

The Civics and Public Affairs Sub Committee met virtually, via Zoom on May 18, 2020.
Present: Sub Committee: Jennifer Boyer, Miriam Tremontozzi
WMHT: Joseph Tovares, Michelle Thivierge, Dan Clark, Ryan Jones, Mary Gribulis

Dan Clark, host and producer of New York NOW joined the committee to share the work he has been doing since the middle of March around the pandemic.

Since WMHT's remote working began, Dan shared how he has been working down at the Capital and attending the Governor's regular press conferences. In this time of state wide quarantine, Dan shared how the use of technology and digital platforms have served as essential tools in the continued production of the show. These tools have provided the chance to interview guests and reach audiences in ways. And he will continue to find ways to utilize them moving forward.

Another new initiative Dan shared was his efforts to pull together some themed shows about relevant topics, including a recent well received one on local agriculture. And forthcoming, Dan shared plans for themed shows around State finances, education and the environment.

Next the committee heard from producer, Ryan Jones. Together with Joseph Tovares, they shared with the group the successful funding of an engagement grant around The American Experience's upcoming airing of "The Vote".

They shared how WMHT will produce a three-part special reporting project to air on New York Now. Ryan walked through the areas of focus for the three part series. WMHT will also produce five short video biographies of historically prominent New York women for streaming on our website and social media. And will conclude our programming by hosting a screening of "The Vote" and our original content with either a traditional panel discussion or potentially virtual one, to follow. Plans are needing to be revised a bit as it was the original intent to do a "roadtrip" of sorts with a host exploring/visiting sites of historical prominence connected to women's suffrage around the state. Plans are still in place to start shooting in June and airing in July.

Finally, Ryan offered details on a newly submitted grant for a project around New York State and the Underground Railroad with a particular focus on the local involvement in the movement. Ryan shared about the Myers Residence on Livingston Street in Albany and the Underground Railroad Education Center. We talked about ways to engage young people and educators with this grant initiative as well.

We concluded the meeting talking about the growth of digital platforms during the pandemic. How many, including the station are using these tools in new and exciting ways to meet needs and reach audiences. We also talked about the real digital divide and how traditional on air broadcast, and initiatives like WMHT's Home Classroom are meeting an equity and access gap in the community.

The meeting concluded at 5:00 PM

Minutes submitted by Michelle Thivierge