke on behalf of Christina as a consummate volunteer, art collector, garden artist, and well respected member of Lexington. It was mentioned that she will bring many good things to LexArt, including an extraordinary garden party.

Upon motion by Peter Demuth, seconded by Molly Nye, it was:

**VOTED:** To expand the board by 1 person for a 1-year term and to elect Christina Gamota to fill that slot.

## **8. Close of Meeting**

Katina decided to table reports from the Board Committees (executive, finance) until next meeting. The staffing of the Society Committees (building, development) will wait until September.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm. The LexArt Board meets next on August 17, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Bain  
Clerk

TO: LexArt Board Members  
FROM: Michael Lawson, Treasurer  
DATE: August 11, 2021  
SUBJECT: Treasurer's Report

In the last Treasurer's report in June, I provided information regarding our profit and loss statement as well as our balance sheet.

The Treasurer's report for the August Board meeting, and for on-going Trustee's meetings will contain two major parts. The first will report the status of our various accounts for both the Society and where appropriate, Guild balances. Second, I will comment, as necessary, on any financial issues that should be brought to the attention of the Board.

#### Major Account Balances

- Cash in various accounts: \$322,220.39
- Certificates of Deposits: \$124,782.80
- Endowments (restricted assets): \$196,235.04
- Guild Balances, checking accounts: \$ 74,619.03
- Guild Balances, saving/CD accounts: \$ 23,454.69.

You will recall that the annual budget approved by the Board included, as part of the revenue projections, an increase in membership of twenty percent. I note that membership has not increase, but has, in fact, declined.

Finally, not reflected in the assets presented above in a PayPal balance of approximately \$43,000. In August it was transferred to the Society's checking account.

## Development Committee Report

**Committee Members:** Wayne Davis (chair); Christina Gamota, Molly Nye, Alison Lauriat, Katina Leodas, Jasmine Lipman, Matthew Siegal (ex-officio).

### 1. Recent Grants Awarded

As previously reported, the Mass Cultural Council awarded LexArt approximately \$67,000 from its Cultural Facilities Fund. The first \$60,000 represents match funding in support of the Molly Harding Nye Gallery project, including the lift replacement, accessible rest room, and various COVID-related upgrades to the HVAC system. The remainder provides funding for us to develop a formal plan for maintenance, repair, and potential improvement to the building. We are finalizing the paperwork for receipt of the funds.

We recently received notice of the award of \$6,041 from the Mass Charitable Mechanics Association for the purchase of tools and equipment for woodworking and fiber arts.

### 2. Nye Gallery Donor Appreciation Reception

On September 18 at 4 pm., we will host a Donor Appreciation Reception to celebrate the opening of the gallery and express our gratitude to the major donors to the project. The reception will be held in the garden at Christina Gamota's home. In addition to organizing the event, Christina has generously offered to cover the expenses. (THANK YOU!) The donors are also invited to drop by the gallery for an informal visit earlier in the afternoon, in connection with our *Reopening/Reawakening/Rebirth* collaborate exhibit. Board members are invited and encouraged to attend. Due to space limitations and COVID precautions and depending on the number of guests who RSVP, we may need to limit whether board member spouses can attend.

### 3. Major Donor Program

Last winter, the Development Committee began working with fundraising consultant Diane Remin to develop what we hope will be an ongoing program for soliciting major gifts, which would run alongside ongoing solicitation efforts such as the Annual Fund. Work completed in the first half of 2021 included:

- Submitted list of ~1600 names from our various lists for "wealth screening" to identify those potentially with means and interest in LexArt to give major gifts (e.g., \$2500 per year for three years, and up).
- Reviewed screening results and identified approximately 30 top prospects, for whom a third-party service developed individual profiles.
- Developed a draft of Funding Priorities to be used in discussion with donors, which was presented to the Board at its March meeting, with feedback provided.

