

# CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE COMMISSION MINUTES

February 13, 2007  
3:00 pm

Freeholder meeting room in Bridgeton, NJ 08302

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission was held on Tuesday, February 13, 2007 at 3:00 PM., in the Freeholder meeting room in Bridgeton, New Jersey.

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

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

Special Guest: Nancy Moses

## **Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes from January 16, 2007 was made by Suzanne Merighi. The motion was seconded by Jean Jones and passed unanimously.

## **Encore Award Nominee**

This year's Encore Awards dinner will be held on May 16, 2006 at Bally's in Atlantic City from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Jean Jones to nominate Jackie Sandro of the Clay College for the 2007 Encore Award. The motion was seconded by Suzanne Merighi and passed unanimously.

## **2006 Year in Review Presentation**

Mr. Pisarski presented a PowerPoint presentation documenting the 2006 activity of the Cultural and Heritage Commission.

The charts used in the presentation are attached, which shows years 2005 through 2007 for Block Grant Re-grantees. The charts included audience participation.

## **Nancy Moses – Long Range Plan Discussion**

Mr. Pisarski introduced Nancy Moses, who has been retained to handle the Commission's Long Range Plan.

Nancy stated how pleased she was to be working with the Commission again this year. After studying the Commission, Nancy felt that the Commission has done an excellent job of supporting the Arts and Cultural groups in the county.

Nancy asked the Commission why a strategic plan is done and what is the process. Marianne Lods responded that she thinks the reason for a strategic plan is for there to be direction in the future for the Commission. Suzanne Merighi mentioned the need for a series of goals to get everyone on board, and Roy Kaneshiki felt it came down to finances.

Nancy has read all of the Commission's notes for the past three years including proposals to the state, finances and the Commission's strategic plan. Nancy discussed the goals of the cultural plan and how the Commission would measure success. She indicated the next step would be to conduct focus groups with the organizations that deliver cultural experiences in Cumberland County. She suggested two groups with twelve participants in each group. The two groups would meet to discuss what the Commission could do to support their organizations. Nancy would then analyze the goals and rubrics that are determined at the meeting and then relay to the Commission an analysis, which would lay out the strategic direction for the next couple of years.

Mr. Pisarski discussed with the Commission the conference on the cultural programming he attended in Trenton, which was conducted by Department of Community Affairs. One of the speakers at the conference was David Grant of the Dodge Foundation who spoke about the process Dodge uses in planning and using rubrics to establish "a stellar standard".

Nancy asked what success for our Commission would look like in the future. Jean Jones responded that the impact of the programs of our sub-grantees would play a role; Roy Kaneshiki mentioned the bottom line for him would be the

numbers and the amount of people attending the events. Pat Gale felt it was the ambiance of the performer/performance and the quality of the performance versus the number attending. Matt Pisarski stated he would gauge success partially by the attention the Commission receives from Trenton. For instance, if the Council on the Arts uses the Commission as a stellar example of what could be done and encourages the Commission to participate in new grant and funding programs. Jane Christy mentioned success to her would be someone from Cumberland County sitting on the Council on the Arts in Trenton.

Nancy asked the Commission to give other definitions of programmatic success. Marianne Lods mentioned that references and articles of Cumberland County events in statewide newspapers (e.g. Star Ledger) from reporters who know what they were talking about would be a sign of success. Pat Gale suggested an increased involvement by ethnic groups would also be a positive sign. Suzanne Merighi suggested an annual event that Cumberland County could undertake could prove successful. Nancy asked if one goal would be to build some organizations into regional entities, which could then apply directly to the State for funding. The Commission endorsed her suggestion.

Nancy then reviewed with the Commission what was discussed to that point. She said her notes indicated that the Commission would see success if more people came to events and if they were a more diverse audience; if a resident of Cumberland County sat on the NJ Council on the Arts in Trenton; if there was more regional coverage by the media; if the Council on the Arts were to use Cumberland County as a stellar example of new programs; if more ethnic groups were to benefit from funding; if an event were held to put the Commission "on the map"; and if direct funding from NJ Council on the Arts was sought by some of the re-grantee organizations which would enable the Commission to direct more of its funds to smaller, needier organizations.

The Commission discussed the possibility of cultivating a foundation for donations and endowments. Suzanne Merighi indicated that a movement was locally afoot to start a community foundation, and that although the process has just begun, a dedicated group of people was involved.

Nancy asked if it was the roll of the Commission to produce events. The Commission felt it is their responsibility to encourage and provide leadership to other groups and organizations to conduct the events. Nancy asked what words would best describe the roll of the Commission. The Commission suggested the roll of mid-wife to the smaller groups. Other rolls mentioned would be that of initiator, facilitator, promoter, overseer and educator.

Nancy asked if the Commission is responsible for the implementation of this plan. Mr. Pisarski felt the implementation teams established for the County Cultural Plan were intended to off-set the responsibility of the Commission but whether or not this has been successful is questionable. He indicated though, that the

Commission is the umbrella organization for cultural programming in the county.

Suzanne Merighi suggested that the Economic Development Board should also play a role. She voiced her opinion that this was the intent in the implementation agenda, specifically a shared responsibility.

Nancy asked what reason the Commission feels the implementation has not sustained momentum. Roy Kaneshiki mentioned follow-up. Marianne Lods stated accountability and Jane Christy stated lack of funding, and there needs to be money available to pay people and organizations to head these programs.

Nancy envisioned the Commission having greater funds in three years if it were to get someone from Cumberland County to sit on the Council on the Arts, get noteworthy coverage in the media of what the Commission is doing (get buzz), and create a vehicle to receive more private sector support such as establishing a community foundation outside of government.

Freeholder Director Rainear suggested that the Commission needs to establish stronger links between the Tourism Council and the Recreation Commission, as these boards are related and should be working together.

Nancy asked what was most important for the Commission to accomplish over the next 5 years. The Commission's response was recognition, money and leaders in Cultural and Heritage.

Nancy stated that in order for these accomplishments to be met, the Commission would have to be willing to give up some activities and asked what those would be. After much discussion, the Commission replied that its administrative role in the Teen Arts Festival could be reduced, and its budget allocation for the newsletter could be reduced or even eliminated. Nancy suggested that publicity could be more effective through press releases and the Commission's website. The Commission also indicated that its administrative roll in East Point Artists' Day could be reduced.

Nancy made the suggestion to the Commission that she would write down everything that was discussed and then share it with everyone. Then it can be decided if we would like to have Nancy back for another meeting to discuss further. Mr. Pisarski asked Nancy if the Commission should be thinking beyond state funding, possibly regional and NEA funding and should the Commission be stepping up our goals as we are asking our re-grantee's to do. Nancy agreed and said yes this should be happening. Further discussion occurred regarding re-grantee organizations. It was felt by the Commission that there were different interests held by the re-grantees, that some had an interest in growing, but that some were satisfied with their current scope. Nancy suggested that re-grants could be tiered so as to provide different benefits for different interests. Nancy suggested that the Commission should consider branching out in its search for

grant funds to include federal sources. She indicated that the Commission should set new standards for its funding just as it would like to see its re-grantees expand their scope.

Nancy ended the conversation by stating that she would provide her notes of the discussion to ensure they accurately reflected the intent of the Commission. Upon receiving her notes, the Commission would decide whether she needed to visit them again prior to the focus groups.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business a motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Suzanne Merighi. The motion was seconded by Penny Watson and passed unanimously.

The next regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2007 in the Freeholder Meeting Room in Bridgeton, New Jersey.