

CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE COMMISSION MINUTES

March 18, 2008
3:30 pm

Freeholder meeting room in Bridgeton, NJ 08302

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2008 at 3:30 PM., in the Freeholder meeting room in Bridgeton, New Jersey.

Present: Jean Jones
Marianne Lods
Patricia Gale
John Garrison

Suzanne Merighi
Flavia Alaya
Roy Kaneshiki

Matthew Pisarski, Principal Planner
Kim McCann, Recording Secretary
Jill Swartz, Project Specialist
Freeholder Jane Christy

Special Guests: Nancy Moses
Rachel Dukeman

Approval of Minutes – February 19, 2008

A motion to approve the minutes with corrections from February 19, 2008 was made by Roy Kaneshiki. The motion was seconded by Flavia Alaya and passed unanimously. Patricia Gale abstained from voting on the minutes.

Mr. Pisarski took a moment to introduce John Garrison to the Cultural and Heritage Commission. The Commission members introduced themselves and welcomed Mr. Garrison. Mr. Garrison thanked everyone for the warm welcome.

Commission Manuals

Mr. Pisarski provided each Commission member with a Cultural and Heritage Commission manual. The manual includes the following information: Cultural and Heritage Commission Members, County Cultural Plan, Long-Range Plan, By-Laws, ADA Plan, Re-Grants and the Budget.

Mr. Pisarski stated if the members had a document that they would like to be included in the manuals to please send him an e-mail with the request. Mr. Pisarski mentioned that the meeting minutes will now be three hole punched so they can be put into the manual if the members choose to do so.

Yokohama International School – 3/24/08 & 3/25/08

Mr. Pisarski noted he has e-mailed flyers and has tickets for anyone interested in attending the concert. The students of the Yokohama International School will go to the Bayshore Discovery Project in the morning on March 24, 2008 and then have lunch on the docks. In the afternoon, the students will go to the Clay College and RRCA with dinner at the Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts. Mr. Pisarski mentioned everyone is welcome to participate in the whole day or for lunch. On Tuesday March 25, 2008, the students will be going to the Seabrook Education and Cultural Center then on to the Buddhist Temple for lunch as being provided by the women of the Temple. In the afternoon, the students will go to the college for rehearsal. The Seabrook Education and Cultural Center will host a reception in the foyer at 6:00 p.m. followed by the concert at 7:00 p.m.

Encore Award Nomination

Mr. Pisarski mentioned this year's Encore Award would be awarded to Freeholder Christy. Freeholder Christy thanked all of the Commission members.

Envision Magazine Advertisement

Mr. Pisarski provided handouts of the second version for the Envision Magazine Advertisement. Mr. Pisarski asked the Commission for any last minute recommendations before finalizing and sending it to Mike Cagno. Mr. Pisarski mentioned Envision Magazine is the new South Jersey Arts Magazine that is replacing Arts Beat. The inaugural issue will be out this summer and is being led by Mike Cagno of the Noyes Museum.

The Commission felt the positioning of the center text needs to be moved and the possibility of changing the font. Other suggestions made were to change the wording to Promoting our Culture and History. Mr. Pisarski stated he would have Ken Browne make the changes mentioned and would e-mail it to everyone before sending it to Mike Cagno.

SHARE Grant/Feasibility Study – Nancy Moses

Mr. Pisarski introduced Nancy Moses, who has been retained to handle the Share Grant/Feasibility Study with Salem County.

Ms. Moses stated how interesting she found this project, because of its innovative approach of sharing arts and heritage services. Ms. Moses also expressed the timeliness of this project given the Governor's interest in shared services.

Ms. Moses mentioned this is not the first time she has studied government cultural programs. She noted that she has worked with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and with the National Endowment for the Humanities. Ms. Moses made it clear that she has two clients in this project - Cumberland and Salem Counties – both of whom have to be shown positive attributes to sharing services.

Ms. Moses noted that with the help of Mr. Pisarski's input, she has come up with a list of questions for the Commission and will have a similar discussion with Salem's Commission.

