

Meeting Minutes – June

NY Public Radio Community Advisory Board Meeting



Meeting Highlights

Subject: Meeting & Guest Speaker Minute Highlights

Date: June 6, 2017 **Location:** The Greene Space
44 Charlton Street
New York, NY 10014

Time: 6:31 PM **Adjournment:** 8:32 PM

Invited Guest Speaker(s) [Leonard Lopate](#), Host of The Leonard Lopate Show
WNYC

Attendees: CAB Attendees Present (P) Excused Absence (E)

Chad Bascombe (P), Liz Buffa (P), Carole Chervin (P), Grace Clarke-Vice Chair (P), Barbara Gerolimatos-Vice Chair (P), Lue Ann Eldar-Chair (P), Andrew Greene (P), Merwin Kinkade-Vice Chair (P), Stan Ince (P), Alex Murry-Staff Liaison (P), Lisa Nearier (P), Samantha Pedreiro (P), David Szyk(P), Kathryn Tornelli (P), and Jacob Wojnas (P). Raesha Cartagena (E), Judith Cholst (E), , Carmina Lu (E), and Board Liaisons Ellen Polaner (E), and Lauren Seikaly (E), and Nancy Walcott, VC (E) 25 Public Attendees, including Catherine Kinkade, Didi Lacher, Alan Brown, Alfred Friedland, and new CAB 2017 Class Nominees Michaela Balderston, Michael Brown, Erica Johnson, Marlene Birnbaum, and Donna Blank (E).

AGENDA	Presenter	Time Allotted
1 Opening Remarks and Approval of Agenda	Eldar & CAB	30 minutes
2 Conversation with Leonard Lopate, Host of The Leonard Lopate Show	Gerolimatos/ CAB	60 minutes
3. Public Commentary	Public and CAB Attendees	15 minutes
4. CAB Business		16 Minutes

