

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 170

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

According to your 501(c)3 letter, in what town is your official office located?

West Hartford

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

West Hartford

Will this activity occur after August 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

139215-Roberts2020

Organization Name

Elizabeth Park Conservancy

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

060983352

Principal Contact Name

Ann Drinan

Title

Development Manager

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Phone

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[Map It](#)

Website

<https://www.elizabethparkct.org/>

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Amount requested this application

\$5,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

The mission of Elizabeth Park Conservancy is to maintain, preserve, restore, and promote the Rose Garden and other gardens of Elizabeth Park as a regional horticultural park for the education, enjoyment, and appreciation of the Park's current and future generations.

The vision of the Conservancy is to sustain and elevate the Park's status as a significant national landmark with the oldest public rose garden.

Describe the diversity of your board.

Elizabeth Park Conservancy strives to create a board that represents our community. The City of Hartford requires that at least 51% of our board members be residents of the city of Hartford.

Our board currently has 16 members.

62% are female

25% are people of color

12.5 % are of Latino heritage

1 member identifies with the LGBTQ community.

What percentage of your board makes personal financial contributions to your organization?

100%.

Every member of the board gives according to their means. Some give quite substantial yearly gifts, while others donate what is a significant gift for their financial situation.

Detail any changes since your last application.

The Conservancy commissioned a Master Plan of Elizabeth Park, which was completed in early 2017; most of the planned projects in the plan have already been accomplished.

The Garmany Visitor Center, which opened in September 2020, is a huge success, with people coming both for the gift shop, which has many items by local crafts people, and the informational offerings (kiosks, Welcome Video, and brochures).

The Conservancy continues to beautify the Park - a new walkway/entrance is being created from Bainbridge Rd to the Heritage Rose Garden, in memory of Sally Kennedy.

A major capital campaign is nearing completion to create a 75-car parking lot near the Visitor Center; construction began this week and we hope to have it completed sometime this spring. (Parking is of great concern since we closed the road around the Rose Garden to vehicular traffic.)

Major fundraising is underway to raise enough funds to restore the greenhouses, which are badly in need of repair. A \$600,000 major gift will be announced shortly.

Project Name

Summer Concerts 2022

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

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No

Project Description

The Conservancy is requesting support from the Roberts Foundation for three of our concerts scheduled for the summer of 2022. These concerts attract hundreds, if not thousands, of people, and are always free to any and all.

The new John G. Martin Foundation stage with its roof now enables us now to present ensembles that would not have been able to perform on the old stage under direct sunlight. We request support for three of our five concerts - dates to be determined:

- Gene Bozzi's Jazz and Strings, with their Ella Fitzgerald concert. In this concert, a jazz trio, string players from the Hartford Symphony, and Tina Fabrique perform selections from the 1956 Verve album, which includes "Begin the Beguine," "It Don't Mean a Thing," and "Night and Day."
- The Hartford Symphony Brass Quintet, with a mix of classical, jazz, and pop.
- Ed Fast's Conga Bop, a supergroup coalition of top New York City artists in jazz, dance, and drumming.

Project start/opening

06/22/2022

Project end/closing

08/18/2022

Project venue

John G. Martin Foundation Stage on the Rose Garden Lawn

Project town

West Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

All summer concerts are free and open to the public. Depending upon the ensemble, these concerts attract between 750 and 2000+ attendees. People come with a picnic dinner, and many bring their "dancing shoes." The concerts are extremely popular, and attract people from throughout greater Hartford and beyond.

In 2022, we will present 5 or 6 concerts, each on Wednesday evening at 6:30, with a raindate of Thursday.

We are asking support from the Roberts Foundation for three of these concerts.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

We typically do not market these concerts, as we are usually at full capacity. We used to put a sandwich board sign on Asylum Avenue on concert weeks; it is unclear whether this practice will continue.

We list the concerts on our website, send out an e-blast for each concert, and include the concerts in our annual Events brochure. This is sufficient to get the word out!

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

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The Conservancy will use Roberts Foundation funding to help pay artists fees for three of the ensembles: Gene Bozzi's Jazz & Strings, the Hartford Symphony Brass Quintet, and Ed Fast's Conga Bop.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

The Conservancy will list the Roberts Foundation on our website, in e-blasts pertaining to these three concerts, and in a speech by President and CEO Christine Doty from the stage before each of these concerts.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

The Elizabeth Park Conservancy strives for excellence in any endeavor we undertake. In terms of the summer concerts, now that we have a permanent stage with a roof, we are interested in bringing in more sophisticated ensembles that could not have performed previously under the open sun.

We have to weigh the interests of our long-standing audience with two concerns:

1. To bring in more classical, jazz, and cross-over ensembles that raises the quality of the concerts.
2. To continue to appeal to the desire of many area families to come and dance the night away over a picnic dinner.

Thus we are doing both. We are booking a few ensembles, such as Jazz & String, that could never have performed before under direct sunlight, and continuing to offer favorites, such as Latanya Farrell and Eight to the Bar.

We hope this mix of old and new will satisfy our long-time audience and yet entice new people to come to the Park for our jazz and classical concerts.

How does this project align with that definition, and how does it advance your mission?

Our mission is to enable people from throughout Connecticut to come to Elizabeth Park and enjoy what we have to offer, plus our beautiful gardens. These concerts offer an extra incentive for individuals, families, and groups of friends to come to the Park to enjoy an evening together and hopefully appreciate the beauty of our gardens.

The Conservancy is pleased to be able to offer free concerts to any and all, as part of our mission to welcome everyone to our beautiful Park, and to help build community among the people who do visit us.

How will your audience and the community benefit from this project?

The audience, which is the community, will benefit by experiencing a great concert in a beautiful setting with hundreds of other music lovers.

Families bring picnics and meet with friends. Kids run wild on the far side of the lawn. Groups often bring banners so members can find them. It's an incredibly festive evening at every concert - family, friends, kids, love, food, laughter, music, dancing, etc.

Outdoor concerts remind us all of the importance of sharing experiences, of listening to new sounds, to celebrating friendships, and experiencing the beauty of nature. All this and more happens at Elizabeth Park concerts.

How will this project be evaluated?

We evaluate the concerts by the opinion of board members and staff, attendees with credentials in the music world, and emails and phone calls we receive from audience members.

One factor that we must take into account is the number of people different groups attract. The Rose Garden lawn is a finite space -- too many people can start to negatively impact the Rose Garden itself.

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This concern has, in part, driven our intent to bring in jazz and classical groups, which may draw a smaller (though still quite substantial) crowd.

Cover letter

- [EPC-Cover-Letter-2022-Proposal.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [EPC-2021-Budget-vs-Actuals.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [EPC-Balance-Sheet-1-31-22.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [EPC-2022-Summer-Concerts-Budget.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

Yes

Annual report

- [Elizabeth-Park-Annual-Report-2021.pdf](#)

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Grant Report

- [Elizabeth-Park-Conservancy-Grantee-Reporting-Form.pdf](#)

Other materials?

- [Elizabeth-Park-Conservancy-2022-Ensemble-Bios.pdf](#)

Our bottom line in 2021 was greatly enhanced by several bequests from long-time donors.

The board is still finalizing the 2022 budget. Attached is the 2021 budget and actuals for fiscal year ending 12/31/21. The proposed 2022 budget is @ \$800,000.

The EPC Master Plan is too large to upload.

Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?

Yes

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Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?

Yes