

CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION
MINUTES
August 11, 1998
3:30 P.M.
CUMBERLAND COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Present:

Jean Jones Joseph Polhamus
Sunkie Oye Penny Watson
Suzanne Merighi
Freeholder Chuck Griffiths

Kim Wood, Director
Nancy Cannone, Acting Secretary

The meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission was called to order on Tuesday, August 11, 1998, at 3:30 p.m., in the Freeholder Meeting Room, County Administration Building, by Chairperson Penny Watson.

The Chairperson called for approval of the Minutes of June 10, 1998 (Annual Dinner). A motion to accept the Minutes was made by Sunkie Oye, seconded by Joe Polhamus, and passed unanimously.

The Chairperson then called for approval of the Minutes of July 14th. A motion was made by Suzanne Merighi, seconded by Jean Jones and passed unanimously with the following corrections: correction of date, and correction of Freeholders name.

PRESENTATION:

BRIDGETON/BAY ATLANTIC SYMPHONY: Ann Gregory, the Executive Director of the Symphony gave a short presentation to the Commission. She noted that this Symphony, formerly the Bridgeton Symphony, has changed its name to more accurately reflect the region it serves - which goes from the Delaware Bay to the Atlantic Ocean. She stated her pride in that this 15-year old professional symphony has not only survived but grown artistically in the region it serves, where other similar groups have not made it. Ms. Gregory described some of the group's programs including those performed at Cumberland County College and Stockton State College, and noted that while they receive funding from the State Council on the Arts, they encourage and welcome donations.

OLD BUSINESS:

EAST POINT: Director Wood passed around pictures and reported on the August 1st Open House co-sponsored by this Commission and the Maurice River Historical Society. She stated that the event went very well and the CCC&HC's new art tent was used for the first time. There were 14 area artists painting and assisting children in painting pictures of the light house, the Snake Brothers, guitarist Steve Byrne, beach and marsh walks, kite flying, face painting, paper making, and painting sessions for children, animals from the Bridgeton Zoo and many other activities. It is believed that this was the fifth year the event was held and it gets bigger and better every year. Mrs. Wood reported that \$4,000. was spent on the event this year.

The Maurice River Historical Society gave Certificates of Appreciation to: Tricia Dufford artist and former coordinator of the Cultural and Heritage Commission for having the insight to get the event started; Stephen Kehs, Director of the County Department of Planning & Development for his work in getting the restoration dollars to repair the lighthouse; and, Jean Jones, former president of the Maurice River Historical Society, for her tireless enthusiasm, dedication, and hard work in the restoration of the lighthouse.

Following the event, Freeholder Lookabaugh had all the workers, artists and entertainers back to her house on the Bay for dinner.

Chairperson Watson commented that Freeholder Lookabaugh suggested that when the light house is complete both inside and outside, to have the opening be an art exhibit of all the art that has been done over the years. This would be an event that this Commission could sponsor. Director Wood commented that now that the Commission has a tent an outdoor Art show would be easy to do. Jean Jones remarked that in the past the Historical Society did outdoor art shows there for two or three years using lengths of snow fence for artists to hang their work on. Mrs. Wood stated that it doesn't have to be just paintings, it could be sculptures, photographs, etc., as long as it related to the County. She suggested that the show could be called "Cumberland County Treasures."

Mr. Polhamus remarked that a very successful photo contest. The public voted on their favorite photo by putting a dollar into that artist's container. That may be a way to raise money.

NEW BUSINESS:

FY 1999 GRANT AWARD: Director Wood asked Commission members to read the summarized consensus of the grant evaluation panel of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts which reviewed this Commission's grant application. The summary was very positive stating that the local organization has a good re-grant program, a diverse panel, a good range of programs - including programs for senior citizens and good

promotion of the grant program. They commented on the good response rate stating that 17 of 25 eligible organizations applied, with 15 being recommended for funding. They also noted that the planning processes being clearly articulated in includes broad public input, and shows a high level of professionalism in the agency staff. The advisory committee and panel are culturally diverse. They also commented on the attention given to children and seniors in the design and support of programs.

Mrs. Wood reported that the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission received the largest amount it ever received from the New Jersey Council on the Arts this year. The Commission received a \$140,000. block grant which will be re-granted to local arts agencies and another \$45,000 in special initiative funding for cultural programs for the city of Vineland, for a total of \$185,000. In regards to the \$45,000., an advisory committee (consisting of Board members and Vineland residents) will be appointed to recommend possible programs. However, the final decision on programs to be implemented will be made by this Commission. A motion was made by Joseph Polhamus, seconded by Sunkie Oye, and passed unanimously that Chairperson Watson, be empowered to appoint an Advisory Committee to make recommendations on the Grant.

Several members questioned two amounts of \$45,000. listed on the summary sheet. Mrs. Wood explained that the City of Vineland received \$20,000. for cultural programming in FY1998 under the condition that they would work with the CCC&HC and the State Arts Council to develop a cultural plan. They received an additional \$45,000. in FY1998 to create the cultural plan. Vineland has received \$110,000. in the last six months from the State Arts Council, thanks to this Commission. Director Wood will work with the City on this plan. They must work with our Commission so that credit goes to both the State Arts Council and the CCC&HC. This cultural plan will be the role model for the entire State.

LONG RANGE PLAN: Director Wood asked members to look in their file at the 1995 "Long Range Plan" of the CCC&HC. The Director made copies of a summary of the Plan that Suzanne Merighi had, and passed it out to Commission members. Suzanne pointed out that in reading the Plan she was impressed with how much of the plan this Commission has actually accomplished. Mrs. Wood would like "Long Range Plan" Committee to come up with some goals and objectives for a new plan. Suzanne Merighi, Chairperson of the Committee suggested picking out the points the Commission wanted to continue that we feel are successful, such as, sponsoring an event each year and honoring community members. New idea she suggested were:

- (1) Promote the County in a positive way with a nice quality brochure listing some of the recent activities in the terms of the arts in the County - that local leaders could give out to businesses interested in locating in the County. The Commission, she believes, has done some wonderful quality things that enhance the image of the County.

- (2) Work with the schools more perhaps doing some partnership type things, and perhaps looking at the core curriculum for the State of New Jersey to see if there is anything CCC&HC can do to help the schools. Freeholder Griffiths is aware of one in the Social Studies field. He will get the wording to Suzanne. Director Wood said that Art Education Committee of the South Jersey Cultural Alliance, of which she is a Board member, meets monthly with a focus on incorporating standards for Arts in education. She will try to attend the next meeting.
- (3) Work on more of the partnerships to promote some more of the quality groups from this area such as the Bridgeton Symphony on a local level, and on a regional level the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts.
- (4) Have Commission members attend some of the events funded and doing some kind of informal evaluation.

Mrs. Merighi said the last thing she wanted to bring up, should not be written in the plan, but to retain a good relationship with the Council on the Arts - which is our main funding source - it would be nice if members wrote a thank you note once in a while. Mrs. Wood said that she thanks them every time she talks to them, as they really look forward to hearing from Commission members.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL CALENDAR: The Director reported that the current Cumberland County Cultural Calendar listing the monthly events, is going out in the mail today and will go out each month to everyone on our mailing list. On the bottom it states that it is funded in part by the State Arts Council and Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission

CHILDREN'S BOOK: Chairperson Watson reported that the Historical Society has met to go over the book, but have not compiled their suggestions. She asked for any input from Commission members, and several passed on corrections and/or suggestions to Mrs. Watson. She will take them back to the Historical Society, and then try to set up a meeting with the author.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Cannone,
Acting Secretary