

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION
MINUTES**

April 13, 1999

3:30 P.M.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Present:

Mel Brody	Patricia Gale
Susan Gogan	Suzanne Merighi
Jean Jones	Joseph Polhamus
Penny Watson	Sunkie Oye

Freeholder Chuck Griffiths
Kim Wood, Director
Nancy Cannone, Secretary

The meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission was called to order on Tuesday, April 13, 1999 at 3:30 p.m., in the Freeholders Meeting Room, of the County Administration Building, by Chairperson Penny Watson.

The Chairperson called for approval of the February 9, 1999 No formal meeting was held in March 1999 as the Commission attended the "Encore Awards" dinner in Atlantic City. A motion to approve these Minutes was made by Joe Polhamus, seconded by Patricia Gale, and passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

TEEN ARTS: Director Wood reported that the Teen Arts program was a huge success. 450 students attended. Some of the people participating this year were: A sketch artist from ABC; a professional painter; a music professor and an opera professor from Rowan University. All of these people enjoyed the day very much and would like to come back in the future.

EARTH DAY CONCERT: The Director reminded Commission members that this concert will be held on Saturday, April 24th - which is less than two weeks away. Mrs. Wood reported that \$15,000 is still needed and asked Commission members for their assistance in raising this money. She stated that the difficulty in raising money this year seems to be that there are too many events scheduled for this time of year. This will have to be considered when the Commission plans a concert for next year.

It was suggested that perhaps the Commission should form a Fund Raising Committee so that more members are involved in tapping into the resources.

Jean Jones suggested that perhaps we should hold the concert in the very early part of the year when there is not much going on. It would no longer be an Earth Day Concert, but that would be okay.

Director Wood commented that the Commission has to decide if this concert is something we want to continue. Its a very exciting project and is something that is really good marketing for the Commission, but we must really make a commitment so that we can find the appropriate funding and therefore provide the public with good first quality entertainment.

Mel Brody suggested that the Commission needed to set up some standing committees. We are growing rapidly, and these committees could work in a specific area on a constant basis. It would have to be decided if the Commission wanted to form a committee for each event, or specific ongoing Committees such as Finance, etc. and report back during monthly meetings.

Chairman Watson asked if it would be possible to use grant money for this concert, perhaps with matching funds. Mrs. Wood reported that she had written \$5,000. into our current grant and it is being used for the Earth Day Concert.

Freeholder Griffiths suggested that perhaps the Commission should hold a special meeting or workshop to discuss the direction the Commission is going to take, standing committees etc.. It would also be helpful if the Commission knew what the goals of the Tourism Advisory Council were and how the two groups could better work together. Freeholder Griffiths asked Kim to come up with an idea for two or three hours on a Saturday or Sunday where the Commission could sit down together and come up with some ideas.

YOUNG AUDIENCES OF N.J. SCHEDULE: This program is currently in the Vineland School System doing the workshops on "World Culture" with the sixth grade students. The Director will send copies of the programs out to Commission members so that they can visit and observe some of these programs. On May 18th, 19th or 20th, there will be a culminating event that the whole Commission will be invited to attend.

Suzanne Merighi commented that her son has been involved in several of these sessions and has enjoyed them very much.

"A NIGHT OF STARS": This event is scheduled for Saturday, April 17th, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$125. per couple. The event is almost sold out, so there will be a good amount for scholarship money available for County College students.

CUMBERLAND ARTS AND MUSIC FESTIVAL: This is the event to be held in July that the Commission is sponsoring in connection with the Center for Health & Fitness in the amount of \$10,000. This event the "Sunset Sprint Triathlon" and will have national TV

coverage on ESPN, with an expected audience of over 10,000 people. When the Commission agreed to be a co-sponsor, it was with the understanding that our local artists would be able to paint, show, and sell their work. The Director asked for help from Commission members in setting this up as she has no ideas on how to organize this. Bob Rose will show Mrs. Wood the space that is available for the artists at the Bridgeton High School Field. Mel Brody volunteered to assist on this project as did Chairman Watson. The Chairman will send a notice to all who are listed in the "Artist's Directory." Other events going on at this location during the event, will be New Orleans Jazz Music, and some Food stands including a micro-beer garden.

