

# CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE COMMISSION MINUTES

August 19, 2008

4:00 pm

Joint Salem-Cumberland Meeting

Parvin State Park, 701 Almond Road, Pittsgrove, NJ 08318

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission was held on Tuesday, August 19, 2008 at 4:00 PM., in the conference room at Parvin State Park, Pittsgrove, New Jersey.

**Present:**  
Cumberland

Jean Jones  
Penny Watson  
Suzanne Merighi  
Marianne Lods

Roy Kaneshiki  
Patricia Gale  
John Garrison  
Flavia Alaya

Matthew Pisarski, Principal Planner  
Kim McCann, Recording Secretary  
Freeholder Jane Christy

**Present:**  
Salem

Ron Magill  
Christina Pierangeli  
B. Harold Smick, Jr.  
Robin Weinstein

Tom Mason  
Donald Pierce  
Jim Waddington

Dr. Jim Turk, Arts Director  
Irene Wanner, Recording Secretary  
Freeholder Beth Timberman

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Tom Mason read the Open Public Meetings Act. Mr. Pisarski introduced himself followed by the Cumberland Commission members.

## **SHARED Services Feasibility Analysis – Nancy Moses**

Nancy Moses opened by thanking everyone for the opportunity to work on the shared services study. Ms. Moses noted the study was very interesting and she was able to get to know a little bit about Salem County, where she had never been before except to Appel Farm a couple of times.

Ms. Moses noted the study examines both the feasibility and advisability of combining some or all of the administrative components of the Cultural and Heritage Commissions of Salem County and Cumberland County. Ms. Moses learned after meeting with the manager who runs the shared services program that no Cultural and Heritage Commission had ever done a feasibility study to examine whether they could combine their services. Ms. Moses stated the idea of the study was originated by Robin Weinstein and Matthew Pisarski was the one who secured a grant from the state. The study was designed to answer three questions, what is shared services, what are the conditions under which Salem and Cumberland should share services if at all and if the decision is made to do shared services what is the next process.

Ms. Moses was surprised to find out that New Jersey has five hundred sixty six municipalities and over the years there have been many efforts to reduce the number of individual municipal services at each municipality or government entity. Ms. Moses stated it is the Freeholders who decide on shared service arrangements and often the political leadership decides not to move forward because they are concerned for a loss of jobs or a loss of identity. Ms. Moses mentioned she met with both Commissions to see what their expectations were. Ms. Moses stated the answers she received from both Commissions were very similar. Both Commissions had the same expectations for the study and felt their commissions were doing fine. The Commissions stated they would look forward to consider doing a shared service agreement if their arts and culture organizations and citizens received the same level of service. The Commissions also wanted their identity to be sustained. Salem County was very respectful of Cumberland County's progress and was eager to do shared services if their county's cultural organizations could learn from Cumberland's success in cultural development. Cumberland County was happy to do the study if it could provide some guidance and support for Salem County's cultural community. Ms. Moses looked at the similarities and differences in the county's and in the cultural and heritage arena. The county's are very similar in many ways, with both having rural characters and a relatively low density population. The structures of the Commissions are very similar. There are in New Jersey many different ways to have Cultural and Heritage Commissions. Some counties have their Commissions not for profit organizations while some are county government or other types of entities. Ms. Moses pointed out that both Salem and Cumberland County's are part of county government with the same number of Commission members and also the same number of staff.

Ms. Moses noted there is a slight difference in the stance of both the Commissions. In Cumberland County the focus is on the private sector, arts and cultural development. In Salem County they believe in cultural development but also believe the public sector can and should take the lead. Ms. Moses reviewed the pros and cons of shared services. The pros of working together are the Freeholders would have the opportunity to support a model initiative in-line with the Governor's priorities. There would be cost savings in some areas such as

out of pocket costs and staff time. The other would be some efficiency from cross-county collaboration in the heritage tourism area. The share program would cover the costs of combining the Commissions up to \$200,000.00. The cons of shared services would be the Commissions would lose their distinctive identities. The regrantees might feel uncomfortable or threatened in a new administrative model. Issues of parity such as staff time, meeting locations and time and funding allocations would emerge. Current staff expenditures and jobs may be eliminated or reduced. Penny Watson asked if this was a Cumberland-Salem Commission and re-grant funds were given to one Commission, she sees a danger that the state might start to give less money because the state would see it as one entity. Ms. Moses noted that she spoke to both the State Council for the Arts and the State Historical Commission and they both expressed interest and were intrigued with this concept. The State makes their decision on how good the county's are at delivering arts and cultural services. Flavia Alaya stated she was concerned with the analysis in the report. The report shows Cumberland County's ratio of cost of services to grants was much better compared to that of Salem County. She asked to what extent is the collaboration going to increase the delivery of services. Ms. Moses replied with respect to the expense budgets, Cumberland devoted twenty eight percent of its 2008 budget to salary and benefits, and forty percent to re-grants. Salem devoted forty eight percent to salary and benefits and twenty eight percent to re-grants. Ms. Moses believes this is a concern for the Commissions.

