

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION
MINUTES**

July 13, 1999

3:30 P.M.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Present:

Mel Brody	Joseph Polhamus
Austin Gould	Suzanne Merighi
Jean Jones	Penny Watson

Freeholder Chuck Griffiths
Freeholder Director Douglas Fisher
Kim Wood, Director
Nancy Cannone, Secretary

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission was held on Tuesday, July 13, 1999 at 3:30 p.m., in the Freeholders Meeting Room, of the County Administration Building, Bridgeton, New Jersey. Chairperson Penny Watson called the meeting to order and read the opening statement in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Law.

The Chairperson called for approval of the May 11, 1999 Minutes. A motion to approve the Minutes was made by Mel Brody, seconded by Austin Gould, and passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

SUMMARY OF RETREAT: Director Wood thanked Commission members for taking their personal time to attend the retreat. She stated that while not all the tasks set forth were accomplished, there was a lot of conversation, and this will be of benefit in the future. As a result of the Retreat Mrs. Wood has herself done the following:

- * Sent letters to the editors of the "Bridgeton News", the "Daily Journal", and the "Press" requesting that the Commission's Cultural Calendar be printed once a month in their newspapers. Jean Jones reported that the editor of the "Bridgeton News" said that they have been receiving this Calendar, and have been putting all the information on the Calendar in their paper, just not all at once because sometimes there isn't enough space to publish the entire Calendar at once.
- * Called Mr. Tofanelli, who is responsible for the Commission "Newsletter" and asked him to call individual Commission members one month before the "News-

paper was put together. It was stressed in general conversation, that to make the Newsletter the most effective, articles should be written on events coming not articles after an event has been held. It was suggested that Mr. Tofanelli attend one of the Commission's meetings so the members can all sit down, and exchange ideas to come up with a specific format that would be used for each issue. Perhaps specific categories could be set up so that specific columns and information would be in each "Newsletter". This would be more effective than Mr. Tofanelli calling each member for every issue. Some suggestions were columns on "Around our Town", "Historic Buildings", "Culture & Arts Events", so that each month a brief article could be written on these specific subjects.

Mrs. Wood will ask Mr. Tofanelli to attend the September meeting.

- * Director Wood asked members to go review the copies of this year's Grant applications in their packets which shows all of the organizations who asked for funding this year.

DISTANT VOICES PROGRAM: Sunkie brought information on the "Distant Voices" program done by Dan Peak from Wilmington, Delaware. This program deals with the internment of the Japanese living in America during World War II. Mrs. Wood reported that she had spoken to Dan about the program and felt it was something the Commission could do, and was affordable costing \$1,000.00, plus the cost of the theater. There is a 425 seat theater at Cumberland Regional High School in Seabrook which would make it a perfect location for this program. Mr. Peak will get back to Mrs. Wood with available dates, hopefully early January of 2000. This program will be on the high school & adult level. The question was asked about a program for a younger audience, as most school age children have no knowledge of these events and how the Japanese population came to settle in this area. Mrs. Wood remarked that perhaps we could put on a performance during the day for the high school students, and maybe get the theater free for the evening appearance. Mel Brody stated that he felt that this type of program could become a major event for the Commission and not just a one-shot affair. The Commission should think about how to expand and incorporate others into the event and make it an all-day event. Freeholder Griffiths suggested that the Seabrook Educational Center would be a good starting point. Another possibility was the Japanese-American Citizens League. A motion to support and go ahead with this "Distant Voices" project was made by Suzanne Merighi, seconded by Mel Brody, and passed unanimously.

EAST POINT ARTISTS DAY: The Director reported that the annual East Point Artists day will be held on Saturday August 7th. Participating will be approximately twelve artists, the bands including the "Snake Brothers, food, animals from the Cohanzick Zoo, and other events. The light house will be open for tours.

