

CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE COMMISSION MINUTES

February 24, 2022

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission was held on Thursday, February 24, 2022, at 4:00p.m., via teleconference and/or in-person at The Millville Army Air Field Museum.

Present: Michael Cagno Suzanne Merighi
 Marianne Lods Maria Cerda-Moreno
 Penny Watson Yogesh Thakur

Commissioner Pearson, Commissioner Liaison

Lisa Jester, Millville Army Air Field Museum Executive Director
Omarey Williams, Shared Services Coordinator
Matt Pisarski, Department Head/Director
Wanda Riviera, Confidential Assistant

Approval of Minutes – January 27, 2022

Two edits to the January 27, 2022, meeting minutes were mentioned by both Penny Watson & Omarey Williams. Mr. Cagno asked for approval of the January 27, 2022, meeting minutes with the corrections noted to be fixed. A motion to approve the January 27, 2022, Cultural & Heritage Commission meeting minutes was made by Suzanne Merighi, seconded by Marianne Lods, and passed unanimously.

Grantee Spotlight – The Millville Army Air Field Museum

Mr. Cagno introduced their host for the afternoon's meeting and The Millville Army Air Field executive director Lisa Jester. Ms. Jester welcomed the Commission and was honored to have them in attendance at their facility. She thanked everyone for their support of the Museum through the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Jester thanked the Commission for the funding of their interpretive signs for the murals that on their buildings. Ms. Jester showed a prop to explain how the interpretive signage worked at their facility and said they currently had funding in to produce three more. Ms. Jester said there was no Air Show to be held this year but referenced a 2022 Calendar of Events. She, again, thanked the Commission for their ongoing support of The Millville Army Air Field Museum. Mr. Cagno thanked Ms. Jester for hosting.

Discussion of The Greenwich Communications Tower

Mr. Williams explained that there was a lot of information provided within the emailed meeting packet about the Tower. He thanked Penny Watson for providing the Commission with the information. Ms. Watson voiced her concerns saying the site was about 75 feet off Springtown Road in Greenwich. Ms. Watson & Cerda-Moreno had recently walked the potential site and

mentioned the Greenwich Environmental Resource Inventory cataloging this area as a Lenni Lenape site. It was also within the bounds of Springtown, which was an extremely important unincorporated part of Greenwich wherein free Blacks and self-manumitted slaves took refuge. Citing additional reasons, Ms. Watson, on behalf of the Greenwich Township Land Use Board (L.U.B.), said this was not an appropriate site for a communications tower. The Greenwich Township L.U.B. would be sending correspondence to the companies involved, as well as the State, which they would send to Mr. Williams to share with the Commission. Commissioner Pearson asked if Ms. Watson recommended the tower be placed in a different location, to which Ms. Watson responded “yes.” County Counsel John Carr had explained to Ms. Watson the site at hand was just one of the potential locations the County was looking at to construct the tower. It was clarified that, yes, Greenwich Township L.U.B.’s recommendation would be for the County to look at alternative sites for the communications tower. Mr. Cagno requested the Commission see the Greenwich Township L.U.B.’s response letter.

2022 Teen Arts Festival

Mr. Williams mentioned the last few years, Cumberland had been organizing the Teen Arts Festival in conjunction with staff at Cape May County with The Levoy Theatre acting as host. Mr. Williams explained, last year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, Teens Arts was strictly virtual, adding this year’s festivities would be in-person again. Mr. Williams said Teen Arts 2022 would be held on April 6th at The Levoy Theatre with both an indoor/outdoor component utilizing areas around Millville. The Commission would be directly supporting Teen Arts through their grant, directly funding the core of The Festival, as well as outside staging for performance arts events. Mr. Williams would soon send out the event flyer to the Commission and would appreciate the support of anyone able to attend Teen Arts. Departmental staff would man a tent at the event at an as-yet-undisclosed location, as well. Mr. Pisarski thanked City of Millville for their support.

Discussion of County Broadband Initiative

Mr. Williams stated the Broadband flyer was included within the meeting packet and was, also, shared on social media, County websites, and at booths at events held across the County. Mr. Williams said staff were trying to get it out to as many County residents as possible and urged the Commission members to tell their friends and family how easy it was to fill out. Mr. Williams planned to continue to do outreach events anywhere he could attend. He welcomed suggestions and any help any of the Commissioner members could provide to help in this County-wide initiative. Messrs. Williams & Pisarski urged everyone to fill out both County and Vineland City surveys for Broadband, as well. Ms. Merighi noted this initiative would already help check one of the items off the Commission’s Long-range Plan.

