

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE
COMMISSION MINUTES**

March 25, 2021

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission was held on Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 4:00p.m., via teleconference.

Present: Suzanne Merighi Maria Cerda-Moreno
 Yogesh Thakur Marianne Lods
 Penny Watson Olive Doss

Commissioner Barber
Commissioner Pearson
Matthew Pisarski, Planning Director
Omarey Williams, Shared Services Coordinator
Matt Horowitz, Recording Secretary

Guests: Lisa Jester
 Patricia “Patt” Martinelli

Approval of Minutes – February 26, 2021

Suzanne Merighi made note of a few corrections to numerical and spelling errors that Matt Horowitz said would be fixed as soon as possible. A motion to approve the February 26, 2021 minutes was made by Penny Watson. The motion was seconded by Marianne Lods and passed unanimously by the Commission with the aforementioned corrections to be made.

Discussion of 2020 Annual Report

Omarey Williams referenced the 2020 Annual Report included within the emailed Commission meeting packet. Mr. Williams mentioned a lot of planned events for last year were canceled due to COVID-19, but many great things were still accomplished by the Commission. Marianne Lods commended Mr. Williams & Matt Pisarski for the beautiful way in which his Report was presented this year. Both Suzanne Merighi & Commissioner Pearson echoed a similar sentiment.

Discussion of Commission Long Range Plan Draft – Christopher Shrum

Mr. Williams stated the first draft of Chris Shrum’s Long Range Plan was included within the emailed Commission packet, asking for any changes, comments, corrections, concerns, etc., and asked if they could be emailed out to him, in addition to the discussion at the meeting. He further stated that if anyone felt they needed more time to sit with and digest the plan, they could take a week and send their comments via email. Mr. Williams explained Mr. Shrum had built upon the initial sketch that had been provided for last month’s meeting having added on more outcome-based objectives. Ms. Lods asked if any of the goals mentioned within the Plan needed to be prioritized, to which Mr. Pisarski replied “yes” and asked Ms. Lods to, please, include this within her emailed comments. Ms. Lods, also, asked if “1MM” meant “\$100,000,” to which Mr.

Pisarski stated he would have to reach out to Mr. Shrum for further clarification. Ms. Merighi said she loved that the report included projected costs for some of the objectives. Ms. Merighi stated she liked the potential sources of funding and timelines mentioned, as well, but thought it was a bit light on specifics. Mr. Pisarski stated he agreed and thought, one on hand, it was good to have it be open-ended because very specific plans can, sometimes, become unattainable. Mr. Pisarski stated he also liked the fact that it was progressive, so it did not limit the Commission with their objectives.

Ms. Merighi asked Mr. Pisarski about the current status of the County's Broadband efforts, to which he explained the County was currently working on a plan and an analysis with a consultant, as well as potential construction of additional towers. Mr. Pisarski stated he hoped to collect additional funding from organizations such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA.) Michael Cagno stated he wished he could share in everyone else's optimism with the Plan, but felt it was very cookie-cut and templated. Mr. Cagno explained he felt it did not seem very specific to Cumberland County and he was concerned about the achievability, as well as the number of objectives. Mr. Cagno added he totally agreed with Ms. Lods on establishing some sort of order of priority to go along with the various objectives. Mr. Pisarski urged Mr. Cagno and others to collect their thoughts within an email to be forwarded to Chris Shrum. Ms. Lods forewarned Mr. Pisarski, from her own personal experience, the National Endowment for The Arts (NEA) Our Town Grant, which was listed under multiple categories, was very hard to attain. Mr. Pisarski suggested some kind of footnote could be added to explain the apparent challenges of attaining the NEA Our Town Grant. The Commission agreed they would collect their thoughts, via email, and send them to Mr. Williams to be sent to Chris Shrum.

