

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE  
COMMISSION MINUTES**

**January 28, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission was held on Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 4:00p.m., via teleconference.

**Present:**

Penny Watson	Maria Cerda-Moreno
Yogesh Thakur	Marianne Lods
Michael Cagno	Sharon Yoshida
Robert Dragotta	Suzanne Merighi
Olive Doss	Commissioner Barber
Commissioner Pearson	

**Guests:**

Matthew Pisarski, Planning Director  
 Omarey Williams, Shared Services Coordinator  
 Kim Gauntt, Cumberland County Recreation & Tourism  
 Matt Horowitz, Recording Secretary

**Approval of Minutes – November 19, 2020**

A motion to approve the November 2020 minutes was made by Michael Cagno. The motion was seconded by Marianne Lods and passed unanimously by the Commission.

**Welcome Commissioner Deputy Director Darlene Barber & Commissioner Donna Pearson as Liaisons**

Matt Pisarski stated he would like to congratulate Commissioner Deputy Director Darlene Barber on her re-appointment to the Commission, as well as welcome Commissioner Donna Pearson to the Commission.

**2021 Officers' Slate & Nominations – Memorialization of Recommendations**

Vice Chairperson Suzanne Merighi asked for the 2021 Officers' Slate & Nominations from the recently appointed Nominations Subcommittee. Mr. Cagno proceeded to present the Officers' Slate as follows: Chairperson – Suzanne Merighi, Vice Chairperson – Michael Cagno, Treasurer – Sharon Yoshida, and Secretary - Robert Dragotta. A motion to approve the 2021 Officers' Slate was made by Penny Watson, seconded by Yogesh Thakur, and passed unanimously by the Commission.

**Discussion on the Renewal of Americans for the Arts Membership**

Omarey Williams discussed the potential renewal of the Commission's membership to Americans for The Arts. Mr. Williams mentioned it had proven fruitful over the past four years and was priced at \$75.00/year. He asked if the Commission would like to renew their membership or let it lapse, although, staff recommendation would be to keep it ongoing. A motion to renew the Americans for The Arts membership for 2021 was made by Ms. Lods, seconded by Mr. Cagno, and passed unanimously by the Commission. Mr. Cagno posed the question if various Commission members could attain login information to access said

membership, to which Mr. Williams stated he could email the login information out to everyone on the Commission. It was stated Mr. Cagno & Ms. Lods both have existing memberships.

### **Discussion of 2021 Teen Arts Festival**

Mr. Pisarski explained the Commission had provided \$10,000 to The Levoy Theatre for the 2021 activities, including, but not limited to, a virtual Teen Arts Festival. Although, he mentioned a decision had not yet been made in regards to Teen Arts 2021. Mr. Pisarski stated he planned to have a virtual meeting with Lauren Van Embden and the Teen Arts Committee and would provide the Commission with a formal update. Mr. Pisarski stated he would attain a list of potential dates for the Commission, as well. Ms. Lods stated she had a scheduled Zoom meeting that upcoming Friday with Ms. Van Embden and Katie Kiessling. Ms. Lods added she would forward the meeting invite to the Commission and report on it next month.

### **Discussion of 2021 Virtual Eagle Festival**

Mr. Pisarski stated, due to COVID-19 limitations and restrictions, there would be no in-person Eagle Festival held this year. Citizens United Maurice River had offered to present a virtual speaker series, as well as very limited trail walks with information within this month's meeting packet, as well as on the Commission's Facebook page. Mr. Pisarski explained next year, he hoped to have a full normal Eagle Festival-related event.

### **Update on the Long Term Plan – Christopher Shrum**

In Mr. Shrum's absence, Mr. Williams stated he would explain a bit regarding the update of the long-term plan. Mr. Williams explained included within each Commission members' meeting packet was a "sketch" of the long-term plan. He asked the Commission members if they felt any assets were missed, if anything from the previous long-term plan was not addressed, etc. Mr. Williams stated he would send out the previous long-term plan, via email, following this meeting. Mr. Williams added he planned to have a virtual meeting with Chris Shrum in an effort to get an update on his progress.

Mr. Williams made reference to Page 2: Infrastructure and stated the County was currently working on Broadband, as well as arts revitalization. Mr. Pisarski mentioned County Administration was working on a countywide re-vamp of their social media presence. Although, Mr. Pisarski explained it was a challenge getting the consultant, who had a wide range of interests, to hone them in specifically for the Cultural & Heritage Commission. Ms. Merighi asked if the consultant (Mr. Shrum) planned to give the Commission and staff next steps to take, as well as some sort of timeline. Mr. Pisarski explained yes, he would, as this was all part of the initial Request for Proposals (RFP.) The Commission members stated they would happily look over the Long Term Plan "sketch" that weekend.

### **Discussion of The Maurice River Bikeway Phase V Project**

Mr. Pisarski made reference to a letter from the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Katherine J. Marcopul, PhD, included within each Commission members' meeting packet. Mr. Pisarski explained the Commission received these occasionally, as an interested party, and this one in particular was located in Maurice River. It outlined the potential effects, provided mapping, etc. Mr. Pisarski stated he did not see any type of negative impact to any type of historic resources. Ms. Watson stated she agreed and it seemed to be very low-impact with no potential problems. Mr. Pisarski added the Commission could comment, but there seemed to be no need to now and he would simply keep this correspondence for the record.

