

CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE COMMISSION MINUTES

April 17, 2007
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, April 17, 2007 at 3:30 PM., in the Freeholder meeting room in Bridgeton, New Jersey.

Present: Patricia Gale
Marianne Lods
Suzanne Merighi
Jean Jones
Penny Watson

Matthew Pisarski, Principal Planner
Kim McCann, Recording Secretary
Jill Swartz, Project Specialist
Freeholder Director Douglas Rainear
Special Guests: Bridgeton Public Library &
Accion Social Puertorriquena, Inc.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from March 13, 2007 was made by Marianne Lods. The motion was seconded by Patricia Gale and passed unanimously.

Penny Watson abstained from voting on the March 13, 2007 minutes due to the fact that she was not present at last month's meeting.

Special Requests - Bridgeton Public Library

Gail Robinson, as representative of the Bridgeton Free Public Library, presented a request for special funding. She thanked the Commission for their support in the past. Ms. Robinson mentioned this would be the third annual cabaret event for the Friends of Bridgeton Library. They want to do a "Jazz Cabaret" as there is not a lot of jazz presented in the county. Jazz also attracts all age groups and the cabaret style of the event is well received. The organization is requesting \$300.00 for the event.

Marianne Lods made a motion to approve the special request of \$300.00 to the Friends of Bridgeton Library to assist in paying for the musicians. Penny Watson

seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

1st Quarter Budget Report & Review

Mr. Pisarski provided a hand out of the first quarter budget report and mentioned that he would try to review the budget quarterly to give the Commission members a sense of how they are doing.

Mr. Pisarski explained that some of the itemized expenses were taken out of different line items than what was originally planned. Mr. Pisarski indicated that the line items would balance at the end of the year. For instance; under marketing services, there was \$225.00 set aside for a full-page Encore program ad, but this expense was actually taken out of a different category. Mr. Pisarski informed the Commission he spent \$180.00 from the budget for South Jersey Cultural Alliance that offers a program that allows access to the Foundation Center's database. The Commission agreed that access to this database would be useful.

Special Requests – Accion Social Puertorriquena, Inc.

Two representatives were special guests from the Accion Social Puertorriquena, Inc. They stated they are celebrating their 51st year and are trying to bring the organization back with cultural activities such as dances with Hispanic entertainers. The young people in the community are becoming more involved. For this year's event, they refer as "old school" in order for kids to get an idea of what the older generations listened to. A local dance school known as Dance Crush will also be performing.

The representatives noted that Accion Social Puertorriquena, Inc. also does fund raising for Three Kings and baskets for Thanksgiving. The organization is currently administered by a second generation of volunteers and they are trying to keep what their parents and grandparents started alive.

The Commission members asked the representatives what dollar amount they were looking to receive. Their reply was any amount the Commission could give would be greatly appreciated. Mr. Pisarski explained that typically special requests are only provided once and if an organization is looking for funding again that they would need to apply through the grants program. Accion Social Puertorriqueno received a \$1,000.00 special request last year.

Freeholder Director Doug Rainear asked the representatives if they had a number in mind. He stated if the Commission does agree to a special request it would be with the stipulation that Accion Social Puertorriquena, Inc. would need to go through the grant process next year instead of requesting a third special request. Mr. Pisarski let the representatives know that the Commission will

deliberate and he would send a letter to Margaret Custodio indicating the amount of their award. The representatives thanked the Commission for their consideration of their request.

Suzanne Merighi expressed how uncomfortable she is with the special requests and the Commission needs to let Gale Robinson know that next year the Friends of Bridgeton Library will have to go through the grant process. Suzanne felt the Commission needs to be consistent on what they are doing and everyone agreed. Suzanne suggested an award of \$300.00.

Penny Watson made a motion to approve the special request of \$300.00. to Accion Social Puertorriquena, Inc. Suzanne Merighi seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Draft Letter Re: Open Seat on Council on the Arts - Review

Mr. Pisarski presented to the Commission the draft letter for the open seat on the State Council on the Arts. Patricia Gale asked Mr. Pisarski if Tricia Dufford was considered. Mr. Pisarski replied that Ms. Dufford was not and the decision was made that the Commission wanted representatives from both parties as candidates. After some discussion by the Freeholder Liaisons, potential candidates were presented.