Discussion of Cumberland County On Canvas Event

Mr. Williams said Mr. Pisarski could probably add additional commentary, but they were looking to discuss bringing the Cumberland County On Canvas event back in about August or September of this year. Mr. Williams explained they wanted to revitalize this event because it had been very popular in the past and helped them gather artwork for the County art collection to be dispersed and displayed throughout County buildings. Mr. Williams further explained the majority of artwork amassed from previous Cumberland County On Canvas events had already been dispersed, so a new event would help replenish their supply of local artwork. Following a brief period of discussion amongst the Commission, Mr. Williams stated the event could even be comprised of previously created works, so long as they prominently featured Cumberland County. It was explained this would be such an event wherein the top three artists chosen would be compensated for their pieces of work.

Mr. Pisarski added the art would have to be focused around Cumberland County, but the artists themselves did not have to be from Cumberland County. He also clarified that the theme was open, and the artwork could capture a scene from anywhere in Cumberland County. Ms. Merighi asked if there was already money allotted for this event within the budget, to which Mr. Williams stated it was not factored into the budget as a line item. Mr. Pisarski stated the question, now, was if the Commission wanted to purchase first place or the top three best. Mr. Williams explained there was currently \$11,000.00 remaining in the Promo for The Arts Grant line item. Ms. Lods stated with the top three places and, potentially, some honorable mentions, she figured it would total up about \$1,000-1,500.00 and asked if that monetary amount was achievable for this event. Mr. Williams stated, yes, it was, and Ms. Lods made a motion to approve the

Cumberland County On Canvas Event with the modified format previously discussed for no more than \$1,500.00 awarded in prize money. It was seconded by Olive Doss and passed unanimously by the Commission.

Discussion of Millville Plein Air Event

Mr. Williams mentioned he had recently had a conversation with Ms. Lods and they thought the Millville Plein Air would be a very fruitful event. Mr. Williams said the Commission would be working in collaboration with the Riverfront Renaissance Center for The Arts (RRCA) and Glasstown Arts District and they would be looking to hold this event in September. Ms. Lods further explained it would likely take place within the Downtown Millville area and would total around \$1,000.00; First Place - \$500.00, Second Place - \$250.00, and Third Place - \$125.00, as well as about \$150.00 for the judge. Ms. Lods stated the date they had in mind for the event was Saturday, September 25, 2021, which was, also, the same day as their Farm Market at The Village On High. Ms. Lods stated one piece of artwork/artist would be on display (and for sale) for about three weeks at the RRCA. Ms. Merighi stated this sort of Plein Air event was usually held within the Western part of the County, so it would be great to host it in a different location.

Mr. Williams shared \$1,400.00 was set aside for Plein Airs out of the line item and there was money available in the Grant, as well. Mr. Cagno inquired if that line item was for this type of event or the Four-color Plein Air to be held in the wintertime. Mr. Pisarski explained there were currently two Plein Airs: the August Plein Air for Riverfest in Bridgeton and the Four-color Plein Air in December and this would be an additional third event in Millville. Mr. Williams explained money could be pulled from the Grant/Promo for The Arts line item, if need be, as well. Following a brief period of discussion amongst the Commission and staff, a motion to accept the proposal of \$1,000.00 for the Millville Plein Air Event was made by Mr. Cagno. It was seconded by Maria Cerda-Moreno and passed unanimously by the Commission.

Discussion of Graphic Designer for County Bus

Mr. Williams referred to photographs of the County bus contained within the Commission meeting packet; said bus may have been seen driving around the County to help promote the 2020 Census last year. Now, that the Cumberland County Department of Planning, Tourism & Community Affairs had completed their work on the Census, the message and wrap on the bus would need to be changed and updated. Mr. Williams explained the Department wanted to get the bus wrapped for purposes of the County to participate in various events in the community. Mr. Williams was wondering if the Commission could approve them going out to a local graphic designer to help take one big thing off Mr. Pisarski's workload and give a great opportunity to a local artist. Mr. Pisarski stated he had, essentially, hit an "artistic roadblock" with a design, a consultant could design a piece of artwork, and there would be a graphic designer at the wrap company who could fit their creation to the various panels across the bus. Mr. Pisarski explained it did not need to be put out for a Request for Proposal (RFP) because the amount was low enough and he would rather just hand-select an artist or put it out as a proposal.