- **Why is the Commission interested in doing the feasibility study?**

Freeholder Christy began the response by stating that the study was started by Mr. Pisarski's concerns regarding the administration of Salem's Commission. Mr. Pisarski stated that Salem County Cultural & Heritage Commission has two consecutive administrators that failed on different levels at the time. Ms. Moses asked the Commission what they felt they might gain from the study. Mr. Kaneshiki replied that he expected more financial support from the State. Freeholder Christy noted that special funds are available for administration of shared services, which the Commission could take advantage. Mr. Pisarski explained that the Commission had received \$20,000.00 for the feasibility study and that programming funding was available for any resulting shared services in the amount of \$100,000.00.

- **Do you think there might be disadvantages of having the administration stretched between two counties?**

Ms. Lods replied that there could be a great deal of extra work put upon the staff. Ms. Gale felt that Salem and Cumberland share similar programming and demographics, and that Salem could benefit from Cumberland's extensive experience. Ms. Merighi's concern was that current staff would be spread too thin without the commitment of additional staff. The other concern would be how to handle the competitive nature between the two counties involving staffing, grant funds and re-grant prioritization. Ms. Moses then offered that a potential deal breaker for the Commission might be if this opportunity did not provide at least the same level of staff support and grant dollars that the Commission currently

receives. The Commission responded affirmatively.

- **Are there any political issues that deserve special attention?**

Ms. Merighi stated the Commission would need to see how the two Freeholder Boards would interact, as decisions would have to be shared. Ms. Moses asked Mr. Pisarski if the governing relationship between the Freeholder Board and the Commission varies by county. Mr. Pisarski replied that although Cumberland and Salem Counties operated in very similar ways, some counties within the State have private non-profit Commissions and some counties do not have the Commission's governance handled by the Freeholder Board.

- **Are there any financial issues?**

- Ms. Moses mentioned how much money the Commission has available annually for programming. She indicated that the budgets between the Cumberland and Salem Commissions are distinctly different, with Salem's agenda on a much smaller scale than Cumberland's ambitious mission. She indicated that some method of portioning available budget funds would have to be considered.

- **Are there any administrative functions that Cumberland's Commission would not want to relinquish?**

- Mr. Pisarski mentioned the need to maintain autonomy in re-grant allocations. There would need to be some type of formula for re-granting if the two counties were to receive a single lump sum amount for this purpose from the State Council on the Arts.

- **What evidence would you use in determining whether it makes sense to combine the administrations of both Commissions?**

Ms. Jones indicated the level of incentive and commitment from the Salem Commission would be an indicator. Ms. Jones asked how monthly meetings would be conducted. Ms. Moses asked the Commission members if they would care how Salem's members were nominated or appointed, stating that the Commission members in Cumberland have been selected using the highest standards and that the members around the table today were exemplary. Ms. Merighi responded that she would like to know that members are qualified and not just political appointments. Ms. Alaya asked if Salem's Commission had an opportunity to address their concerns with the study. Mr. Pisarski responded that Mr. Weinstein, the Deputy Administrator for Salem County, went to the Salem Commission when Cumberland applied for the grant several months ago and indicated Cumberland was moving forward with the study. Dr. Turk, the new Coordinator for the Salem Commission, mentioned to Mr. Pisarski that since that

time, the Salem Commission has not given it a second thought and the study has not been mentioned in any of Salem's meetings. Mr. Pisarski mentioned that Ms. Moses will have a similar meeting with Salem's Commission and it will be known after that meeting exactly where Salem's Commission stands. Mr. Garrison mentioned that Cumberland seems much further along than Salem in its consideration of this issue, and felt that perhaps smaller steps of integration would be better than a more dramatic move. Ms. Gale mentioned that she would like to know what level of commitment of the Salem Commission members hold and how long they have served. Ms. Merighi asked if the Commission proceeds, how would the proposed shared services affect the stakeholders, specifically the Commission, re-grantees and State Council on the Arts. The other question Ms. Merighi asked was whether or not the shared services will strengthen or weaken the Commission. Ms. Moses asked what criteria would be used to identify a weakening of the Commission. Ms. Merighi replied that the reduction of resources, either staff or funds, would be a sign of weakness.

Other Old/New Business

Mr. Pisarski noted he has included correspondence in everyone's packet, which is self-explanatory.

Adjournment

There being no further business a motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Patricia Gale. The motion was seconded by Jean Jones and passed unanimously.

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