Subsequently, as LexArt began the Strategic Planning discussions, the Development Committee (with the concurrence of the Executive Committee) decided to suspend work for a few months to allow some time for the Strategic Planning process to proceed.

We believe now is the time to resume work on the Major Donor Program. The renewed Vision, Mission, and Values statements (to be discussed elsewhere in this meeting) will help communicate much more

effectively why LexArt exists and where it is going. Also, the Strategic Planning process, while far from complete, has reinforced the need for the three priority areas that had already been identified. Last (and far from least!) the budget approved by the Board anticipates a contribution of at least \$100,000 from fundraising, which is unlikely to be reached unless we attract some major donations.

**Action requested at this meeting.** Attached (next page) is a revised and updated statement of the Funding Priorities. We ask that the Board endorse these priority areas for this year's focus of the Major Donor Program. (*Note:* If individual board members – especially those with marketing expertise – have wordsmithing suggestions, we'd love to have them. Please email to [wayne.davis@lexart.org](mailto:wayne.davis@lexart.org).)

We anticipate scheduling a training session with Diane Remin in September on how to approach and talk with prospective donors. We will notify all board members of when this is scheduled and encourage you to attend—without commitment that you will then be pressed into service. (Though we won't say no if you volunteer.)

#### **4. Annual Appeal**

The Development Committee plans to get started much earlier this year on the Annual Appeal. If any board members, observers, or general members are interested in helping, this is a good way to learn about non-profit fundraising and we could use the help.

Board members are reminded that we hope and expect to have 100% participation.



**LexArt Major Funding Priorities**  
**The Next Thousand Days**  
(Draft Updated August 11, 2021)

**Our Vision:** The human need to create is celebrated, encouraged, and embraced.

**Our Mission:** To spark joy, enrich lives, and build community through the practice, teaching, and sharing of art and craft.

**Our Goals**

Cherish and pass-on traditional methods of craft.

Acknowledge and welcome diverse and contrasting voices.

Celebrate new perspectives and ideas.

Increase the community’s knowledge, appreciation and awareness of art and craft

Be a vibrant center of creativity and growth, providing ladders of learning and pathways of access and engagement.

**Priority Areas**

**EDUCATION**

*Expand access to learning of art and craft-making*

- Build a professionally managed program with ladders of learning from beginner to high craft.
- Provide scholarships for adults & teens to take classes at LexArt.
- Offer scholarships for graduating high school seniors to pursue art at the college level.
- Develop more teen and multi-generational classes.

**GALLERY PROGRAMMING**

*Bring programming to the Nye Gallery to further our collaboration and engagement with new audiences*

- Develop compelling exhibitions and associated programming with regional artists who will inspire and challenge us, *e.g.* immigrant artists from Lowell.
- Hold juried invitational shows that will continue to raise the level of excellence.
- Infuse the outdoor space with art, creating a community gathering space.

**NEW TECHNOLOGIES**

*Invest in the means to support current members and attract and engage new audiences*

- Properly equip LexArt for on-going remote-learning, collaboration, and gallery education, which will be integral to all exhibitions.
- Expand offerings in traditional craft areas
- Experiment with digital artforms, *e.g.*, 3-D printing and laser cutting.

## Executive Director's Report

Going forward it may be helpful if members of the board advised if there are particular topics that they may wish to see addressed in any given directors report. I assume a balance between providing updates on organizational and administrative activity with progress on strategic initiatives, but balk at attempting to make any such document comprehensive. Some guidance or specific requests would be welcome to help keep such future documents focused and concise.