Local artists such as Anne Feinstein, Donna Vertolli, and others were mentioned as ideas. Mr. Pisarski added money for this agenda item would come from the Unexpended Miscellaneous line item. Mr. Pisarski stated he was looking to pay such a graphic designer about \$1,000.00. Following a discussion amongst the Commission, County staff, and the Commissioners,

Commissioner Barber suggested assembling an ad hoc committee to work along with a designer. It was suggested to have one person representing each of the three major cities/areas within the County: Bridgeton, Millville, and Vineland. Ms. Watson additionally suggested the Commission having a final review of the design prior to it being applied to the bus itself. Commissioner Barber made a recommended motion to select an ad hoc committee (one from each of the three major cities) to work along with the designer on a new wrap design for the bus. Ms. Watson seconded and the motion was passed unanimously by the Commission.

Discussion of Millville Army Air Field Signs – Lisa Jester

Lisa Jester stated she and her organization had recently met with The Authority (formerly known as the Cumberland County Improvement Authority/CCIA) meeting specifically with Kim Ayres & Gerald “Jerry” Velazquez. Ms. Jester, a handful of her Board members, and staff from The Authority brainstormed and started a capital campaign with potential interest from John Scarpa or the John F. Scarpa Foundation, who they have met and talked with a few times. Ms. Jester said Mr. Scarpa suggested they get a Hangar rendering, as well as a feasibility study, done because they would like to move the Q Hangar. Ms. Jester explained the Millville Executive Airport would like to move said Q Hangar from its current location to the old area where the DRBA Administration Building was located, in-between the Millville Army Airfield Museum & Hangar 8 AKA “The Big Green Monster.” Ms. Jester stated the Authority had agreed to work with Manders Merighi Portadin Farrell Architects, LLC to do the Hangar rendering and would absorb the cost. Ms. Jester said the Authority suggested that she contact the Commission to see if there was any additional funding available to help with the feasibility study.

Additionally, Ms. Jester expressed excitement there was a new company coming into the Airport called Jet East that would employ 150-200 people and stated the Q Hangar would be used for Economic Development of the County & Airport. Penny Watson suggested Ms. Jester apply to the New Jersey Historic Trust, as there was a grant round currently open and they like feasibility studies. Mr. Cagno asked for a bit of clarity on whether it was a feasibility study to do the move or a capacity study on fundraising dollars, to which Ms. Jester explained it was regarding fundraising. Mr. Cagno asked if there were limitations on such funding, to which Mr. Pisarski replied it would have to be from the County line item and could not be grant-funded. Mr. Pisarski asked, for clarification purposes, that there were environmental concerns related to the Q Hangar with a good portion to be demolished with three trusses to be retained, re-located to a new structure to be built where Ms. Jester had indicated with historic interpretation of the Q Hangar through signage at the new building, to all of which Ms. Jester exclaimed “absolutely!”

Ms. Jester further explained the re-built Q Hangar would, hopefully, house Verna's Flight Line Restaurant & Catering, as their current location was sinking, as well as a tasting area for Glasstown Brewing Company. Following a brief period of discussion amongst Ms. Jester and the Commission regarding the involvement of John Scarpa and further specifics, it was clarified Ms. Jester was asking the Commission for \$6,500.00 to help fund the aforementioned feasibility study. At this point in time, Mr. Pisarski explained, if there were no further questions from the Commission, Ms. Jester could sign off and the Commission could discuss her proposal. After explaining draft designs of the Airport’s interpretive signs (funded by the Commission the previous year,) Ms. Jester thanked the Commission for their time and proceeded to sign off.