Mel Brody suggested that we make this an "Art Show" stating that some artists will set up easels and paint, and also sell their work. He stated that spaces usually are about 10' x 10." It was asked if there would be a fee to be in this show. It was suggested that the event be free to County artists, with a small charge to out of County artists. Mel Brody volunteered to go with Kim and Bob Rose to view the space available.

BARBARA BRUNO: Director Wood reported that she had not spoken with Barbara Bruno, but that she had spoken with Richard Geiger the County Solicitor, last week who gave her some advice on how to handle the conversation. Mrs. Wood stated that it was her understanding that Commission members wanted to get the book completed and that if Ms. Bruno is not willing to give us her illustrations at no extra cost, as we are not going to pay her any additional money, we will get the illustrations elsewhere.

Jean Jones commented that Kim Wood had mentioned the name of Nancy Ruth Jackson as a possible illustrator. Mrs. Jones has a children's book illustrated by Ms. Jackson (who helps with the Teen Arts Program each year) which she brought to the meeting so that Commission members could see examples of her work. Mrs. Wood will approach her after she talks to Mrs. Bruno.

NEW BUSINESS:

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH: The Director reported that May is "Older American's Month" and the Office on Aging is asking the Commission for an additional \$500 to make the Senior Art Show larger this year. The Commission currently funds this art show through Maude Goodnight who actually applies for the funding. This Commission usually does a Older American's event in May. Mrs. Wood suggested that the Commission could make a grant of \$500 to the Office On Aging to be used for their art show in place of hosting an event. Pat Gale made a motion, seconded by Susan Gogan, and passed unanimously, to give \$500 to the Office on Aging, in place of the Commission hosting an event.

AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE GUIDE: Freeholder Griffiths showed members copies of a guide entitled "African American Heritage Guide to New Jersey" put out by the NJ Commerce & Economic Growth Commission in collaboration with the New

Jersey Historical Commission. Unfortunately, they omitted Springtown and Othello which played a significant role with regard to the "Underground Railway. They did mention Gouldtown, but the interesting part about the book is that one of its key emphasis is the "Underground Railway." At Freeholder's Griffith's and Pearson's request, Mrs. Wood looked into it and discovered that the New Jersey Historical Commission and the Director of African American History misplaced information on Cumberland County. Freeholder Director Douglas Fisher is planning to write a very strongly worded letter to the Department of Commerce as this is a substantial error on their part, requesting that they make the proper corrections and reprint the Guide to include Springtown and Othello.

Jean Jones suggested that the Commission also send a letter of protest. A motion was made by Jean Jones, seconded by Joe Polhamus, and passed unanimously that the Cultural & Heritage Commission also send a letter of protest.

TRULLENDER HOUSE: Chairperson Watson reported that the little brick house in Stow Creek, near the Eagles nest, was placed on "Preservation New Jersey's" list of 10 most endangered sites in New Jersey for this year. It is currently privately owned and the State is trying to buy the land around it. The owner has maintained it for a generation and has finally given up and would like to sell it as vandals come in from the water and ruin it. The problem is, if the State does take possession, Fish Game & Wildlife doesn't care about old buildings so an effort would have to be made at that point to make sure the building was cared for by the right State agency. The other problem is that the owner's lawyer doesn't want him to sell it to the State, he wants to sell it to somebody or some organization to make a large sum of money from the sale, which Chairperson Watson says will not happen.

One of the interesting features of this house which is probably the oldest house in Cumberland County and has been studied by the University of Delaware, is that there is a frame house within its bricks.

SPRING NEWSLETTER: The Director pointed out copies of this newsletter to members so they could take copies if needed.

ANNUAL DINNER: Mrs. Wood reminded members that the annual dinner is coming up in June. She commented that the Commission has been participating in the "Encore Awards Dinner" each year in February. The Director asked the Commission if they wanted to continue the Encore Awards Dinner, and if "yes" do we still want to have the Annual Dinner in June or do we want to do away with it?

