

CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE COMMISSION MINUTES

July 13, 2004

3:30 PM

**Freeholder Meeting Room
Bridgeton, NJ**

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

Freeholder Director Douglas Rainear
Freeholder Jane Yetman Christy
Pam Weintraub, Sr. Planner
Kim Wood, Marketing Director
Kris Lemmonds, Secretary

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission was held on Tuesday, July 13, 2004 at 3:30 PM., at the Freeholder Meeting Room, Bridgeton, New Jersey.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Marianne Lods to approve the minutes from April 13, 2004 and May 11, 2004. Motion was seconded by Penny Watson and passed unanimously. Patricia Gale abstained from voting on the minutes from May 11, 2004.

Gordon Dahl - Cultural Plan

Ms. Weintraub introduced Gordon Dahl of the South Jersey Economic Development District (SJEDD), to the Commission members. Ms. Weintraub thanked Mr. Dahl for taking the time to attend the meeting and for the assistance by the SJEDD.

A RFP was sent out to several consultants to develop a county wide cultural plan. Only one proposal was submitted in response to the RFP. Nancy Moses was the sole responder. The Commission discussed the high credentials of Ms. Moses. It was also stated that her proposal had some new and creative ideas for the county. Ms. Weintraub told the Commission that Ms. Moses has called the Planning Office and the SJEDD Office to inquire. She is very excited about the project. A motion to accept the proposal from Nancy Moses for the Cumberland County Cultural Plan was made by Jean Jones. The motion was seconded by Patricia Gale and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dahl explained to the Commission that all of Cumberland County will be included in the study. SJEDD will be contracting with Nancy Moses under their agency but it would be the Commission's study. The SJEDD will administer the contract. The Commission will be working closely with the consultant. Payments will be made by the SJEDD agreed by the Commission.

2005 Teen Arts Festival

Ms. Weintraub had a few key items to discuss in preparation for the 2005 Teen Arts Festival before the new school year begins in September. A tremendous amount of support was given by the teachers, instructors and from the business owners to have the festival back in downtown Millville. Ms. Weintraub spoke to some of the teachers who didn't participate this year. One of the reasons was due to the location of the festival being in downtown Millville.

After some brief discussion the consensus of opinion was to have the 2005 Teen Arts Festival in downtown Millville.

The next priority will be to secure performance sites for next year's festival. Ms. Weintraub will meet with Marianne Lods and Michael Cagno to discuss planning for next year's festival.

Middlesex County will be conducting a workshop for their Teen Arts critiquers and instructors about Teen Arts on the 2nd weekend of January 2005. They will also be given sensitivity training for dealing with teenagers. Ms. Weintraub will be suggesting to the instructors for the Cumberland County Teen Arts to attend the Middlesex workshop. Transportation may be arranged to encourage attendance.

One more issue was addressed at the State Coordinators meeting. The issue was the fact that Cumberland County is the only county that does not charge schools to attend the festival. The State would like to have every county charge its schools to attend the festival. The philosophy is that, if a charge is assessed there will then be a value associated with attending the festival. There is no penalty if the Commission chooses not to charge for participation in the festival.

Jean Jones cited the fact the Cumberland County is one of the poorest counties in the state and that school funding is a big issue. Penny Watson stated that the free festival is something the Commission can do for the schools. The schools pay school bus fees from \$300.00 - \$500.00 to attend the festival. Assessing a fee could also discourage schools from participating. The Commission decided to keep the county festival free to local schools.

Office of the Disabled Disability Awareness Day - October 2004

Dave Grennon from the County Office of the Disabled contacted Ms. Weintraub about applying for funds through the regrant process for the annual awareness day. Ms. Weintraub explained to Mr. Grennon that the day would have to have an arts component to qualify for funding through

the Cultural and Heritage Commission. As the Commission now sponsors tickets for the Older Americans Month, the same could be done for the Disability Awareness Day.

Ms. Weintraub contacted Greg Hambleton at Cumberland County College regarding performances at the college during the month of October. Greg suggested two performances:

Oct. 17 - Downe Jersey Concert

Oct. 22 - Alvin Ailey Dance Theater performing Ailey II

Freeholder Christy stated that she didn't believe the Office of the Disabled was looking for performance tickets but rather financial support in the amount of \$2,000.00. She also stated that the funding isn't needed until next year. Since the funding isn't needed until next year, it was decided that the Office of the Disabled should go through the regrant process.

Ms. Weintraub will be inviting Mr. Grennon to the Grant Writing Workshop on 7/29/04 and to proceed through the regrant process.

Upcoming Dates

July 27, 2004 - NJSCA grant awards will be announced in Trenton for FY2005. Ms. Weintraub read from a letter from Governor McGreevey about the 2005 Budget. "Nearly \$29 million for the arts, including nearly \$23 million for local arts and cultural organizations - an increase of 42%. Nearly \$5 million to the Newark Museum, \$500,000 in new funding to the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and increasing the Cultural Trust by \$220,000 is also being provided."