Jim Waddington felt the Commissions would be making a serious mistake if they looked at the shared services agreement in terms of a way to improve the amount of money they receive from the Arts Council as this has changed so much over the past six years that no one can anticipate the amounts given. He believes that everyone should look at the report prepared by Ms. Moses in terms of whether or not it will allow the Commissions as two county's combined to provide better services for our population.

Ms. Moses responded by stating her recommendations are not to have the two Commissions eliminated at this time. Ms. Moses believes the two Commissions can look at sharing some various specific activities that would help everybody and keep the Commissions the way they are. Ms. Moses noted the objective should be to get more people to events in both counties.

### **Closed Session to Discuss Shared Services (Staff Not Present)**

Nancy Moses recommended closing the regular meeting and opening closed session.

*See Closed Session Minutes*

The joint meeting continued with staff present.

Mr. Mason asked that the Salem – Cumberland portion of the meeting finish as the Salem members had another meeting to attend. Ms. Moses mentioned she had set out to look at a way to consolidate two Commissions but has learned there is no reason to consolidate. There is an opportunity for the two Commissions to collaborate functionally and stated how pleased she is that both Commissions agreed to establish an agenda to explore collaboration and thanked everyone.

The joint meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

***The Joint Session was concluded and the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission meeting continued***

Suzanne Merighi opened the meeting by stating that both Commissions decided they were not going to follow either model one or two but are going with other shared services opportunities. Mr. Pisarski mentioned he recently met with his counterpart in Gloucester County and is considering doing a joint workshop in November that would be an afternoon event. The workshop would be similar to the long range planning recommendations from the re-grantees that we take the different workshops and combine them into a single event and would collaborate with Gloucester but would certainly consider bringing in Salem. Mr. Pisarski noted when he met with Diane Macris of Gloucester they discussed the cost sharing because there would be costs incurred to bring in consultants for the afternoon. Mr. Pisarski stated he would not mind meeting with Jim Turk once a month for the time being. He indicated that during the short time of the closed session he and Dr. Turk had discussed several collaborative initiatives.

Ms. Moses expressed how wonderful it has been working with Cumberland County and how she is impressed with Cumberland's ability to be proactive. She lauded the Commission's creativity in encouraging both growth and efficiency. Ms. Moses believes if Salem was to catch this they would benefit from it. Suzanne Merighi felt Salem has solved their problem with finding a director they believe in. Ms. Moses noted the conversations should be about expanding resources not about who gets what. There are two ways to think about resources, one is like a pie, you get your slice, we get ours and the other is a bank, you put your resources in and they put their resources in and the bank account grows for everyone. Jane Christy felt that Cumberland has been very fortunate to have worked with Nancy Moses on two other projects and has benefited and grown quite well from her expertise. Mr. Pisarski was surprised to hear the conversation and concerns with Salem regarding re-grantee's from one side of the county not attending events on the other side of the county. Flavia Alaya believes one of the differences between the counties is that Cumberland has a kind of constellation of major population centers: Millville, Bridgeton, and Vineland all form a rather large portion of the county and contribute and partner

with the county in arts programming. Salem does not have this to the same degree. John Garrison noted the two counties are two separate standard metropolitan statistical areas and that gives Cumberland somewhat of an advantage, because Cumberland is their own SMSA, with Salem being hooked in with Philadelphia and Wilmington.

Patricia Gale asked Nancy Moses if the Commission decided to do the shared services would there be share money available. Ms. Moses responded yes there would be share money available for various specific things. An example would be if Cumberland decides to take a look at a single re-grant program that would cover both counties and it was to be done on line, they would give the money to set it up on line. The Commission members asked Mr. Pisarski the amount of time he spends on Cultural and Heritage Commission work. Mr. Pisarski replied it is about sixty-fourty, with sixty percent being spent on Commission work and forty percent on his other responsibilities for planning.

### **Other Old/New Business**

Ms. Gale thanked the Commission for the beautiful flowers she received.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

The next regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission will be held on Tuesday, September 16, 2008 in the Freeholder Conference Room in Bridgeton, New Jersey.