

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE
COMMISSION MINUTES**

August 22, 2019

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission was held on Thursday, August 22, 2019 at 4:00 PM., at Cumberland County Administration Building Bridgeton, New Jersey.

Present: Ella Boykin Penny Watson
Sharon Yoshida Robert Dragotta
Suzanne Merighi

Matthew Pisarski, Assistant Planning Director
Jennifer Morgan, Recording Secretary

Guest: Valdis Basens
Christopher Shrum, The Vibrancy Group

Approval of Minutes – July 25, 2019

A motion was made to approve the minutes from July 25, 2019. Ms. Merighi made two corrections on page one under Long Range Plan the word “express” should read “expressed” and on page two under 2020 Re-grant Guidelines “coloring” should read “color”. A motion was made to approve the minutes as corrected by Ms. Merighi. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dragotta and passed unanimously. Ms. Watson abstained.

Special Request: Documentary of Seabrook by Helga Merits – Valdis Basens

Mr. Basens said Ms. Merits is doing a documentary regarding people seeking refuge in the United States with a particular spotlight on Seabrook. Mr. Basens is seeking funds to assist with the documentary. Mr. Basens said the project is time sensitive because the adults that came over have mostly passed. Mr. Pisarski commented that we would have to give the funds to a nonprofit and they would have to in turn provide the funds to Ms. Merits. Mr. Dragotta has information to help with the film, he will turn over the information to Ms. Merits. Mr. Dragotta has offered his home to Ms. Merits to help offset cost. Mr. Pisarski asked if Ms. Merits would be willing to have a showing of her documentary in Cumberland County, Mr. Basens said yes that it would be possible. Mr. Pisarski commented the funds would have to be used for the cost associated with the work associated with Cumberland County. A motion was made to approve a \$1,000 to the project by Ms. Merighi. The motion was seconded by Ms. Boykin and passed unanimously.

Strategic Plan Discussion – Christopher Shrum, Ph.D.

Mr. Shrum gave a background history on himself and some of the work he has done. Ms. Shrum is an Associate Professor and coordinator of Pratt Institute’s graduate program in Creative Enterprise Leadership for Arts and Cultural Management. Mr. Pisarski would like the plan refined and have the Commission explain to Mr. Shrum what the county’s cultural assets are. Ms. Watson said the county is very diverse. Mr. Dragotta said we have many resources. Mr. Pisarski commented that 25% of the state’s entire agriculture products comes from Cumberland

County. Ms. Merighi commented that we have some very well developed organizations but we need more youth participation, Mr. Pisarski will provide Mr. Shrum a list of re-grants. 45% of the counties land mass is preserved open space. Mr. Shrum suggested having a round table conversation, Mr. Pisarski would like the round table to consist of Commission members and 10 additional stakeholders. Mr. Shrum will have a team of five including Pratt students working on the long-range plan. Mr. Pisarski asked for names to participate in the round table. Ms. Boykin suggested the round table should be diverse in age and ethnicity. Mr. Shrum will come to Cumberland County with the students for a site visit.

Cohansey RiverFest Plein Air Competition – Saturday, August 31, 2019

Mr. Pisarski said even though there is not a RiverFest event per se, the Plein Air competition will still take place. Currently there are 10 artists participating.

Grant Writing Workshop – Thursday, September 5, 2019

Everyone has in their packet a flyer on the workshop. Mr. Pisarski will be sending out a blast email with information.

Artists' Day Mauricetown – Saturday, September 14, 2019

A flyer for Artists' Day is in Commission members packets. Music has been selected for the day. Mr. Pisarski will be selecting the artists to paint that day.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Merighi spoke to Mr. Thakur who indicated there will be a Friends of India Society event at the Cumberland County Tech Center called Summer Garba. The Bayshore Center is busy with their summer sails.

Ms. Yoshida attended the Millville Library's origami story circle time and it was poorly attended.

Mr. Pisarski attended Jenson Cheng's art exhibit at RRCA and said it was well attended.

Tourism Advisory Council Comments – Kimberly Gauntt

Postponed until next month.

Other Old/New Business

Mr. Pisarski commented that there is an effort to revitalize the fair grounds and this will likely become a new venue for programming.

Correspondence

The award letter from the Historical Commission was obtained, we received a cut. Mr. Pisarski stated most southern counties were cut.

Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Ms. Yoshida. The motion was seconded by Ms. Boykin and passed unanimously.