First and foremost, I would like to report on preparations for the September grand opening of our renovated Molly Harding Nye gallery. This will be an invitational exhibit with our first in-person reception in a year and a half. I have reached out to the directors of area community arts organizations to ask if they would join LexArt in celebrating both the grand opening of our gallery and our collective spirit in the face of challenging times. *Reflection, Reawakening, Resilience* will bring together artists from nine community arts organizations in eight towns – ArtsArlington, Art Space Maynard, LexArt, Metalwerx, Mudflat Studio, Munroe Center for the Arts, The Dorothy and Charles Mosesian Center for the Arts, The Umbrella Arts Center, and the Weston Art and Innovation Center, to begin to develop a network of mutual support, collaboration, and hopefully build a broad, better engaged and connected community of area arts organizations. One member and one board member from two of the participating organizations will join me in jurying submissions to the exhibition. Our new gallery desk designed by architect Paul Lukez has finally arrived and completed the overall design/treatment of the renovated gallery. I hope to make the now finished gallery sing with fine artwork for our grand opening. The gallery reception will be Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, with a donor recognition event the following Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup>.

LexArt hosted an outdoor art fair on our grounds July 24. We offered a range of arts and crafts for sale under tents in our parking lot. The building was open for guided tours, the studios staffed with members working and doing demonstrations, and we ran three hour-long sessions of a children's magnetic sculpture workshop, hosted by Massachusetts sculptor Madeleine Lord. Participation and visitation was modest, but sales were respectable at \$9,400. Each outdoor event we do helps build upon our goal of community awareness and engagement. Special thanks to Nicole Mordecai. There are two upcoming town-wide events, The Chamber of Commerce Arts and Crafts Fair, September 25<sup>th</sup>, and Discovery Day, October 9<sup>th</sup>. We are discussing participation in one or both events. The Ceramics Guild would like to hold a parking lot trunk sale on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

We recently closed our latest exhibit *Embracing Abstraction*. This was a quickly conceived and organized exhibit of members work across all guilds, with submissions judged by an outside juror. Given its short gestation, it was an amazingly successful project, populating the gallery handsomely, and with a little more edge than usual. Thank you to Tom Whelan and Susan McFarlane for their lead. Concurrently all the guilds came together to produce and install an outdoor interactive sculptural work - *Change of Place*. This has been a wonderful addition to our outdoor scape. Thank you to Carolyn Reckman and Susan McFarlane for driving this project and enlisting broad member support.

At the outset of my tenure, I asked Katina Leodas if she would be willing to both rebuild as well as manage the LexArt Education program following the sixth-month absence of a dedicated manager/coordinator and the pandemic shutdown of in-person classes. Katina did an admirable job of

stepping in, guiding and building the program through the pandemic months. In May we elected Katina board chair. She has rightfully acknowledged that it is not possible to successfully attend to both positions and is stepping down as manager of the education program. We have asked the guilds to take responsibility for education in each of their respective areas in the short-term. One or two members from each guild will work to put in place a curriculum that I have designated "ladders of learning." This curriculum is meant through a series of designated classes (introductory, intermediate, and advanced) to prepare novitiates to become active and productive guild members. In the longer term, we will need to hire a part-time education coordinator. This is necessary for several reasons. It is a lot to ask of guild members. We wish to strive for consistency across the organization. I wish for the LexArt education program to be much more than arts and crafts classes. It should include a thoughtful approach to educational components for our gallery exhibits, as well as programs for special and or underserved audiences, such as families, teens, veterans, the elderly, and the differently abled, regular open-houses and demonstrations in conjunction with sales and other events. I will detail this more in my next report.

Throughout the past several board meetings and including the Annual Meeting, I have referenced a strategic planning process that was begun in April of this year. I reached out to individual board members and membership to participate in one or more of four strategic planning groups and invited general membership to participate as they chose. I was pleased with the work to update or develop new mission language. It very much reflects my vision for the organization, and I hope we will vote to officially adopt it at this meeting. The other strategic planning groups have not been as successful. I take responsibility for failing to provide the proper charge or framework to these discussions or desiring results rather than the necessary soul-searching exercises. I feel handicapped by both the continuation of remote meeting platforms and a certain summertime absence and disengagement on the part of many. We likely would have benefitted greatly from a professional facilitator as well. Be that as it may, we have failed to answer or even engage in the discussion of who we are, what we stand for, and who and where would we like to be five and ten years from now. Only then can we possibly begin to examine whether the current organizational structure and business model support us to this end. Many that are engaged in the discussions, both board members and membership, are not able to gain the necessary distance from the organization to realize objective perspective and to engage in such self-examination. I also feel that many that have been here a long time, can't see us for what we are now or what we have become. It's easy for me, a relative outsider, recently exposed to the organization to see it for what it is, rather than what it used to be, what we may wish it to be, or how it may be experienced by others, rather than simply referencing our own experience.

