

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE
COMMISSION MINUTES**

July 28, 2022

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission was held on Thursday, July 28, 2022, at 3:00p.m., via teleconference and/or in-person at The County Administration Building & Potter's Tavern both located in Bridgeton, NJ.

Present: Suzanne Merighi Marianne Lods
 Maria Cerda-Moreno Penny Watson
 Yogesh Thakur Karen Barnett

Commissioner Deputy Director Pearson, Commissioner Liaison

Omarey Williams, Shared Services Coordinator
Matt Pisarski, Department Head/Director
Wanda Riviera, Confidential Assistant
Matt Horowitz, Recording Secretary

Approval of Minutes – June 23, 2022

Mr. Williams indicated, following Roll Call, that a quorum was met and would like to entertain a motion to approve the June 23, 2022, Cultural & Heritage (C&H) Commission meeting minutes. A motion to approve the June 23, 2022, meeting minutes was made by Ms. Merighi, seconded by Ms. Cerda-Moreno, and passed unanimously by the Commission.

Review of Re-grant Application Guidelines

Mr. Williams explained staff had provided the Re-grant Application Guidelines and asked that they review them and send him any necessary edits, corrections, suggestions, comments, etc. by the following Friday. Mr. Williams' goal was to release the Guidelines on Friday, August 20, 2022. Mr. Pisarski added staff would update the Census numbers with the new findings from the 2020 Census. Ms. Lods said the Riverfront Renaissance Center for The Arts (RRCA) would be more than happy to host the upcoming Re-grant Workshop again. Messrs. Pisarski & Williams thanked Ms. Lods.

Recap of Recent Events

Mr. Williams said staff had recently attended Cumberland County On Canvas and shared the Top 3 pieces that were chosen as winners and purchased for the County collection. Mr. Williams stated third through first places were awarded to Michael Zambelli, Karen Wilk, and Drew Scarpa, respectively. Mr. Pisarski stated the Commission, along with staff, could collectively come up with specific themes for upcoming Cumberland County On Canvas competitions. Mr. Williams added this year's competition went very well and it was one of his personal favorites to

attend. Mr. Williams explained he had recently attended the Obon Festival, as well and got the last remaining ticket. Mr. Pisarski posed the question as to why the Seabrook Buddhist Temple staff were still doing reservations and limiting the number of attendees to Obon. Select Cultural & Heritage commissioners mentioned this was due to COVID-19. Mr. Pisarski said staff would reach out and encourage the Seabrook Buddhist Temple to loosen up their guidelines for next year's Obon. Mr. Williams said, despite the rain, it was an awesome event with a great turn-out.

Upcoming Events

Mr. Williams stated upcoming events would include the next Plein Air competition to be held at Gallery 50, Inc. to be held on Saturday, August 20, 2022, with an opening to be held on September 2, 2022. He invited all the commissioners to attend and said he would send them a reminder email prior to the event itself. Mr. Williams said the exhibit would be on-display through the month of September at Gallery 50. Another event co-sponsored by the Millville Development District & RRCA would be the Glasstown Plein Air to be held on September 24, 2022, with a reception on Friday, October 7, 2022, running through November. Mr. Williams said the third event would be held on September 10, 2022, for Artists Day On The Maurice River. Mr. Williams added the event was being coordinated with the Mauricetown Historical Society. He said this year's event would be more expansive to try to help bring more people into the area. Mr. Pisarski asked why the awards for the Millville/Glasstown & Gallery 50 Plein Airs award amounts were different and Mr. Williams said he would discuss making a change with Sharon Kiefer to make both events' amounts the same.

Potter's Tavern Discussion

Mr. Pisarski explained Potter's Tavern is owned by the County and was a colonial-era tavern that was the site of the distribution of the Plain Dealer, which was a hand-written "newspaper"-like periodical prior to the Revolution. Mr. Pisarski said the building was restored in the early 1980's, but was closed to the public, except by appointment. He added there was a small pocket park, also owned by the County, which had a retaining wall that was failing. Mr. Pisarski said the Public Works Department had shored it up and closed the park's entrance. He wanted to make a strategic plan for the Potter's Tavern/pocket park property long-term. Mr. Pisarski stated some of the slip coat of plaster on the walls and ceiling was starting to peel off and the cedar shake shingles were starting to hit their life cycle. He asked the Commission what they thought staff could do with the pocket park and backyard area behind Potter's Tavern.

A discussion about murals, artistic tributes to historic figures, and busts or sculptures ensued between staff and the Commission members. It was questioned what the intended use for the Hillcrest property would be, as well as the Caffrey Law Firm, regarding visitor parking. Commissioner Donna Pearson explained The Declaration of Independence was read at the Tavern five days after it was signed. Mr. Williams suggested doing both a mural and interpretive signage on-site with QR codes. Mr. Pisarski asked for suggestions on architecture, graphic design, or landscaping firms, anyone may have to be included within a proposal for a strategic plan for the site and pocket park. It was mentioned that a ramp might be needed to increase access into Potter's Tavern and the pocket park behind it, as well as a proposed mural on the wall nearby on the old bail bonds/apartment buildings. Mr. Pisarski said the plans is to work it into the 2023 budget.

C&H Commissioner Reports

Ms. Merighi said on June 23rd, she had attended another program held at the Millville Public Library. Ms. Merighi said it was part of their programming dedicated to the LGBTQIA+ community. It was an acting workshop done by two presenters, a professor of drama and an actress. Ms. Merighi said she and the other participants partook in improv from scripts. Ms. Merighi shared on Saturday, July 30, 2022, at 2:00pm at the Cumberland County Library there would be a free program with a historical reenactment and a woman portraying Phillis Wheatley, who was the first published African American poet.

Planning Department Update

Mr. Pisarski said upcoming events staff planned to attend would include the Puerto Rican Festival across three days, as well as the parade, Bounty of The Bay with a fundraiser basket, and Oyster Festival. Mr. Pisarski mentioned a Philadelphia Inquirer focusing on cold storage warehousing and food processing within Cumberland County. Mr. Pisarski said he and staff were working on the Draft Comprehensive Farmland Plan for the County to be completed in early August. An Open Space application was submitted for an expansion of the Menantico Preserve in the City of Vineland through the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. It was mentioned how the cannabis retail stores, growers, distribution, etc. were growing across the County.

Other Old/New Business

Ms. Watson indicated herself and Ms. Cerda-Moreno were working on their ongoing African American cemeteries project, along with Ms. Merighi. Ms. Watson asked how the County may be able to use the information collected and distribute it to the public for feedback. Mr. Pisarski said Departmental GIS Specialist Joe Zaccaria could help map the information and make an online survey, which (with the Commissioners' approval) could be uploaded to the County website. Mr. Williams additionally offered up the services of the Department's drone to help locate some of the more difficult to find cemeteries in the fall. Suggestions were made of additional cemeteries across the County to explore and seek out. Ms. Watson urged Ms. Barnett to reach out to her with additional information. Mr. Pisarski said he would help set up a meeting between Ms. Watson & Cerda-Moreno and Mr. Zaccaria.

Adjourn

Mr. Williams asked for one final motion: a motion to adjourn the July 28, 2022, Cultural & Heritage Commission meeting was made by Ms. Watson, seconded by Ms. Lods, and passed unanimously by the Commission. Mr. Williams thanked everyone for their attendance and continued involvement.