

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE
COMMISSION MINUTES**

October 28, 2021

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

Present: Suzanne Merighi Maria Cerda-Moreno
 Michael Cagno Sharon Yoshida
 Penny Watson Olive Doss

Commissioner Pearson

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

Approval of Minutes – September 23, 2021

With no corrections noted, Penny Watson made a motion to move to accept the September 23, 2021 meeting minutes, as presented. The motion was seconded by Maria Cerda-Moreno and passed unanimously by the Commission.

Update on Strategic Plan

Omarey Williams explained everyone had received a copy of the Commission’s Long-Range Plan 2021-2026 both within their meeting packet and via email. Mr. Williams explained, unless there were egregious errors, the remainder of the Strategic Plan would be completed in-house to help finally complete it. Mr. Williams set the following Friday as a deadline for any errors, corrections, edits, comments, problem areas, etc. It would be ratified by vote, via email, on Friday, November 5, 2021, and Mr. Shrum would be paid before the end of the calendar year, if approved by the Commission. Ms. Merighi shared she thought it was a very improved version from the previous drafts Mr. Shrum had submitted. Mr. Williams liked that Mr. Shrum took the Commission’s suggestions and tried to incorporate them into the Strategic Plan itself, as well as various newly-updated elements. Ms. Cerda-Moreno said she read through the Plan and thought it was a tremendous improvement, as well. Mr. Williams extended his thanks to the committee who came out to help work on the Strategic Plan.

2021 Re-grant Applications Received

Mr. Williams shared there were more applicants this year: 9 History applicants and 25 Arts applicants, an increase from 7 History and 18 Arts. Mr. Williams explained there were additional revenues received this year from both the State Council and the Historical Commission. Mr. Williams said there was one new applicant from Downe Township, that was hoping to do restoration work at Union Hall. He explained additional noteworthy applicants included the

Cumberland County Library and the Vineland Historical & Antiquarian Society. Mr William said he was pleased to see Revive South Jersey, as well as Hands Up Silent Theatre. He was very excited to see fresh new organizations as applicants this year. Mr. Williams said the Grants Review Panel would be held on November 4, 2021 and thanked the Budget Sub-committee for increasing the amount of the stipends being awarded to Grants Review panelists.

Ms. Watson asked if Mr. Williams was able to find two more people to serve on the Grants Review Panel. Mr. Williams explained he did find one and thanked Ms. Watson for suggesting Janet Sheridan, who would be joining the Panel for the next three years. Mr. Williams said he did have some difficulty locating a sixth member, but the Panel seemed to be OK with five members, rather than the six in previous years. Mr. Williams added both Ocean & Atlantic Counties' Panels, on which he served, had five panelists each.

2021 Third Quarter Budget Review

Mr. Williams explained there was about \$10,000.00 remaining in the Sub Promo of The Arts account and about \$3,500.00 left in the Marketing Services account. Future expenditures would include re-designed Cultural & Heritage banners and a couple other items that had not yet been posted to the account. Mr. Williams mentioned the annual County Finance Budget cut-off would be sometime near mid-November and welcomed any suggestions to try to help spend the remaining balance down. Mr. Williams explained they would be working with the City of Vineland to fund their mural projects at \$7,500.00. Mr. Williams additionally mentioned at least \$1,600.00 allotted towards upcoming Plein Air events and \$5,000.00 for the Long-Range Plan. Mr. Williams said he was talking with Keith Wasserman to help finish up the West Jersey Time Traveler podcasts before year's end, as well.

Ms. Merighi asked if any left-over monies would be carried over to next year's budget, to which Mr. Williams explained such monies would have to be spent/expended before the year-end budget cut-off. Ms. Watson suggested more West Jersey Time Traveler podcasts be done noting one in particular could be done about the Bridge Keeper's Building over Route 49/Broad Street in Bridgeton. Ms. Yoshida inquired about the \$2,000.00 approved for Helga Merits' film at last month's meeting. Mr. Williams said he would reach out to Mr. Dragotta/The J.A.C.L. after the meeting to find out about the Commission's impending payment to Ms. Merits. Mr. Williams explained, excluding pending payments, it would be about \$7-8,000.00 remaining in Promo of The Arts and \$6-7,000.00 left in the Line Item. Mr. Williams explained he would soon email out a Third Quarter Budget Review including pending expenditures.

2022 Budget Recommendations

Mr. Williams further explained, for those following along, to quickly take a look at the bottom of the 2022 Cultural & Heritage Budget - PROPOSED document. He made reference to the 2022 funding received from the State Council for The Arts (TOTAL LAP FUNDS '22) totaling \$365,922.00. Mr. Williams added total History funds from the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) came in at \$43,286.00 for 2022 with the total amount to be re-granted out. \$200,000.00 from the State Council funds would be taken out to help do the re-granting for Arts funds, he explained. Mr. Williams stated the remainder would be \$143,422.00 for Promo of The Arts and \$22,500.00 to make up the remainder of the \$165,000.00.