Ms. Weintraub stated that she is cautiously optimistic. On the day of the awards the listing of the awards will be on their website at 12:30 pm or 1:00 pm. The Cultural and Heritage Commission will have more money in FY2005. However, it could be the 25% that was taken away from the counties last year and now is being given back in this year's budget. The exact amount will be known on 7/27/04. The Commission is hoping to receive three grants this round. On the website the grants will be listed under the Local Arts Program, the SJ initiative and START.

START Program - The Commission is working with the Down Jersey Folklife Center, the Walt Whitman Center and the Camden County Cultural and Heritage Commission. The START program is the money from the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest given to the State Council on the Arts. It is about broadening and deepening participation in the arts. We are looking at a model of how to increase participation in the arts and breaking down barriers to the arts by targeting our boards first.

7/29/04 - The Cumberland County Grant Writing Workshop at Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts in downtown Millville. The Arts Regrant program will be announced at that time to local arts groups. It has been stressed to organizations that have applied over the last 4 years that they send someone that will actually be writing the grant. Grant applications will then be due on Sept. 2, 2004. The Regrant Board will hopefully be meeting on Sept. 27, 2004.

August 7, 2004 - East Point Open House and Artists Day. Steve Byrne and the Snake Brothers will be performing from noon until 4:00pm. Louisa Sharp and Danielle Trout will be doing the "Paint a Lighthouse" for children. The artists will be from the Vineland Art Alliance.

Chairman's Report

Suzanne Merighi gave the following chairman report. Ms. Merighi thanked those who attended the meeting and encouraged them to attend all future meetings. There has been a problem this year with having a quorum present. It is difficult to carry on the work of the Commission when votes or adequate discussions can't be conducted due to lack of a quorum. She also urged members to try and attend some of the events that the Commission sponsors to see how the Commission's money is being spent.

Minutes and meeting reminders will be sent out about a week in advance so everyone has more notice to plan. Ms. Weintraub stressed that when she or Kris email or call members regarding attending the meeting a reply would be appreciated.

Mr. Merighi gave a recap of the Commission's work so far this year:

- 16 local art organizations received regrants
- Two concerts have been sponsored
 - The Blind Boys of Alabama
 - Natalie MacMaster
- The Economic Impact Survey: The Arts in Cumberland County has been done.
- The County Books have been sent out for restoration. One is in the process of being done and the second book will follow after the first one is done.
- The Commission has reached out to the teens with the Teen Arts Program. To the seniors with the Office on Aging with sponsored performance tickets.

Ms. Merighi would like to have official guidelines established to help prevent last minute requests for funding. Discretionary funds are available but those are limited. Ms. Weintraub would like to have a committee formed to provide specific guidelines to deal with last minute requests. Ms. Merighi asked if anyone was interested in serving on a committee to discuss formalizing last minute request guidelines. Marianne Lods, Suzanne Merighi and Pat Gale will make up the committee.

An example of last minute request was from the Bayshore Discovery Project for the Secretary of State's visit. The Bayshore Discovery Project requested \$3,000.00 to help with the reception. Ms. Weintraub offered \$1,000.00 if approved by the Commission. This request came 1 week before the event. The Bayshore Discovery should have received a combined \$3,000.00 for food (from the Cultural & Heritage Commission, Bayshore and Lenni Lenape). Jean Jones stated that the reception did not look like it cost \$3,000.00. Ms. Merighi asked Ms. Weintraub to obtain receipts before payment is made.

County Book Update

Ms. Weintraub has been in contact with the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts about the County Record Book. The book is currently being treated and is about half completed. It should be completed in about a month. Photographs of the second book will be done and it will then be taken to the Conservation Center to be preserved. By the end of the year both volumes should be done.

Cultural Festival

Ms. Weintraub asked for members interested in being part of a committee to firm up details for the festival.

Kim Wood would like to have input from the Commission for ideas for the festival. Suzanne Merighi, Penny Watson and Mel Brody will make up the Committee.

Steve Kehs, Kim Wood and Pam Weintraub suggested the Commission encumber \$4,000.00 from the trust account. An RFP could then be done for artists to submit a project. The RFP will ask for a piece of permanent public art be commissioned depicting "The Faces and Places of Cumberland County" to commemorate the 35th Anniversary of the Cultural & Heritage Commission. It would be something the Commission could permanently display.

Marianne Lods motioned to allocate \$4,000.00 from the trust budget to commission a public piece of art to commemorate the 35th Anniversary of the Cultural & Heritage Commission. Pat Gale seconded the motion and passed unanimously.

New Business

Ms. Lods announced to the Commission members that Millville is submitting an application for designation as a Main Street City. Main Street is a national program. The Millville Development Corporation is preparing the application. Since the mission is revitalization through the arts and cultural tourism. Ms. Lods requested a motion for a letter of support from the Commission to be included with the applications. Penny Watson made a motion to have the Commission write a letter of support. Jean Jones seconded and passed unanimously.

The next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, August 10, 2004 in County Freeholders Conference Room in Bridgeton, NJ. A motion to adjourn was made by Marianne Lods. Motion was seconded by Penny Watson and passed unanimously.