Although the strategic groups have struggled to achieve the critical group think for which I was hopeful, the discussions and responses to my commentary and directions have helped the progression of my thinking about necessary change. To this end, the executive committee (myself, Mike Lawson, Lauri Hugentobler and Katina Leodas plus invited guests Wayne Davis and Peter Demuth), have begun to discuss some of the above referenced more existential questions facing our organization. Although I hope to continue these discussions in both the strategic groups (if members are willing to continue to meet) and the executive committee (EC), there is support amongst the EC for some initial necessary change. The board chair and executive committee have charged me with presenting the board with my recommendations for these initial steps at our October meeting. I look forward to doing so.

## **Proposed Votes for 8/17/21 LexArt Board Meeting**

### **Proposed Vote #1:**

Through the ongoing strategic planning process, a diverse committee has developed new statements of mission, vision, values and goals for LexArt. They are as follows:

#### **Our Mission**

To spark joy, enrich lives, and build community through the practice, teaching, and sharing of art and craft.

#### **Our Vision**

The human need to create is celebrated, encouraged, and embraced.

#### **Our Values**

We are welcoming, inclusive, and accessible to all

We embody generosity and a spirit of service

We foster curiosity, creativity and collaboration

We demonstrate kindness and respect for one another.

We fervently believe that creative exploration helps us understand ourselves, each other, our commonality and binds us together.

#### **Our Goals**

Cherish and pass-on traditional methods of craft.

Acknowledge and welcome diverse and contrasting voices.

Celebrate new perspectives and ideas.

Increase the community's knowledge, appreciation and awareness of art and craft

Be a vibrant center of creativity and growth, providing ladders of learning and pathways of access and engagement.

The Executive Committee believes that these statements describe an organization that LexArt can become. We believe that the attainment of this mission, vision and goals and the expression of these values in our daily operations will promote the successful continued existence of the organization.

Voted: That the Board approves the adoption of these new mission, vision, values and goals statements to replace current and previous statements.

### **Proposed Vote #2:**

The Executive Committee believes that the health and financial viability of LexArt is heavily impacted by decisions about who can become a member and when, and by decisions about how space in the building is utilized. The Committee believes that these decisions can and should be made by the Executive Director, pursuant to guidelines approved by the Board. The Committee has directed the Executive Director to develop plans and sets of guidelines for how

he will make these important decisions on membership and space allocation and to present them to the Board at its next meeting on October 19, 2021.

Voted: That the Board approves the Executive Committee's directive to the Executive Director to develop plans for his decisions on membership and space allocation.

**Proposed Vote #3:**

Based on input from the Executive Director, the Executive Committee believes that LexArt will need to employ or otherwise engage additional personnel to support the organization's revised vision and mission statements. The Committee has directed the Executive Director to develop an optimal staffing plan for LexArt, that includes the numbers of employees, skills, expertise and hours required, and to present that plan to the Board at its next meeting on October 19, 2021.

Voted: That the Board approves the Executive Committee's directive to the Executive Director to develop and present to the Board a staffing plan for LexArt.

**Proposed Vote #4:**

The Development Committee has requested that the Board supports its proposal to pursue a Major Donor Program.

Voted: That the Board accepts the report of the Development Committee and endorses its plan to develop and execute a Major Donor Program that emphasizes LexArt's funding priorities for support of Education, Gallery Programming, and New Technologies.