2022 expenses under Marketing Services would include the Encore Awards & Program Ad re-doing stand-up Banner Bugs, Facebook & Instagram page boosting, renovation/re-design of the Explore Cumberland website, and increased workshops and trainings for both staff and grantees totaling \$21,000.00 with \$1,500.000 remaining in contingency. Promo of The Arts expenses for 2022 would include membership dues, Senior Month Art Show, Disability Awareness Month, Special Requests (5), Artists' Day, Panel Stipends (6), Teen Arts, and Cumberland County on Canvas. Mr. Williams added new projects allotted for within the 2022 Budget would include the Underground Railroad Project; a Municipal Public Art Initiative; Artists with Disabilities Exhibition, Land Arts Project, Poetry Trail Project, Americans for The Arts Study IV; Sounds of Cumberland Music Project; Writing Project; and Plein Airs (3) totaling \$146, 422.00 with a Contingency of \$34,922.00. Mr. Williams said \$30,000.00 awarded annually from the County Commissioners would go towards the Mural Program, West Jersey Time Traveler podcasts, food expenses, and \$7,500.00 in Contingency. Ms. Merighi suggested it be corrected, emailed out, and voted upon the following Friday, via email.

C&H Commissioner Reports

Mr. Cagno referred to an email he had recently sent containing images from the Barn Studio and their outreach, students, classes, etc. For Gateway Action, Mr. Cagno said they were working on an application to do a partnership with the Barn Studio. Mr. Cagno said the Greenwich Chapter of The Daughters of The American Revolution had an upcoming event planned for November 20, 2021, which he planned to attend. Ms. Watson said she had participated in the Clay College brick-painting event, which she explained was a lot of fun. Mr. Williams echoed a similar sentiment and said the brick painting event was a very fun time. Ms. Merighi reported the Vineland Regional Dance Company would again be performing The Nutcracker this holiday season. She, unfortunately, would not be able to attend, but said there would likely be a couple of tickets available to anyone on the Commission willing and able to attend. Mr. Williams said there were two pairs of tickets for two performances on December 18, 2021 currently available on a first-come-first-serve basis.

County Commissioner Liaison Reports

Commissioner Pearson said she would send her comments, regarding the Underground Railroad Project, via text, due to a bad connection. Commissioner Pearson stated she did not have an official report on behalf of the County Commissioner Liaisons to report this month.

Planning Department Update

Mr. Pisarski explained the Tourism/Recreation Boards had done a holiday luncheon/afternoon hors d'oeuvres gathering, rather than a formalized December meeting. Mr. Pisarski and staff were thinking about organizing such a holiday get-together with all three Boards: Cultural & Heritage, Tourism Advisory Council, and Recreation Commission. Mr. Pisarski proposed Eastlyn Golf Course & The Greenview Inn as a potential venue and was currently working on coordinating dates, times, details, etc. Mr. Pisarski explained, if the Commission agreed, any action items prior to the end of the calendar year would have to be captured and attended to during the November 2021 meeting. The majority of the Commission members agreed to the

event and Mr. Pisarski added each person could bring a plus one, if applicable. It would tentatively be held during the week of December 12th, but he was still unsure of the date and time.

Mr. Pisarski explained the Department had been very busy and Commission members could see the recent activity on the Explore Cumberland Facebook & Instagram pages. He commended Messrs. Williams & Horowitz for their work posting on the pages. Mr. Pisarski added they were currently working on a large billboard campaign across South Jersey for the Cumberland Fresh concept promoting local agriculture and aquaculture. Mr. Pisarski expressed he was very happy to see the Proposed Budget for 2022, which would be shared later in the meeting. Mr. Pisarski stated they were planning to hold the annual Eagle Fest in February 2022 with kids clay-making table that the Cultural & Heritage Commission hosts.

Other Old/New Business

For Other Old Business, Ms. Merighi asked Mr. Williams about the NEA Grant the Commission had applied for just a few months ago. He explained they had not heard a thing but expected an update during either November or December and would have an update as soon as humanly possible. For Other New Business, Mr. Williams posed a question to the Commission, if they wanted to move the meeting time to either 3:00 or 3:30p.m. going into effect starting in 2022. He said this could, also, be voted on during the emailed vote the following Friday.

Ms. Watson asked when meeting might be moving to in-person again. Mr. Williams said this would not be happening until the County was at 70% vaccinated and it was currently about 56%, so not any time relatively soon. It was mentioned the meetings could be held off-site at the locations of some of the re-grantees. A brief discussion concerning COVID-19 regulations and precautions ensued, but largely seemed in agreement of off-site in-person meetings. Mr. Williams said some sort of online/virtual component would remain across all County meetings for those still wanting to remain virtual moving forward.

Ms. Merighi mentioned a Nominations Committee might need to get together soon in preparation for 2022 selection of officers. Mr. Williams asked for any volunteers for the Nominations Committee to start preparing for the November 2021 meeting. Ms. Yoshida & Ms. Merighi volunteered, and Mr. Williams said he would ask for a third member, via email.

Adjourn

Ms. Merighi thanked those in attendance for their participation in today's meeting and kindly asked for one final motion: a motion to adjourn the night's meeting. A motion to adjourn the October 28, 2021 Cultural & Heritage meeting was made by Mr. Cagno, seconded by Ms. Watson, and passed unanimously by the Commission.