

# CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE COMMISSION MINUTES

May 19, 2009  
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, May 19, 2009 at 3:30 PM., in the Freeholder Meeting room in Bridgeton, New Jersey.

**Present:** Roy Kaneshiki  
Patricia Gale  
Suzanne Merighi  
John Garrison

Jean Jones  
Flavia Alaya  
Marianne Lods  
Ella Boykin

Matthew Pisarski, Principal Planner  
Kim McCann, Recording Secretary

Special Guests: Mike Cagno  
Carol Nagao

## **Approval of Minutes – April 21, 2009**

A motion to approve the minutes from April 21, 2009, with corrections was made by Roy Kaneshiki. The motion was seconded by Suzanne Merighi and passed unanimously.

## **Welcome Ella M. Boykin**

Marianne Lods introduced and welcomed Ella Boykin to the Commission. Ms. Boykin thanked everyone for her welcome. Everyone introduced themselves.

## **Encore Awards - Recap**

Mr. Pisarski said that several Commission members had attended the previous night's Encore Awards at Bally's in Atlantic City. The Commission honored the Millville Army Air Field Museum and there were five members of the Museum Board who attended. Mr. Pisarski noted there were a total of thirteen in the Commission's party, which represented the largest group to attend this year.

Mr. Pisarski provided a copy of an e-mail received today from Lisa Jester thanking the Commission again for the honor. Ms. Jester indicated in the e-mail that this is particularly timely because they can now add Encore Award Recipient to their list of achievements on a variety of current grant applications. Ms. Lods added she was seated at a table with the Salem County Cultural and Heritage Commission and it was nice to rekindle conversation with folks she met about a year ago. Ms. Lods also mentioned that Larry Merighi was honored by WheatonArts at the Awards.

### **Teen Arts Festival – Recap and Planning with Mike Cagno, Carol Nagao**

Mr. Pisarski welcomed Carol Nagao and Mike Cagno to the meeting to discuss the experience of this year's Teen Arts Festival. He provided in everyone's packet a breakdown of the 2009 Teen Arts Festival budget and noted that we were over budget again this year. He said Diane Macris from Gloucester County was to attend today's meeting but could not attend; however, as discussed at last month's meeting, Gloucester County does not have a Teen Arts Festival and there has been some discussion of inviting some schools from Gloucester County to participate in our event.

Mr. Pisarski expressed the view that there needs to be discussion on how to increase impact and decrease expense for this event. Mike Cagno noted that the attendance was much lower than in years past and part of that is due to testing schedules in the schools. On the other hand, the quality of the students' work this year was among the best, and what he has heard from all of the teachers contracted with the event is that the students were particularly well behaved, respectful, and engaged, and that they very much enjoyed themselves. Mr. Cagno echoed Mr. Pisarski's earlier concern about how to engage in more participation and at the same time control expenses: he thought one of the options that could be put on the table is perhaps re-thinking where the event is held. In the past it has been at Cumberland County College, and moved to the Arts District to engage in the local scene there, something that has worked out well the past couple of years. Mr. Cagno noted we have been very fortunate over the years with the weather and it was a pretty close call this past year. He thought you really cannot move the date up because you are taking a chance with the weather, so perhaps the discussion could be to bring the event back to the College. Preliminary discussion with teachers after the event this year suggested there was not any type of resistance to this change. The one thing the teachers emphasized is that they would really like to see more kids participate. Carol Nagao said the teachers were very excited and positive about the whole experience and part of it was because the thought the separation between the middle school and high school kids made a huge difference. One of the suggestions made by the teachers for next year's event, if there are middle school students involved, is to possibly offer separate classes aimed at high school and middle school kids because the involvement and ability levels are so

significantly different. Ms. Nagao also feels the teachers would be happy to see the event moved to the College and contained within classrooms and not at the mercy of Mother Nature. A lot of the teachers said they loved being in the Arts District but having it at the College would make it a lot simpler. Mr. Cagno noted he attended the Atlantic County Teen Arts Festival held two weeks ago at Stockton College and they had over seventeen-hundred students participate; however, it was a very open format with students all over the place and teachers had no idea even if the students were still on the campus. He also said he had just found out today that the State Teen Arts will be back again next year through Monmouth County. Ms. Nagao said she had discussed the open format idea with the teachers and they did not like it. They like knowing where the students are; with more students and no structure some of the students tend to get lost in the shuffle with nothing to do.

Ms. Lods passed on a comment from Kim Chapman of the Vineland Regional Dance Company, that she felt this year's event had been one of the best ever. She said she has noticed over the several years of doing the event that perhaps there has been a change of attitude in the young people or toward the arts in general and their acceptance, but there has always been some resistance of the youth participating in dance, especially the boys, and this is no longer the case. Ms. Lods noted that if the tent expense were eliminated from the event, more money might be spent on teachers, especially if there were also an increase in student participation. Ms. Lods also said there will be a new president at the College and we do not know what type of policy will be set. Thinking even further in the future, Ms. Lods said when the Levoy Theatre is completed that will create another indoor venue in the Arts District and between that, the Clay College, and the Arts Center, there may be a possibility of having a downtown campus rather than using tents. Ms. Nagao responded: As long as there were other places for the workshops to take place, that might work.