Marianne Lods asked Mr. Pisarski if the state has indicated when they would be making their decision. Mr. Pisarski stated they had not given a time line. Mr. Pisarski asked Freeholder Director Doug Rainear if any informal feelers have been sent out to anyone at the state level regarding the Commission's interest in filling the open seat. Director Rainear replied that nothing has been sent out but it most certainly could be done. The Commission asked if the date could be included in the letter to the state of when a Cumberland County resident was last on the State Council on the Arts. The Commission approved the language of the letter recommending Larry Merighi and Celeste Riley as candidates to the N.J. Council on the Arts.

Update on Teen Arts Festival – Jillian Swartz

Jillian Swartz updated the Commission on this year's Teen Arts Festival. The number of students that have registered is 137 and Ms. Swartz is still waiting to here from Millville Senior High which she expects will be any day now. Vineland will definitely not be participating. Vineland was one of the first schools to contact the Commission stating they would have over 200 students participate. There was no reason given as to why they changed their mind.

Ms. Swartz mentioned that the area where Teen Arts was scheduled to be held

along the riverfront had been flooded by the recent storm. After a phone conversation with Marianne Lods, it was decided to be moved to where the annual Farmers Market is held. Everyone agreed that location would better suite everyone involved. Ms. Swartz stated that in everyone's packet there is a press release that Mr. Pisarski provided and will be going out on April 18, 2007. The reception is also the same day, which will coincide with Third Friday.

Discussion on Focus Groups for Long-Range Plan

Mr. Pisarski discussed the upcoming Focus Groups that will take place on Wednesday May 2, 2007 and Thursday May 3, 2007 from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Executive Board Room at the Luciano Center. Mr. Pisarski has split the Regrantee's into two groups based on operating budgets. The executive director and chair of the governing board from each organization have been invited, which totals about 25 people per group. There will be a buffet style dinner served and anyone from the Commission is welcome to stop by.

Mr. Pisarski stated the discussion will be very informative and the purpose of the focus groups is to try and determine what the organizations want from the Commission and what their real needs are and try to get a sense of how they feel generally about the work the Commission does and the assistance that is provided. Nancy Moses will be facilitating both sessions.

Draft Attendee List for Morris County Familiarization Tour - Review

Mr. Pisarski provided a draft attendee list for the Morris County Familiarization Tour that is set for Wednesday May 30, 2007. The trip is to see Morris County's Historic Preservation County Grants Program, to see how it is administered and possibly visit a site that has received funding and has been restored to get a sense of what the money can do. The group will have lunch and it will be an all day event.

Mr. Pisarski mentioned that Gordon Dahl has offered to pay for the expenses up to \$750.00, which should be enough, and Dante Rieti is providing the bus. Mr. Rieti is with the Cumberland County Workforce.

Correspondence

Mr. Pisarski mentioned that in everyone's packet there is a hand out for the Delaware Bay Days Poster Contest. The deadline for entries is April 27, 2007.

Mr. Pisarski noted he has received the tickets for senior's month. The Office on Aging has the 100 tickets.

Mr. Pisarski had a question regarding what money could go into the

Commission's trust account. There is currently \$67.00 in the account. The trust account had been established several years ago at the time when Kim Wood was taking sponsorships for the fall concert. The idea was that money would be made from the event. Mr. Pisarski asked Marcella Shepard why the trust was established and what can the Commission do with the account. The trust is established to accept bequest, legacies and gifts. There are a variety of trust accounts that can be established within county government for specific purposes. The specific purpose of the Commission's trust account is empowered to utilize such bequests, legacies and gifts in the manner set forth in the conditions of the bequest, legacy or gift, provided, however, that such bequest, legacy or gift shall not be put to any use which is inconsistent with the laws of this State and of the United States.

The Commission can accept donations and place them into the trust account. This issue of private donations was discussed in the Cultural Plan. Suzanne Merighi asked if this fell under government or private bank account. Mr. Pisarski stated the account was held in the County's Treasury. Mr. Pisarski stated he did not get an answer as to if the Freeholders can take money from this account and use the funds for their own purposes. The only people who have ever taken money out or have put money in were coordinators of the Commission. It was suggested that Marcella Shepard attend the next Commission meeting to discuss the trust account in greater detail. Mr. Pisarski said he would arrange it.

Adjournment

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

The next regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission will be held on Tuesday, May 08, 2007 in the Freeholder Meeting Room in Bridgeton, New Jersey.