1999 CUMBERLAND INTERNATIONAL OPERA COMPETITION: The International Opera Competition is scheduled for October 2nd. Mrs. Wood showed the

41 applications from all over the Country, plus Mexico and Canada. Mel Brody stated that there will be three preliminary judges who will select the ten finalists. Three new judges will select the finalists, and then the winners. One of these judges will be the Director of the New Jersey State Opera. There will be a \$3,000.00 first prize, \$2,000.00 second prize, and \$1,000.00 third prize. Director Fisher asked if this prize money was in line with what other competitions give and was told that this was substantial enough to attract a good number of applicants. Mr. Brody further reported that the evening before the competition, it is proposed that the Commission sponsor a \$100.00 a couple (including 2 tickets for the competition the next night) Opera Dinner to be held at Cafe Centro where diners will be entertained with a "Light Opera". The Cafe Centro can seat up to 150 people. A motion was made to sponsor this dinner by Mel Brody, seconded by Suzanne Merighi, and passed unanimously by the Commission. The Cost of tickets for the competition alone will be \$7.00.

NEW BUSINESS:

STATE ARTS COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING: The State Arts Council Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 27th reported Mrs. Wood. It is her understanding that there will be an increase in funding again this year for our Commission. We have asked for over \$300,000.00 this year, and she hopes we receive around \$200,000.00. Both Director Wood and Freeholder Griffiths will attend the meeting. Freeholder Director Fisher complimented the Commission for the work they have done in bringing so many different types of cultural events to the County.

ARTS & HUMANITIES MONTH PROGRAMMING: The Director asked Commission members for suggestions for programs for this month. Freeholder Griffiths asked if the County Historical Society and the Commission was going to sponsor another "Buried in New Jersey" tour again this year. Mrs. Wood assured members that money would be found for this and "yes" the tour would be held again. Last year the Historical Society was given a \$500.00 Grant from the State. The Tour was free and included a lunch at the Paper Waiter. Freeholder Griffiths reported that the people who went were so pleased that they stated they would have been happy to pay \$10.00 for the tour. It was suggested that since the tour was so successful last year that two buses be used this year.

Mrs. Wood asked for suggestions for a children's program. Some suggestions were:

- a. A children's Opera.
- b. Partner with something the college is doing with children such as the Chinese acrobats.
- c. Push Cart Players

Commission members stated that they saw no problem doing an event in conjunction with the College, as long as the Commission received EQUAL billing, not just a mention on the bottom of the Program. A motion to pursue having an acrobatic or dance type

children's program for the children's portion of the Arts & Humanities month was made by Suzanne Merighi, seconded by Austin Gould, and passed unanimously.

AUGUST MEETING: Following a general discussion a motion to cancel the August Cultural & Heritage Commission meeting was made by Joe Polhamus, seconded by Austin Gould and passed unanimously.

NEWS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Chairperson Watson commented that at the Retreat members had discussed a second Guide on the historical aspects of the County. Ms. Watson passed out to members some notes and ideas that she had for members to review. Freeholder Griffith remarked that he and Jean Doremus hosted a three-day "Know Your County Tour" for Vineland teachers last week. They took 25, and could have taken 80. They spent one whole day in Greenwich & Potters Tavern. Mr. Griffiths said he was amazed at how many people who teach in the County, don't know much about the area. It was suggested that one of these places could be highlighted as a short column in each issue of the Newsletter, especially if the exhibit was being changed or something was going on at one of the locations.

Jean Jones asked about the status of the Children's Book. Mrs. Wood reported that she spoke to Barbara Bruno on the telephone, and expressed to her that the Commission has found someone who is willing to finish the book using her notes and that we would like to do a co-author, and asked how she felt about it. Ms. Bruno stated that she wanted specifics as to what the Commission didn't like about what she gave us, and then she would have to think about it. Mrs. Wood wrote a letter, sent it to County Attorney Richard Geiger, who reinforced it to make it a little stronger, and then mailed it to Ms. Bruno almost three weeks ago. Ms Bruno called Kim and told her she still needs more time to think about it and hasn't made a decision.

The Question was asked, "What if she says NO." Mrs. Wood stated that we would go ahead and do the book anyway. The illustrations did not come up in the conversation, but they do belong to her, but she may think they should be a part of the book. If that is the case, she will not be paid additional money for their use. It was the feeling of Commission members that these illustrations were too generic. They could have been from anywhere. That is where the book stands at this point.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Canhone
Secretary