The Commission discussed Ms. Jester’s request for funding on behalf of the Millville Army Air

Field Museum/Executive Airport. Penny Watson asked how much money total the Commission currently had available for the rest of the year to which Mr. Pisarski asked Mr. Williams to bring up the budget for 2021 and asked that he tally up the Miscellaneous Unexpended items. Mr. Cagno stated he was still confused and inquired that they were requesting \$6,500.00 to interview a bunch of people to see if they wanted to contribute money. Ms. Watson agreed that this was how she understood it, as well. Mr. Pisarski added it was a fundraising capacity study that would determine the likelihood of the project and include a summary analysis of the potential giving related to the project. Mr. Pisarski stated he felt one of the challenges Ms. Jester had was that the major funder already specified who they wanted them to use. Commissioners Barber & Pearson felt as though the Commission would need a bit more information on what they would be doing with the money before fully funding it. Mr. Williams said it looked like there was about \$8,000.00 left within the Commission's annual budget and could probably dedicate \$3,500.00 to something of this nature. Following a period of further discussion amongst the Commission, Commissioner Barber said as liaison to the Authority, she would be giving Mr. Velazquez a call. Commissioner Barber suggested to table this request for now, until further discussions with both the Millville Army Air Field & The Authority.

Discussion of Cultural & Heritage Banners

Mr. Pisarski mentioned the Commission needed about three or four new banners, which could be loaned out to grantees, various County entities, and affiliates to be utilized at events. As mentioned at a previous month's meeting, The Board of Chosen Freeholders' name had recently been changed to The Board of County Commissioners; additionally, the Cultural & Heritage Commission's own logo had recently been re-designed and updated, as well. Mr. Pisarski stated each of the three or four banners would cost about \$115.00. With little discussion, a motion to expend \$400.00 for new Cultural & Heritage Commission banners was made by Mr. Cagno, seconded by Ms. Lods, and passed unanimously by the Commission.

Discussion of Historic Site Management Grant

Mr. Pisarski stated this was something Ms. Watson had mentioned previously. It was available through the New Jersey (NJ) Historic Trust and was due in mid-April. Mr. Pisarski explained it possessed a \$50,000.00 cap with a 75/25% match. Prior to COVID-19, Mr. Pisarski stated, the Commission had assembled a focus group with the Hispanic community to discuss how they would want to represent Hispanic history better in Cumberland County. Mr. Pisarski said one of their primary suggestions was to do a survey to help identify historic sites associated with the Hispanic community/culture within Cumberland County. Mr. Pisarski had reached out to the NJ Historic Trust to ask them if this could be a fundable project and they said, yes, potentially, it could be; explaining the proposal would be that the Commission submit an application to conduct a survey of historic Hispanic sites within the City of Vineland.

At the moment, Mr. Pisarski did not have a cost estimate and it would have to go out to bid with a consultant to do such work. Although, if the Commission received the grant, it would be a 75/25% split amidst the grant and the County, either through the Commission budget or a separate line item. Ms. Watson asked if the Commission would be identifying the consultant prior to the application being made, to which Mr. Pisarski clarified he did not think there was time, but they would come up with a shortlist of potential consultants. Ms. Watson said this might help the application go through faster. Olive Doss asked why this study would be specific

to just Vineland and not the whole County, to which Mr. Pisarski explained he believed a County-wide survey would be more expensive and, potentially, not as effective. Although, if effective, he planned to do a survey of the entire County, as well, based on the results of the City of Vineland survey. Commissioner Pearson shared Vineland had an extensive history with the Puerto Rican community, and they had already done a lot of the basic research. Commissioner Pearson stated there was a person on Vineland City Council who had done such research and she would try to get the Commission his name as soon as possible and they could reach out to him. A motion to authorize the submission of an application to conduct a survey of historic Hispanic sites within the City of Vineland was made by Penny Watson, seconded by Ms. Lods, and passed unanimously by the Commission.

