

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE
COMMISSION MINUTES**

March 23, 2023

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission was held on Thursday, March 23, 2023, at 3:00p.m., via teleconference and/or in-person at The County Administration Building located in Bridgeton, NJ.

Present: Robert Dragotta (November 2023)
Michael Cagno * (January 2028)
Suzanne Merighi * (November 2023)
Marianne Lods * (November 2026)
Maria Cerda-Moreno * (November 2025)
Penny Watson (August 2025)
Karen Barnett * (August 2024)
Yogesh Thakur (November 2026)

Commissioner Victoria Lods *
Commissioner Doug Albrecht

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

Guests: Patricia “Patt” Martinelli, The Vineland Historical & Antiquarian Society

Note: Asterisk () indicates members present at the aforementioned meeting.*

Approval of Minutes – February 23, 2023

Mr. Williams indicated, following Roll Call, that a quorum was met and would like to entertain a motion to approve the February 23, 2023 Cultural & Heritage (C&H) Commission meeting minutes. A motion to approve the February 23, 2023 meeting minutes with the one correction mentioned was made by Ms. Lods, seconded by Ms. Cerda-Moreno, and passed unanimously by the Commission.

Special Request: The Vineland Historical & Antiquarian Society

Mr. Williams introduced Patricia “Patt” Martinelli from The Vineland Historical & Antiquarian Society (VHAS,) who was calling in via phone. Ms. Martinelli explained the VHAS was looking to do school tours at their museum through the 2023-24 school year. It would be two classes at one time and split the group in half; while one group worked on a craft project, the other group would be taken on a tour and then, vice versa. Ms. Martinelli added “The First House” would be

included within the tour(s), as well, which would be freshened up by a group of Eagle Scouts over the summer.

Ms. Lods asked how the money would be used, if approved, and Ms. Martinelli said they would be paying someone to serve as a volunteer coordinator with the bulk of the money being used to create a “teachers’ kit” with resources, activities, games, small gifts, etc. for the class(es) to do after the tour. It would be held for fourth grade classes. Commissioner Lods asked if this would be made available to all fourth grade classes or just a select few. Ms. Martinelli said it would be made available to the entire school system, as well as fourth-grade level home school and private school students, County-wide. Ms. Cerda-Moreno asked how many children The VHAS was expecting and Ms. Martinelli said around 1,000. Ms. Lods asked why they did not apply for the Re-grant program and Ms. Martinelli said she had been overrun in recent months with collections management and large donations. Mr. Williams added he was already helping Ms. Martinelli prepare for the upcoming Re-grant round in 2024. Ms. Merighi asked how many kids went through the program the previous year and Ms. Martinelli explained they had made up and dispersed bags to all of the fourth-grade classrooms within the school district of Vineland.

Following a brief period of discussion amongst Mr. Williams, Commissioner Lods, and the Commission, it was decided the Commission would like to support The VHAS’s continued efforts. A motion to approve The Vineland Historical & Antiquarian Society’s request of a \$2,0000.00 grant was made by Mr. Cagno, seconded by Ms. Lods, and passed unanimously by the Commission. Mr. Williams thanked the Commission and said he would reach out to Ms. Martinelli directly after the meeting’s completion to share the great news with strong emphasis to apply for the Re-grant program to be hosted throughout 2024.

Mural Request: Bridgeton Gateway

Mr. Williams stated next up was a mural request from Esaul Martin from the Southeast Gateway (SEG) Neighborhood Revitalization (also known as Bridgeton Gateway.) Mr. Martin & SEG had selected to work with artist Lisa David-Hart; information on the artist and her background was included within the meeting packet and grant letter of interest for mural. Mr. Williams said the mural design would be based around the Justice Outside/Delaware River Watershed project, as well as working alongside the American Littoral Society. Their request amount was \$5,000.00, which was not the complete mural project amount. Mr. Williams added most of the amount requested would likely be going toward artist fees.