Mr. Pisarski stated that if the Commission wanted to at least consider movement to the College then he would reach out to the College and start negotiating what would be possible. He noted when the College restricted the Commission to spring break the last time it was before the Luciano Center was built, but with the Luciano Center now in place he feels the Commission can at least ask the College to assign a Friday during the school year in April. Mr. Pisarski said if the County is conducting the event, there would not be a fee unless the Commission charged for the event. Ms. Lods said if Gloucester County wants to participate, instead of charging them a fee, perhaps we could arrange for them to pay for some of the teachers out of their account.

Mr. Pisarski reviewed what he would need to check on for the Teen Arts to be held at the College.

- Check scheduling compared to testing
- Keep pre-registration
- Negotiate with Gloucester County to see what their interest is

- Approach College to see what arrangements they would provide
- Classroom availability
- Specifying classes, breaking into one hundred, two hundred level to distinguish between grade school and upper high school

Ms. Lods asked Mr. Pisarski about the reception if the event were moved to the College. She noted the Arts Center is going to set their 2010 exhibition schedule. Mr. Cagno said the artwork is displayed in the atrium and that does not affect the schedule.

### **Liaison Reports**

Mr. Pisarski asked the Commission if anyone had any reports for their liaison duties. Mr. Garrison noted he visited Vineland Boys & Girls Club and saw eleven kids learning jazz and hip hop, he watched two movies presented by the Jewish Federation and went to Historic Founders Day in Vineland. The Commission is supporting dance one day a week for the Boys and Girls Club and he even met Ella Boykin there. The Executive Director took Mr. Garrison around and he saw the kids getting dance lessons and the African American Historical Museum which Ella has been promoting. Ms. Boykin noted she is with the Vision of Hope which is one of the partners of the museum. Mr. Garrison said that on Saturday, May 17, 2009, he attended Historic Vineland for Founders Day that was held at the Vineland State School grounds. The Commission funding went to support the Frank Marone combo. Mr. Garrison noted the Jewish Federation has a film festival at the College and has shown two movies so far. The third film will be held on May 27, 2009. Mr. Garrison stated the films are very good, the promotion is excellent; he only wishes there were more people in attendance. There were about fifty people at each of the performances he attended.

Ms. Gale attended the Upper Deerfield Day on Saturday April 25, 2009. She said she thinks it was the first nice Saturday since several rainy ones. There were a lot of people in attendance and they had the Commission's banner on display.

Mr. Kaneshiki stated his only report was he attended the Encore Awards where the Millville Army Air Field Museum was honored.

Ms. Alaya noted she stops in on Gallery 50 quite often and they currently have a wonderful Quilt Exhibit on display.

Ms. Merighi noted she stops in to Clay College from time to time.

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

Mr. Pisarski provided a copy of a letter from the Wharton School in everyone's packet explaining where they are in the program discussed at the last meeting. He and Meghan Wren will be going to the University the first week of June to meet the students and move forward on the project. They will be meeting with Nancy Moses next week to see exactly what the students will be working on. Ms. Merighi asked Mr. Pisarski what specifically the students would be doing at the Bayshore Discovery Project. Mr. Pisarski replied they are discussing what the shipping sheds will actually do for the community once they are up and running. There has been a lot of analysis on how to get the shipping sheds restored and up and running but does not know how much analysis there has been as to what they will actually accomplish once they are up and running. Ms. Gale asked Mr. Pisarski what have been the results of the funding discussion. Mr. Pisarski replied he spoke to Ms. Wren to let her know the Commission was providing \$1500.00 and proposed that she reach out to her Board to see if they could raise \$1,000.00 with the understanding the Commission is underwriting the whole project if they are unable to come up with the balance. Ms. Wren said she would speak to her Board but did not feel it would be a problem.

Mr. Pisarski noted he had e-mailed everyone the results of the newsletter survey and has provided today in everyone's packet the printed format. The data is pretty clear: only seven of the respondents said they wanted the newsletters mailed to them. Mr. Pisarski said he would be spending the next several months tweaking the e-mail list and adding to it. The first newsletter was sent out this week. Ms. Lods asked if there was a place on the e-mail to subscribe or unsubscribe. Mr. Pisarski replied no because such a service is usually related to a list serve. He said he would be working with Loaded Media and maybe by next month's meeting will have an estimate of the cost to have a e-mail address button on the website.

Mr. Pisarski provided an invitation in everyone's packet for the pre- Bay Days reception, to be held on June 12, 2009.

Ms. Merighi asked if there are any updates on the Bayshore Heritage Trail. Ms. Alaya replied it has been accepted by the State and now the plan has to be completed.

Ms. Jones asked about the date for the East Point Artists Day. Mr. Pisarski replied they are looking at September 26, 2009.

Ms. Alaya reported that Watson & Henry is working with the Bridgeton Library on a Historic Sites Management grant application for the historic section of the library building. She indicated that she has just completed a similar grant application for the Cumberland Nail Works Museum building and thanked Mr. Pisarski for writing a letter of support for her application.

John Garrison thanked Ms. Alaya in turn for writing a letter of support for the

library's application.

### **Correspondence**

Mr. Pisarski provided a copy of a letter from Misono Miller from Office on Aging thanking the Commission for the sponsorship of one hundred tickets for senior citizens at the Bay-Atlantic Symphony performance May 2, 2009.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business a motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Flavia Alaya. The motion was seconded by Patricia Gale and unanimously carried.

The next regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission will be held on Tuesday, June 16, 2009, in the Freeholder Meeting Room in Bridgeton, New Jersey.