**Liaison Reports**

Robert Dragotta stated he had spoken to all three of his organizations: CHABA had created a children's coloring book based around nature and Mrs. Reeves, which he could distribute to the Commission members. All That Dance had taken over By Our Hand on Route 49, re-modelled it, and would soon be functioning out of that facility. Mr. Dragotta explained All That Dance would be sharing a recital on YouTube that upcoming Sunday. They were, also, currently having classes, although, Mr. Dragotta would not be able to attend until the spring. Mr. Dragotta, additionally, stated he had been in touch with Sharon Kiefer at Gallery 50, who would be in touch with him over the next few days with her updates.

Ms. Watson & Ms. Merighi stated they had both reached out to the grantees, but had not heard anything back at the time of this meeting. Mr. Cagno explained he had reached out to the Greenwich Chapter of The Daughters of The American Revolution, via email and by phone, multiple times, but had yet to hear anything back, as well. Mr. Williams stated he would send Mr. Cagno some updated contacts for them. Mr. Cagno stated he had spoken to Gateway Community Group, who were doing classes virtually. Mr. Cagno stated regarding the Barn Studio, Pat Witt had left him a voicemail and wanted to thank the Commission for continually providing grants to organizations, such as theirs. Mr. Cagno had been in touch with Ms. Witt's daughter Carol, as well, and stated he would call them back shortly.

Maria Cerda-Moreno stated she was in contact with Chase Jackson from the Bayshore Center at Bivalve regarding their programming for the upcoming months. Ms. Cerda-Moreno posed a question as to why she was having the same assignments as last year, regarding the Maurice River/Mauricetown Historic Commission. Mr. Pisarski stated that was OK because it was purely by chance. Sharon Yoshida stated she had the Mauricetown Historical Society and Ms. Cerda-Moreno had Maurice River Historical Society, which helped clear up the confusion. Ms. Cerda-Moreno explained she was referring to Nancy Patterson at East Point Lighthouse.

**Tourism Advisory Council/Recreation Commission Comments**

Cumberland County Recreation & Tourism Director Kim Gauntt explained she was currently working on and arranging outdoor events to be held throughout 2021 and was hoping it would be a better year than 2020. Ms. Gauntt explained the Tourism Advisory Council/Recreation Commission had received a \$25,000 Southern Shore Region Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) Grant again this year, which should be on the Commissioner meeting agenda for February 16, 2021 for approval to accept the grant funds. Ms. Gauntt said she was excited to do more marketing for the County, including both standard and digital billboards, print advertising, etc. Ms. Gauntt explained because it was the beginning of the year, she did not yet have too much to report to the Commission.

Ms. Gauntt's next upcoming event would tentatively be the Cumberland County Kids' Fishing Derby, which would be the 39<sup>th</sup> annual due to last year's event cancellation. Ms. Gauntt explained the event staff did lose on-site coordinator Bob Buzznardo, who was a great asset to each year's event. It would be held at Mary Elmer Lake in Bridgeton and usually has 100+/- attendees depending on the weather. Ms. Gauntt added said event would be held on May 2, 2021 from 8:00-1:00pm for kids ages 5-13. Mr. Pisarski further explained due to COVID-19, a COVID Response Plan would be put into place by the Department coinciding with the event. Suzanne Merighi inquired as to whether the County does any coordination of advertising with

the Bayshore, regarding, specifically, the Eagle Festival. Ms. Gauntt said she does help when Mr. Pisarski does the annual Eagle Festival and her Commission does do mini-marketing grant for non-profit organizations. Ms. Gauntt explained she can send out applications to anyone, but said grant have to be used specifically for marketing or advertising.

### **Other Old/New Business**

Ms. Merighi asked if anyone else had any additional Other Old/New Business to tend to; Commissioner Deputy Director Darlene Barber stated she would like to speak. Commissioner Deputy Director Barber explained she would like to introduce and welcome Commissioner Donna Pearson to the Commission. Commissioner Deputy Director Barber also explained that the name of the Board of Chosen Freeholders had now changed to the Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Deputy Director Barber stated she wanted to address the County's various actions regarding COVID-19. Commissioner Deputy Director Barber stated there was a free walk-up rapid testing clinic down at the Marino Center on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Commissioner Barber suggested signing up wherever everyone could for the COVID-19 vaccine and explained the County was currently only receiving 1,000 shots/week – 500 for the Vineland Board of Health and 500 for the Cumberland County Board of Health. Commissioner Barber suggested trying the Bridgeton & Millville Shop Rite Pharmacies.

Commissioner Deputy Director Barber suggested passing this information on to family and friends and stated the Commission members could call her directly at any time for questions regarding vaccines. Commissioner Deputy Director Barber explained she wanted to pay tribute to Linda Peck at the Greenwich Historical Society, who recently passed away, as well as Mr. Buzznardo and many other good, hard-working people throughout the County. Ms. Lods asked if there were any specific provisions for disabled persons, who were not able to stand in line for their vaccine at a medi-center, to which Commissioner Deputy Director Barber explained, no, it did not seem like there were any such provisions yet, unfortunately. A brief discussion amongst Commissioner Barber and assorted Commission members ensued regarding COVID-19 vaccinations.

### **Correspondence**

Mr. Williams explained the Commission had recently received correspondence from WheatonArts, via Executive Director Susan Gogan, who thanked Mr. Pisarski and the Commission for the \$10,000 they appropriated from last year's budget. Mr. Williams stated he knew it would be very much appreciated and put to good use there at WheatonArts. Ms. Merighi thanked everyone involved for a job well done with this month's meeting and stated she looked forward to seeing everyone in February.

### **Adjourn**

One final motion to adjourn the January 28, 2021 meeting was made by Ms. Watson, seconded by Mr. Dragotta, and passed unanimously by the Commission. Ms. Merighi asked the Commission members to please help Mr. Williams by reviewing the Long Term Plan "sketch" provided over the weekend.