Special Project: Capital Recovery Center Mosaic Project, Artist Stipend

Mr. Williams shared an image of the Capital Recovery Center Mosaic Project (also, included within the meeting packet) on screen. Mr. Pisarski explained that Melissa Niles at the Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Services Office (or Department of Human Services) was opening a Capital Recovery Center located on Pearl Street in Bridgeton. It would be a facility used to assist with alcohol and drug recovery patients and Mr. Pisarski stated the building itself was very nondescript. Ms. Niles had selected an artist to do a mosaic that would surround the entrance to said building and while Human Services was able to cover the expenses related to the materials, they did not have money to compensate the artist. Mr. Pisarski & Ms. Niles had agreed, if the Commission had funding available, they would like to extend a small stipend to the mosaic artist just as an appreciation for their time and effort. Given the amount of time and work they had already put in, staff recommendation would be \$500.00 to show the County's appreciation. Ms. Lods made a motion to provide the Capital Recovery Center mosaic artist with a \$500.00 stipend, which was seconded by Yogesh Thakur, and passed unanimously by the Commission, who thought it turned out lovely.

Special Project: Vineland Historical Society: A Trip Through Time – Patt Martinelli

Patricia "Patt" Martinelli, first and foremost, extended her thanks to the Commission for giving her the opportunity to meet with them today. Ms. Martinelli explained she was asking for a \$1,000.00 Special Request Grant to help fund the publication of an 85-page book entitled A Trip Through Time: A (Slightly Inaccurate) Historical Tour of South Jersey. It was originally researched and compiled by Philip S. Nutt, who was once a member of the Vineland Historical Society's Board of Trustees, during the late 1930's. Mr. Cagno inquired about the unit cost/book and potential retail value, to which Ms. Martinelli said \$8-10.00 and \$12-14.00, respectively. As the sole funder, Mr. Cagno asked if the Commission would get credit within the book for publishing, to which Ms. Martinelli proclaimed "absolutely!" Ms. Merighi asked how "slightly inaccurate" the contents of the book were, to which Ms. Martinelli explained "it was a different time and place" and some of Mr. Nutt's language within was not politically correct, yet not outrageously offensive, and various roads, sites, etc. mentioned were no longer in existence.

Ms. Merighi asked if there was any way the Commission could get a look at the book before deciding, to which Ms. Martinelli thought she had sent over copies. Mr. Williams explained, yes, Ms. Martinelli had already done so, and it was on a Google Drive and he could forward it to everyone on the Commission. Ms. Merighi asked if there were any concerns about publication rights from Mr. Nutt's estate, family members, etc., to which Ms. Martinelli stated, no, because it

was during Mr. Nutt's time spent on the Board of Trustees and it was donated to them upon his passing. With no further questions or inquiries from the Commission, Ms. Martinelli signed off and thanked the Commission again for their time and consideration. Ms. Merighi urged she would really like to see the material for A Trip Through Time: A (Slightly Inaccurate) Historical Tour of South Jersey first before the Commission approved anything. Mr. Cagno, Mr. Pisarski, and a number of Commission members stated they agreed, as well. Mr. Williams said she would forward the Google Drive document with the book out to the Commission upon the meeting's adjournment.

Discussion of Possible Response to Recent Violence Against The Asian American Population

Mr. Williams stated that unfortunately there had been a rise in racially motivated violence and they all recognize it and would like to condemn it. Mr. Williams explained it was weighing especially hard on Commissioner Pearson's heart, so she brought it to the Cultural & Heritage Commission because they deal with so many different racial populations. Commissioner Pearson first and foremost extended her thanks to both Mr. Pisarski & Mr. Williams for being receptive to the idea of some sort of response on behalf of the Commission. Commissioner Pearson explained she had reached out to the Seabrook Education & Cultural Center (SECC,) as well, who were, also, interested in doing something. Ms. Merighi asked if anything as such had been done in the past and if there was a precedent for the Commission to look at, to which Mr. Pisarski explained they have had workshops in the past.

