Lessons from HONK! Festival: Collaboration at the urban/neighborhood scale

NOTES

• Where else can there be cross-border installations/festivals
  o Necessary strategies/possibilities?
• HONK! as “template” for other kinds of conversations.
  o Originated in 2006 as Brass Band Festival in Davis Square
  o Involvement from the beginning by Davis Square businesses
    ▪ On the cheap, in tradition of Bread & Puppet Theatre
    ▪ Chose to work with spaces that already existed; didn’t need additional electricity, lighting, etc.
    ▪ Didn’t want to close off streets; leave space activated as it was
    ▪ Popular because it’s music, not just ideas
    ▪ Year 2: turned it into a parade, Davis to Harvard Sq.
      • Connected to Harvard Sq businesses
      • Got help in contacting police, getting parade permits
      • Space between bands during parade occupied by, e.g., puppet theatre, political action groups, hula-hoop performers, etc.
      • At first, challenge to get groups to come
      • Now, repeaters along with artists wanting to design for this
  o Three levels of support:
    ▪ Business community
    ▪ Individuals/public wanting to attend
      • Kickstarter fundraising
      • Individuals/families provide housing for the bands
    ▪ Municipalities
  o Two faces of festival:
    ▪ Bands that come: intermixing among the bands
    ▪ Public: doesn’t care about the details, just want to have fun
  o Expanding each year with new activities
  o Sunday night blow-out after Octoberfest: all musicians play together
• Collaborations:
  o Worked with Boys & Girls Clubs; participated in voter registration drives
• Cambridge Arts Council:
  o Provided list of who needed to be contacted from the City/how to move through the bureaucracy
• Mass Cultural Council:
  o Working within context of MCC’s designated “cultural districts” can provide a baseline
• EMichelman noted supportive value of local cultural council, as in Brookline
• LCardona: Broader issue of information/communication access (or lack of same) related to the arts in the region:
• AHouston: MCC resources include “Adams Grant Program for Public Art,” which includes both planning and completion grants.
  
  
  o Make sure to this source on the BostonApp/Lab website