Discussion Highlights

- 1 CAB Chair Lue Ann Eldar (LE) opened the meeting at 6:31 PM. The meeting's agenda for June 2017 was approved by the CAB and LE introduced the FY 2018 CAB Officer slate: Dr. Barbara Gerolimos (BG) as Chair with Vice Chairs Grace Clarke (GC), Nancy Walcott (NW) and Jake Wojnas (JW) who plan to rotate the recording role as Raesha Cartagena will be cycling off as CAB Secretary. 2014-2015 CAB Chair Steve Rapkin (SR) extended congratulations to LE upon her last meeting as Chair and for her dedication to the CAB during her tenure and her last two-year term as 2016 & 2017 CAB Chair. SR then proposed a motion to approve the incoming CAB Officer slate to be presented at the upcoming June BoT meeting. Citing that we all come from various communities but come together because of the station and such great talent as Leonard Lopate, LE recognized Vice Chair Grace Clarke for chairing the CAB Nominating (aka Recruitment) Committee for the creation of the online form and for vetting, interviewing, and recommending five nominees out of 61 applicants for five available CAB positions. LE also recognized Merwin Kinkade (MK)'s two-year term as Vice Chair and BG's work during her tenure for one year as Board Secretary often performing back-up duties in her latest role as Vice Chair.
- 2 LE thanked BG for arranging the evening's conversation with Leonard Lopate at The Jerome L. Greene Space. As an avid WNYC Leonard Lopate Show listener, BG introduced Leonard Lopate (LL) citing a recent show's discussion about the U.S. opiate addiction crisis as very informative and "just so fascinating." Mr. Lopate began his presentation by bridging highlights from his 32-year broadcasting career while recognizing his producer Melissa Eagan as critical to the show's success in attracting guests and exceptional intern and production talent. In Section 4, follow highlights of the CAB's last meeting of the year and we invite you to visit the CAB's [wnyc.org/cab](http://www.wnyc.org/cab) web page to listen to the [audio recording \(http://www.wnyc.org/outreach/cab/minutes/June2017/\)](http://www.wnyc.org/outreach/cab/minutes/June2017/) section of Peabody, Associated Press and James Beard awardee Leonard Lopate's conversation with the CAB.
- 3 Leading the Q&A portion of the conversation, BG commented, "You have such a wide variety of books (to review). How do you read all of those books?" LL: "Fabulous staff...interns have read 600-page books (for the show) ...I do read a lot as well." CAB Member Lisa Nearier asked about Mr. Lopate's approach --preparation or in the moment-- for interviews. LL reported that it is a combination of preparation and listening to what a guest is saying. An attendee from Upstate New York wanted to know whether interviews are done in person or remotely. LL: "We try as much as possible to host the guest in studio." Referencing interviews with a consigliere and a protester who was on the run, LL felt there could be advantages to having "phoners." CAB Member Steve Rapkin, who was finalizing his six years on the CAB, wondered if he were ever surprised (or disappointed) by any guests. LL recalled moments with the comedian Jerry Lewis and movie director Francis Ford Coppola. Questions about the advent of the podcast and its influence on programming and distinguishing one's voice from the noise from Anita Aboulafia and Erica Johnson came up. LL replied: "We've (The station) changed where others have disappeared. We (concentrate) on the under-reported -- we just do it but don't name it that. We talk more about Africa than most talk shows. We have an 'explain' series -- twice a year about food. I'm always surprised. I love those 'Food Fridays' so we're encouraged." To follow up on EJ's question, Lopate suggested that anyone wishing to enter the field should start with a podcast, then You Tube it. If people (followers) think it's interesting, you'll find someone that will want to distribute it. LL summarized "We reach people we never reached before -- I remember receiving a comment from (a listener) in Japan: 'I started listening to you to improve my English and then I found (the subjects) interesting'."
- 4 Continued summary of CAB, Public Commentary and Q&A: Q. When you're in the studio in the box -- how do you feel about the audience -- are you talking to yourself? A. If it's interesting (for the listeners), I don't always know if it was ok. Then, I'll get fabulous feedback. You're not the person you are in everyday life. Imagine if I asked as many questions as I do in real life?" Q. Tonight, you read your presentation, but it sounded like you're talking to me. A. Writing for the ear is different for writing for the page. I try to make it sound as conversational as possible. That's the way I write. Q. How have you seen the trends change given that it (NPR) has maintained popularity? A. 1985-2001 -- until 9/11 when our transmitter was destroyed and we began broadcasts on FM, we discovered a new demographic. They (Listeners) find you by accident. Recalling another guest's (before she became a famous actress') surprising explanation: "Julia Stiles wanted to be on our show. When asked why she contacted us, she acknowledged her parents. "I wanted to make them proud." Q. NPR or WNYC should distinguish its programming. We have to pay NPR to run their programming -- public radio -- I came from Pittsburgh WDOQ. WPSA trends in popular radio. If you're in NY and LA, you have an advantage. A. I was approached by DC "Inside Beltway" but in NY I can talk about what's at The Frick. Q. I'm Patricia from Harlem. How do you handle -- someone you might not like?" A. You ask them with respect; i.e., "People call you a war criminal..." On the air, you have a strange view --if I can't answer the questions (that the listeners want asked), what am I doing here?" LL explained that native New Yorkers often identify with their school alma maters. Erasmus High came up with Barbra Streisand in her interview with Leonard Lopate. This evening, another Erasmus (Eastern) alumna was in the audience --Didi of Brooklyn, who asked about LL's programming format and what constitutes the makings of a good conversation. A. There is the Morning Edition format --20-minute minimum with a maximum of 40 minutes. We (The Leonard Lopate Show) want a full-range. Recalling an interview with Gene Simmons, "you just keep on talking to them as if it's a normal conversation." LE mentioned an old photo (Leonard Lopate with author Joan Didion) that Vice Chair Grace Clarke shared with the 2015 Recruitment Committee. GC asked if there was a question that LL wished he got more often. A. "That's a good question. People don't ask me a lot about what I do. I'm very happy." CAB Member Chad Bascombe followed up by asking if there were any interviews that were personally consequential. A.I interviewed my brother. It was an education for me. I've live a wonderfully enriched life -- sharing a birthdate with John Coltrane, Broadway shows, fabulous books that I get to read." Opening for additional commentary, a member of the public and WNYC listener since 1988, Eileen McKinney, finds sponsorship messaging to capture WNYC's "halo effect" worrisome -- Upstate maple businesses and properties are being affected in The Catskills. CAB Members Carole Chervin suggested canvassing the CAB re: sharing its opinions more on environmental impact and other issues. CAB Member Andrew Greene suggested that WNYC might consider being more opinionated. LE adjourned the meeting inviting Mr. Lopate, CAB and public audience members to an onsite pizza party (with BG's delicious brownies) recognizing outgoing members, welcoming new members and acknowledging the importance of the public's attendance.