Mel Brody commented that they were two different events, The Encore Awards Dinner is important to attend so that everyone is aware of Cumberland Culture and Heritage Commission, and the Annual Dinner is a kind of thank you to Commission members for their time and effort.

Susan Gogan asked if the Annual Dinner had to be held so close to the Encore Awards Dinner.

Suzanne Merighi commented that one of the important parts of the Annual Dinner was to award someone from the County for their service, and that is essentially what is done at the Encore Awards Dinner.

Jean Jones, Sunkie Oye and Pat Gale commented that they are unable to attend the Encore Awards Dinner because of the date it is held.

A motion to forego the Annual Dinner for this year, and review our decision next year was made by Mel Brody, Seconded by Suzanne Merighi, and passed unanimously.

MILLENNIUM COUNTY: Freeholder Director Fisher and Freeholder Griffiths feel it would be a great idea if Cumberland County received a designation as a Millennium County. This project was spearheaded by Hillary Rodam Clinton. There are certain criteria that have to be met to receive this designation but it has a Tourism/Heritage connection. Director Wood stated that in order to do this, a Committee has to be formed to organize and enhance Millennium celebration events and programs. The planning process must include people and organizations that broadly represent the Community, plan programs and events with a national millennium theme, "honor the past imagine the future." Mrs. Wood asked the Commission for a motion to pursue the feasibility of this project and write for the handbook describing the program. A motion was made for the Director to pursue the feasibility of this project by Joe Polhamus, seconded by Jean Jones, and passed unanimously.

GRANT REVIEW PANEL: This Panel met on Monday April 5th and went through all of the twenty-five Grant Applications. Of the 25 applications, 4 were completely denied. The Grant Review Panel this year is taking a very hard look at the "American's with Disabilities Act" and its requirements. Some of the organizations that we currently fund are not fully accessible to the handicapped. Mrs. Wood stated that at the last State Arts Council that she attended the Grants Chairman stressed "Do not fund any organizations that are not holding events in fully accessible locations." Many of the organizations that have this problem are County organizations or schools where groups hold their events. The Panel has suggested that we give these organizations until March 20, 2000 to come into compliance, as we are on an 18 month grant cycle this year. What the Panel is saying is either bring your building into compliance or hold your events somewhere else.

Twenty-five organizations applied for funding totaling \$353,000, and there is not enough money for everyone.

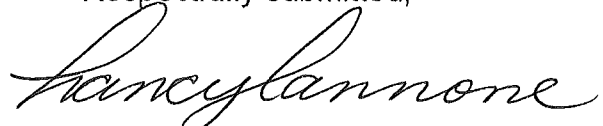
LEANNE MC GIFFEN: Leanne McGiffen a very talented opera singer from Cumberland County has given CCC&HC a lot of guidance for our Opera Festival. Because of all this assistance, we would like to help her in with her request for the

Commission's assistance in putting on a trio recital on June 5th. at the College. This program will include Leanne, baritone Ellem Eley, and accompanist Howard Evans. Mr. Brody stated that they are requesting \$2,500. This money will have to be raised. Mel Brody will work on this.

OPERA FESTIVAL: Mel Brody reported that the "Opera Festival" is scheduled for October 2nd, at Cumberland County College and will consist of international competition. An ad is being placed in the "Opera News" an international magazine with a circulation of 125,000. First place will receive \$3,000, second place \$2,000, and third place \$1,000. It will be open to everybody. Entrants will send in a professional tape. A Panel will review the tapes and select 10 finalists for the evening. These finalists will then compete that night by singing one selection. Three finalists will be selected from this group and will sing an additional selection, and then first, second, and third place winners will be selected. The Opera Committee is attempting to get very substantial Judges, hopefully from the Met etc.. One Judge, from the New Jersey Opera Society has already committed to the program. Mel Brody will secure the donations. A motion to go forward with this program was made by Joe Polhamus, seconded by Jean Jones, and passed unanimously.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Cannone
Secretary