

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE  
COMMISSION MINUTES**

**October 22, 2020**

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission was held on Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 4:00p.m., via teleconference.

<b>Present:</b>	Penny Watson	Maria Cerda-Moreno
	Marianne Lods	Sharon Yoshida
	Robert Dragotta	Suzanne Merighi
	Olive Doss	Commissioner Barber

Matthew Pisarski, Assistant Planning Director

Matt Horowitz, Recording Secretary

<b>Guest:</b>	Kim Gauntt, Cumberland County Recreation & Tourism
	Omarey Williams, Shared Services Coordinator
	Dr. Iveta Pirgova, WheatonArts

**Approval of Minutes – August 27, 2020**

A motion was made to approve the August minutes by Ms. Lods. The motion was seconded by Ms. Merighi and passed unanimously by the Commission. Commissioner Barber had to abstain because she was not in attendance at said meeting.

**Update on Strategic Plan – Omarey Williams**

Mr. Williams spoke with Mr. Shrum and he is still conducting interviews with the re-grantees. Mr. Shrum had requested 30 minutes from each Commissioner for their input, comments, etc. on the Strategic Plan prior to the November meeting. Ms. Merighi offered a couple positive comments. Ms. Watson gave positive feedback as well.

**WheatonArts: Communities & Cultures of Central & South America – Dr. Iveta Pirgova**

Commission members have contained within their packets materials regarding and pertaining to Dr. Pirgova's presentation. Mr. Pisarski said this contained the project proposal and several images. Dr. Pirgova explained this project would be a continuation of the previous partnership between WheatonArts & The Cultural & Heritage Commission. Said proposed project would pertain to communities and cultures of Central/South America.

Reflections & Expressions: Communities & Cultures of Central & South America would include numerous exhibits running from the fall of 2021-22. One of the projects will be led by local Guatemalan artists, created right on the street, and destroyed over time as people walk across the installation. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Dr. Pirgova explained both projects will contain both in-person and virtual elements, as well.

Mr. Pisarski explained there would be travelling exhibits throughout Cumberland County, as well as a potential partnership with Atlantic County. Dr. Pirgova explained the budget for

WheatonArts previous project funded by the Commission in 2016 was \$10,000. Commissioner Barber asked if there was a way for Dr. Pirgova to do an alternate budget/spending plan. Mr. Pisarski explained, in addition to the Commission, majority of the projects' budgets would be covered by various grants, funding sources, etc. Dr. Pirgova would need to know at this meeting if the Commission planned to partner with WheatonArts for these projects. A motion for Cultural & Heritage Commission to partner with WheatonArts was made by Ms. Watson. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cerda-Moreno and passed unanimously by the Commission with no commitment on funding levels. Funding would be determined through the 2021 Commission budget process.

### **EastPoint Lighthouse Request to Amend Podcast – Nancy Patterson**

In Nancy Patterson's apparent absence, Mr. Pisarski explained back in 2015, the Commission first implemented the West Jersey Time Traveler Podcast program and had 15 podcasts created for historic sites throughout Cumberland County; one of which being EastPoint Lighthouse and at the time, Keith Wasserman was the contractor attached to the podcast program.

Since 2015, there had been some dramatic changes to both the Lighthouse itself and the administration at the Lighthouse. Ms. Patterson is currently the director of the Maurice River Historical Society, who is now managing the Lighthouse. Mr. Pisarski explained Ms. Patterson was concerned because the person interviewed within the podcast now has a contentious relationship with the organization and was requesting a new podcast be created.

Mr. Pisarski stated he explained to Ms. Patterson any decision on re-doing the podcasts (in both English & Spanish) would have to be made by the Commission and could be worked into the 2021 budget. Mr. Pisarski explained, regardless, the historical data within the podcast was still accurate. Following a brief period of discussion between Mr. Pisarski and the Commissioners, it was decided the podcast should not be changed for internal politics, but may need to be updated with updated material concerning the Lighthouse and threat to the Bayshore.

Mr. Pisarski said he would simply ask for a commitment to include EastPoint Lighthouse on the list of podcasts to be worked on in 2021. It was decided the issue would be tabled until the Commission's 2021 budget was established with Commission's stance to be relayed directly to Ms. Patterson. Ms. Cerda-Moreno explained to Mr. Pisarski the podcast links on the Commissions' website appeared to currently be dysfunctional.

### **2021 Re-grant Applications Received**

Mr. Williams stated he had sent out an addendum prior to the meeting with some additional updated information. Comparatively. Mr. Williams explained for 2021, there were 21 Arts applications and this year, for 2021, there were currently 18 applications received. Mr. Williams continued there were four organizations whom decided not to re-apply: Bridgeton Main Street, Greater Bridgeton, Inc., Cumberland County Black Hall of Fame, and Hands In Action.