Mr. Pisarski further explained he was thinking of some sort of webinar, training, or workshop focused on diversity and the challenges of race-based violence. Mr. Pisarski stated the Commission had always done workshops in the past with speakers, although, this specific topic was a little new for them, but was without a doubt, within their mission. Commissioner Pearson inquired about a potential partnership with the SECC, which Mr. Williams said he felt would be a great idea! Following a lengthy, thought-provoking period of discussion amongst the Commission members and County staff, Ms. Lods suggested adopting a Statement of Inclusivity from this point forward. It was suggested the Commission members and affiliates could all take a stab at writing their own version of a Statement of Inclusivity and send it over to Mr. Williams. Commissioners Barber & Pearson mentioned the Board of Chosen Commissioners were, also, working on issuing a similar statement of their own, as well. Mr. Cagno stated he thought it would be great to get out there and show their support through action in addition to issuing a Statement of Inclusivity. Commissioner Pearson mentioned the County used to host a Cultural & Heritage Day and it would be an awesome idea to hold such a similar multi-cultural event again. Mr. Pisarski explained he would start coordinating with County Administration & Counsel John Carr on all the aforementioned topics, ideas, and concerns.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Merighi mentioned the Vineland Regional Dance Company (VDRC) would still be holding their annual dance recital, which would be outside this year, on April 25, 2021 at 3:00pm. Ms. Doss stated she had received an email from Ms. Pitts-Brown inviting her to participate within a worship at the SECC on March 26, 2021 at 10:00am, via Zoom. Ms. Doss stated the City of Vineland were still waiting for release from "the powers that be" to hold in-person events and meetings. Ms. Doss thanked Mr. Williams because she had talked to Ralph Padilla at PRACC,

who were working on something for this upcoming August.

Tourism Advisory Council/Recreation Commission Comments – Kimberly Gauntt

Kim Gauntt was not present, and Mr. Williams stated she did not have any major updates to report and the Commission would speak with her in April. Mr. Pisarski explained, however, there was one event the Tourism Advisory Council/Recreation Commission were actively working on, the 39th Annual Bob Buzznardo Kids' Fishing Derby, which was scheduled for Sunday, May 2, 2021 to be held at Mary Elmer Lake in Bridgeton. Mr. Pisarski mentioned he would send out the flyer to the Commission shortly, so they could help with the event's promotion.

Other Old/New Business

Mr. Williams stated an action-packed Commission meeting follow-up email would additionally include a link to an article about the Black Heritage Trail that Assemblyman Antwan McClellan had spearheaded and will have an impact on Cumberland County. Secondly, Mr. Williams said he would be sharing information about the Teen Arts Festival, which would be completely virtual (on Google Classrooms) this year, as hosted by The Levoy Theatre. Mr. Williams shared this year's Teen Arts would be held on April 21, 2021 and Mr. Pisarski added there will be a staggering 488 kids participating this year.

Mr. Pisarski stated he had two brief items to share under Other Old/New Business: he received an email earlier that day regarding the County perusing a Community Development Block Grant for Capital Funds for COVID-19 Adapted Recreational, Cultural, Hospitality, and/or Tourism programs that could be re-granted out to Cultural & History non-profits. Mr. Pisarski stated it could potentially award, if successful, \$75-100,000.00. Mr. Pisarski explained Penny Watson was putting together a database of burial sites. Ms. Watson was thinking of a project she could undertake as County Historian and would be identifying all the cemeteries and burial sites throughout the County. Ms. Watson would, also, be working on the African American Burial Ground Network Study Act, as per the Senate. Ms. Watson planned to work with with Maria Cerda-Moreno on this project and asked for additional volunteers from the Eastern Side of the County; Ms. Merighi quickly volunteered, as well as Commissioner Pearson and Ms. Doss. Mr. Pisarski volunteered the assistance of Planning Department GIS Specialist Joe Zaccaria, too.

Adjourn

Ms. Merighi asked for one final motion: a motion to adjourn the March 25, 2021 Cultural & Heritage Meeting. A motion to adjourn was made by Yogesh Thakur, seconded by Maria Cerda-Moreno, and passed unanimously by the Commission. Ms. Merighi wished everyone in attendance a "Happy Easter!" and a "Happy Passover!," in closing.