C&H Commissioner Reports

Ms. Lods said she had spoken with staff at the Vineland Public Library several times, who indicated they were working on a project to be held in October called FanCon. She said The Library had been hiring people and were getting back to a normal path serving the residents of The City of Vineland. Mr. Williams said he would get Ms. Lods new contact information for Bridgeton Public Library. Ms. Riviera stated that she had already sent Ms. Lods the information, and Ms. Lods confirmed that. Ms. Merighi said Millville Public Library had invited her to attend

one of their event planning meetings in March. Ms. Cerda-Moreno said she had spoken to Downe Township Union Hall representative Bob Campbell. He said they had received a grant and were looking to do work on upgrading the building. Ms. Watson said The Vineland Historical & Antiquarian Society had re-opened in the beginning of February. Ms. Watson was working on their preservation plan, as well, which she expected to be completed by March.

County Commission Liaison Reports

Deputy Director Commissioner Pearson stated while she did not have anything official to add, she greatly appreciated all Messrs. Williams, Pisarski, and Departmental staff were doing a fantastic job getting information out to the residents with the Broadband Initiative. Commissioner Pearson indicated there were many more great things still to come!

Planning Department Update

Mr. Pisarski mentioned the interpretive signage/podcast program. Explaining he and Mr. Williams had been in touch with someone who would be attending next month's meeting potentially requesting new signs and a program related to individual people. He asked the Commission to think about how they may want to handle an interpretive signage/podcast program focusing on individuals. Mr. Pisarski added to expect a report next month on Keith Wasserman and the status of the podcasts he was currently finishing up. Staff had committed to two additional podcasts and would likely have funding for a few more. If they added the existing Cultural & Heritage website to the new Explore Cumberland NJ site, the QR codes would have to be changed and updated. Messrs. Pisarski & Williams said they were working on doing post boosting for Facebook, too. Yogesh Thakur suggested ideas for building a brand for Explore Cumberland NJ across social media. It was suggested putting some sort of vinyl addition with the Explore Cumberland website onto the Outreach Bus, as well.

Other Old/New Business

Ms. Watson asked if Mr. Williams was able to track down any images of The Rams Inn. Mr. Williams explained it was posted on the County website and Facebook page, but it did not appear as though members of the public had any such images. Mr. Williams said staff would search further. Mr. Pisarski added he thought it was great so many of the posts were historically related and were garnering so much positive attention on Facebook.

Mr. Cagno shared he regretted to inform the Commission they had received a letter of resignation from long-time member Sharon Yoshida. Mr. Williams further explained Ms. Yoshida had said with changes in her life and things of that nature, she did not feel as though she could continue to give 100% of her attention to the Commission. Ms. Yoshida indicated she enjoyed her time spent on the Commission and would surely miss everyone. Messrs. Cagno & Williams stated Ms. Yoshida had made a recommendation on a potential candidate: Keiko Warner, also, a member of the local Japanese American community. Ms. Merighi said she knew Ms. Warner and personally felt she would be a wonderful candidate for the Commission.

Correspondence

Mr. Williams said the piece of correspondence from Richard Grubb & Associates (a) had recently been emailed out to the Commission and everyone was able to share their comments, via email. Additionally, two more pieces of correspondence—one, from Hunter Research (b) and another piece of correspondence from Grubb & Associates (c)—were included within the meeting packet for the Commission’s review. When questioned, Mr. Williams added the Archaeological Survey from Leesburg (a) was only emailed out because it was so extensive. Mr. Pisarski explained, regarding the culvert on South Avenue in Bridgeton, the Department had dedicated a portion of their FY2023 South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) grant funding towards a consultant study examining the culvert. A brief discussion ensued concerning the South Avenue culvert issue. Commissioner Pearson thanked Mr. Pisarski and staff for their efforts with the culvert, along with everything else they do.

Adjourn

Mr. Cagno asked the Commission for one final motion. A motion to adjourn the February 24, 2022, Cultural & Heritage Commission meeting was made by Ms. Lods, seconded by Ms. Cerda-Moreno, and passed unanimously. Mr. Cagno thanked everyone for their attendance. Mr. Williams added March’s meeting would be held at The Boys & Girls Club of Vineland with additional details to be emailed out prior to said meeting.