

Meeting Minutes – March

NY Public Radio Community Advisory Board Meeting



Meeting Highlights

Subject: Meeting & Guest Speaker Minute Highlights

Date: March 13, 2017 **Location:** The Greene Space
44 Charlton Street
New York, NY 10014

Time: 6:31 PM **Adjournment:** 8:35 PM

Invited Guest Speaker(s) **Dean Cappello**, Executive Vice President & Chief Content Officer
WNYC

Attendees: (E = Excused; X = Present; P=Phone)
CAB Attendees Present Anita Aboulafia, John Bacon, Chad Bascombe, Gary Brocks, Liz Buffa, Carole Chervin, Grace Clarke (Vice Chair), Lue Ann Eldar (Chair), Barbara Gerolimatos (Vice Chair), Merwin Kinkade (Vice Chair), Peter Kentros, Lisa Nearier, Alex Murry (Staff Liaison), Samantha Pedreiro, Steven Rapkin, Theodore Schweitzer, David Szyk, Kathryn Tornelli, Adam Wasserman, Jacob Wojnas, and Nancy Walcott (Vice Chair).
Excused: Raesha Cartagena, Judith Cholst, Andrew S. Greene, Stan Ince, Carmina Lu, and Board Liaisons Ellen Polaner and Lauren Seikaly
18 Public Attendees, including Margot Perron, President, Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy, and Leslie Landon, Development Director

AGENDA	Presenter	Time Allotted
1 Opening Remarks and Approval of Agenda (March 13, 2017) and Approval of Minutes (January 17, 2017)	Eldar & CAB	15 minutes
2 Conversation with Dean Cappello, Chief Content Officer	Cappello/ CAB Public	60 minutes
3. Public Comment	Public Attendees	15 minutes
4. CAB Business		30 Minutes

Discussion Highlights

- 1 Lue Ann Eldar (LE) opened the meeting at 6:31 PM, welcoming all. The meeting's agenda and minutes from January 2017 were approved. LE introduced Dean Cappello (DC), Chief Content Officer, WNYC, noting he began at WNYC in 1997 as the News Director, overseeing a newsroom of three to cover New Jersey and New York City.
- 2 DC described his journey as Chief Content Director at WNYC, stating that when he joined WNYC, the station was licensed to school boards and municipalities. DC began by sharing a timeline, noting major milestones in WNYC's history: In 1924, WNYC was launched as an AM station. FM was added in 1943. In 1995, Mayor Giuliani sold the station for \$20MM to WNYC Foundation and Laura Walker was the first non-municipal appointee by the WNYC Board of Trustees as President. DC said 9/11 was an important turning point because more NYC news was wanted and needed. WNYC filled that void. WQXR was acquired in 2009, and WNYC Studios – a Podcast group -- was launched in 2015. A Fast Facts slide show compared snapshots of NYPR 1997 vs. 2017 with geometric growth in budget, listenership, staffing and financial support. DC marked 2015 as a moment of reckoning for the station as he and his team worried about the future of radio. In response, the content team reorganized to form WNYC Studios, leading with podcasts to expand programming portfolios, retain talent, build loyalty, and establish a footprint in new terrain. DC undertook a mandate to produce 25 new brands in the 5-year strategic plan. WNYC Studios produces, Radiolab and Freakonomics. the big franchises, as well as shows such as 2 Dope Queens, representing indie features. Instead of being underwritten, new show investments seed-fund on their own schedule--a move geared toward integrity and producing what audience wants and what a business can be built around. The explosive growth of WNYC represents innovative brilliance and a general shift toward mobile-device consumption. In terms of the newsroom, *The United States of Anxiety*, for example, is news content that didn't sound like content. Jim Schachter, Vice President for News at WNYC is also thinking about device-oriented content. All these approaches allow WNYC to reach larger and broader audiences. WNYC also uses podcasts to cross-promote across age-grouped audiences For example, by having 2 Dope Queens introducing its audience to a new podcast, Nancy, which focuses on the LGBT community stories. DC's team also looked into the audience engagement experience. The Sleep Study was about sleep but also about audience engagement and involved listener sign up to join with WNYC in improving sleep, a concept that fostered community. DC believes radio is inherently an act of community, even if you listen alone, you know you are with others. WNYC Studios' principles reflect these communal sensibilities. At the core is creating programming around personalities, i.e., Richard Hake should stop you in your tracks when you try to leave each day, and you should fall in love with Jad, and listen to *Radiolab*. DC stressed that it is important for the station to evolve, as well as keep important personalities, like Brian Lehrer or Leonard Lopate. This will allow the station to discover new, up and coming talent. CAB members posed the following questions: What do we know about downloads vs time listening? (Apple controls most audience information. The "discover" feature is an attempt to understand what people use. The most listened-to podcast is NPR1 7am newscast); How do collaborations happen? (In the case of *Indivisible* specifically, it was launched over Christmas break. To build excitement and make the schedule feasible, WNYC brought in commentators from *The Economist*, Midwestern station personalities, and Charlie Sykes to collaborate. How does content differ between AM and FM? (In the past, AM was all news and talk; FM was music and programming. Brian and Leonard were only AM. Music licensing limits what WQXR can turn into a digital product.); How does the station create a consistent tone to brand a podcast as WNYC? (Advertisers and funding partners are interested in being identified with WNYC, i.e., *Radiolab* is a brand that raises money for WNYC); How are local vs national and podcast vs radio identified? (New York projects to the globe, and local information here can be nationally important.). A member of the public wanted to know how WNYC spots the next big thing? (As more content is brought in, we start to hear concerns we've never heard before. Veterans. Immigrants. Legal framework. Car talk came out of a local Boston University radio station wanting to do a DIY show, and only Tom and Ray showed up. DC closed with a final word on "audio signatures" for content being obviously WNYC: Amateurs can create podcasts which increases the possibility that "we'll find the next Ansel Adams." WNYC has a responsibility to see beyond current content "buckets" and stay open to pitches of all kinds.
3. Public Comments: Jill requested more programming about overdevelopment and gentrification. DC noted that *There Goes the Neighborhood* podcast addressed this, and Brian Lehrer on and off does live call-in shows also. Concern was expressed about anyone being able to afford to live in NYC. Other public attendees worry about the integrity of the underwriters, in particular the sponsorship of a natural gas pipeline company. WNYC was challenged by questioner to refuse such underwriters. DC noted that with sponsorships, it makes it financially possible to do a lot of the things.
4. CAB Business Topic: Recruitment process for new CAB members 2017-18. Without a Recruitment Chair as Barbara Gerolimatos 2016 Recruitment Chair would be out of town, LE proposed an open call for applications followed by two "open house" style group interviews. Steve Rapkin suggested Grace Clarke, who then agreed to Chair and suggested that a Google form be used instead of free-form applications, and that the CAB page on WNYC.org include a CAB mission statement or explanation about the CAB's focus. Liz Buffa, Jake Wojnas, and Chad Bascombe volunteered to be on the 2017 Recruitment Committee with Vice Chair Grace Clarke as Recruitment Committee Chairperson.

ACTION ITEMS	Responsible	DUE DATE
1. Create a Google document to be using in the application screening process for new CAB Members	Clarke/Wojnas/Buffa	April 2017
2. Announcement for new CAB applicants	Eldar/Murry/Clarke	April 2017
3. Review applicants, select interviewees and nominate final candidates by June CAB meeting for BOT approval.	Clarke/Wojnas/Bascombe/Buffa	June 2017