Those not applying for re-grants were not because programming had been cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19 and had left-over funding to be applied to 2021 or they had operational issues and did not want to take on another grant; most stated they would be interested in returning in 2022. Mr. Williams explained there was one new applicant, Project Inspiration, bringing the total requested amount from \$148,752 in 2020 to \$124,896.12 in 2021.

For the Historical side, Mr. Williams further explained there were eight applicants in 2020 and in 2021, the Commission was down one applicant (The Vineland Historical & Antiquarian Society.) He had spoken to Pat Martinelli, who simply explained they could not take on any new programming in 2021, but hoped to re-apply in 2022 that would incorporate the entire County. Mr. Williams explained the total requested amounts for Historical Grants went from \$57,290 in 2020 to \$60,978 in 2021. He stated there was one new re-grantee, The Greenwich Tea Burning Chapter of The National Society of The Daughters of The American Revolution. Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:00p.m., the Grants Review Panel would meet, via Microsoft Teams, and prepare their recommendation amounts for the November Commission meeting.

### **NJ Historical Commission 2021 CHPP Awards**

Mr. Pisarski stated the full County History Partnership program (CHPP) listing was available within each Commission members' packet. They were very pleased to announce almost every County had received an increase, including Cumberland, who was awarded \$28,857. Mr. Pisarski stated this was a sizable increase from the previous year's awarded amount.

Depending on the Budget Sub-committee's recommendation, could be supplemented slightly to make it an even \$30,000. Mr. Pisarski stated the Commission would, ideally, like to cover at least 50% of the request amount, which Mr. Williams explained was within the \$60,000 range. Mr. Pisarski stated the Commission's funding was \$18,857 throughout 2020 and they had received a \$10,000 increase for 2021. He explained the State Council Awards would be announced the following Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **Liaison Reports**

Commissioner Barber told the Commission, with regards to COVID-19, an enormous amount of money had been spent at the County level. The Commissioners had received a lot of reimbursement money from the grants. Commissioner Barber explained that with the changing of the County's jail system, they will be saving \$8-10 million/year for their tax-payers. The Board's goal was to not increase the County's tax rate for the next three years.

Commissioner Barber wanted to assure the Commission, as a member of the Commissioner Board Budget Committee, she promised the Cultural & Heritage Commission would continue to be funded. Commissioner Barber stated she thought Mr. Pisarski and his team were doing a great job through the Cumberland County Department of Planning, Tourism & Community Affairs' recent transition and extended her words of thanks to the Commission.

With no Group Liaison Organization Reports, Mr. Pisarski relayed Mr. Cagno was quite ill, suspicious that it could be COVID-19 and was in the process of receiving testing. Mr. Cagno had reached out to his three organizations, who were all doing as well as could be expected. Mr. Pisarski stated Mr. Cagno would be taking some time off to recover in the safety of his own home. Ms. Watson asked Mr. Pisarski to, please, relay the Commission's best wishes to Mr. Cagno for a speedy recovery.

### **Tourism Advisory Council/Recreation Commission Comments – Kimberly Gauntt**

Ms. Gauntt explained the Tourism & Recreation Commission had been working on a Social Distancing campaign and had implemented digital and billboard advertising. She and Mr. Williams took a ride within the past few weeks to take pictures of all the billboards in the Philadelphia Area on great highways, I-95, Route 130, the Walt Whitman Bridge, and other

heavily-travelled locations. For Recreation, Ms. Gauntt was working on a database to include all the various leagues and their leaders in Cumberland County, which was complete to date. She was hoping they were able to get more accomplished in 2021 than in 2020 due to COVID-19. Ms. Merighi inquired if most of the billboards were electronic. Ms. Gauntt explained more about the billboards, their locations, messages, frequencies, and promotion of outdoor recreation during COVID-19. Mr. Williams explained said ads ran every eight seconds amongst a recurring rotation of six ads total.

### **Correspondence**

With no Other Old/New Business, Mr. Pisarski explained the first piece of Correspondence was related to Building 230 at the Millville Army Airfield Historic District. It was pretty self-explanatory, but they were doing some remediation to said building; Mr. Pisarski had received some additional information, which would be included within next month's meeting packet, regarding the State Historic Preservation Organization (SHPO) conditions.

Regarding the letter Re: National Garden of American Heroes, Mr. Pisarski explained Ms. Watson had noticed they had given the Commission something like a week to provide a response and they had, obviously, not made that deadline. However, the Commissioners and staff had decided it was important for the Commission to reply and said letter was mailed out anyway. Ms. Merighi thanked Ms. Watson for her efforts and stated she thoroughly enjoyed the biographies.

### **Adjourn**

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