Following a period of discussion, the Commission raised questions about the artists’ ability to do a mural. Mr. Cagno & Ms. Lods both suggested creating and putting into effect a County-wide Public Art Plan to help avoid and alleviate such issues. The Commission requested additional details on materials, implementation, design sketches, experience, location, etc. Mr. Williams said he would reach out to Mr. Martin for additional details on the project. Ms. Lods made a motion to table the Bridgeton Gateway mural request discussion until April 2023, which was seconded by Ms. Cerda-Moreno, and passed unanimously by the Commission.

2023 Teen Arts Festival (April 4, 2023)

Mr. Williams shared the Cumberland & Cape May Counties Teen Arts Festival would be coming

up soon enough on April 4, 2023 to be held at The Levoy Theatre and in and around Downtown Millville. Mr. Williams & Ms. Lods were both on the Teen Arts event preparation committee and they were looking to have about 800 students in attendance. Mr. Williams asked if any of the Cultural & Heritage Commission members were available to volunteer on the day of the event. Ms. Merighi volunteered to help out for part of the day's events. Mr. Williams added the Teen Arts' Showcase Ceremony would be held at The Levoy on Wednesday, April 19, 2023 from 7-8:00pm highlighting student artists moving on to the State-wide competition.

The Sound of Cumberland County Music Compilation (2023)

Mr. Williams explained staff were starting The Sound of Cumberland County Music Compilation submission deadline for 2023 even earlier this year than last. He said this would allow for additional time to have items produced for the Department's give-away/events season. Mr. Williams stated staff would only accept original compositions and would include 15-18 of the strongest submissions from artists who had not previously submitted and/or been included on the 2022 music compilation. Mr. Williams added cover tracks were still a bit of a grey area even with the various music licenses and consulting with legal counsel. He urged the Commission members to forward the flyer to any artists they may personally know. It was currently posted on the website and being boosted on Facebook until May 31, 2023. Mr. Williams said he hoped to have CD's produced and in-hand by the end of June.

C&H Commissioner Reports

Mr. Cagno said ART C was doing their CUT Film Festival for which he would send a link to a promotional video out to his fellow Commission members. Mr. Cagno said the film festival would be held in September and the summer issue he pens for New Jersey Lifestyle magazine would be solely dedicated to sharing details about CUT. He said the Millville Public Library's Author Series was currently underway and being received exceedingly well. He added construction on the Library was coming along very nicely.

Ms. Barnett stated she did not have any reports from any of the organizations she personally oversaw. However, wanted to share information about an event at the Cumberland County Library, the second, which she was facilitating for them: an activity for National Poetry Month showcasing the works of Gwendolyn Brooks. It would be a three-day event with participating families having their final works filmed and shared online, along with a red-carpet event. Ms. Barnett praised Youth Services coordinator Terri Carpenter for infusing diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI) into to all of her recent programming there at the Library.

Ms. Lods said she did not have any liaison report(s), but asked if the Bay Atlantic Symphony was still a part of the Commission's group. She shared they would be holding a 40th anniversary concert on May 5, 2023 at Stockton University in Atlantic County where they were currently headquartered while originally starting in Bridgeton, Cumberland County. Ms. Lods said they would be playing Beethoven's 9th Symphony with a chorus of up to 100 performers and it was poised to be a truly spectacular event. She invited all her fellow Commission members to attend the event.

County Commissioner Liaison Reports

Commissioner Lods said the County Commissioners were currently working on their budget and shared she had a meeting scheduled with the County's Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Treasurer, Jeff Ridgway. She promised to share additional details about the budget next month.

Planning Department Update

Mr. Williams explained in Mr. Pisarski's absence, the Department's major update was preparing for their move into the 4-H Extension Center building. Mr. Williams said the tentative move would be during the week of April 24, 2023 and the Cultural & Heritage Commission meeting that week on the 27th would still be held at the County Administration Building. Mr. Williams added all the Departmental meetings would still take place at the Administration Building until May to give staff time to settle in and best prepare the technical components.

Adjourn

Finally, Mr. Williams asked for a motion to adjourn the March 23, 2023 Cultural & Heritage Commission meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Merighi, seconded by Ms. Lods, and passed unanimously by the Commission. Mr. Williams thanked everyone for their continued attendance, wished them a great month, and said he would see them all in April at the Administration Building.