

CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE COMMISSION MINUTES

May 08, 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, May 08, 2007 at 3:30 PM., in the Freeholder meeting room in Bridgeton, New Jersey.

Present: Patricia Gale
Marianne Lods
Suzanne Merighi
Jean Jones
Flavia Alaya

Matthew Pisarski, Principal Planner
Kim McCann, Recording Secretary
Jill Swartz, Project Specialist
Freeholder Director Douglas Rainear
Freeholder Jane Christy
Special Guests: Marcella Shepard
Mike Cagno
Carolyn Krull

Discussion of Commission Trust Account – Marcella Shepard, County CFO

Mr. Pisarski introduced Marcy Shepard. Mr. Pisarski asked if monies can be taken out of the Commission's trust account by the Freeholder Board and used for another purpose, other than what the donations placed into the account were intended for. Ms. Shepard's reply was that the Freeholder Board could not and stated she had a copy of the resolution establishing the trust account from 1998; it is a resolution establishing a dedicated trust fund for Cultural & Heritage events and activities. The next question was if the account is an interest bearing account and Ms. Shepard responded in the affirmative. Mr. Pisarski asked if a private donor was to make a donation to the Commission and the donation is placed in the trust account, is that donation tax exempt. Ms. Shepard said she was not sure without consulting with an accountant who specializes in tax law. Ms. Lods said she would check with her accountant and get back to the Commission with an answer. Ms. Shepard stated that there has not been any money deposited into the account since 2005.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from April 17, 2007 with the correction of a spelling error was made by Marianne Lods. The motion was seconded by Jean Jones and passed unanimously.

Flavia Alaya abstained from voting on the April 17, 2007 minutes because she was not present at last month's meeting.

Video Presentation and Discussion of Yokohama International

Mr. Pisarski mentioned to the Commission that the Yokohama International School in Yokohama, Japan had contacted him. They are doing a tour of the East coast called East to West introducing traditional Japanese music and musical instruments to American audiences in March 2008.

They will be performing at the UN Charter School, International House Philadelphia, Keio Academy, and Rowan University. Some of their contacts in Philadelphia recommended the Seabrook Cultural Center and Mr. Pisarski was contacted and asked if we would be interested in hosting them. They would come on a Tuesday or Wednesday, the week of March 25, 2008. The idea is they would arrive in the morning, they would visit the Seabrook Cultural Center and the Buddhist Temple, followed by a private reception at the Seabrook Cultural Center, and then they would go to the Cumberland County College. At the college, they would have an afternoon workshop where the students would be brought in on field trips and interact with high school aged kids from Yokohama. Mr. Pisarski thought there could also be other vendors and venues set up that are related to Japanese Heritage and later that evening they would put on an evening concert.

Mr. Pisarski presented a copy of Yokohama's program to the Commission and showed examples on a power point presentation of concerts they have performed. Mr. Pisarski would like to establish an Ad Hoc committee that would include Vic Baker from the Seabrook Cultural Center and would ask Roy Kaneshiki and a few others to facilitate the project. The event would need to be incorporated into the 2008 budget. As for cost, depending on our award from the Council on the Arts, it could range anywhere from \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00. The cost for the Yokohama Group would be about \$3,500.00. That cost includes hosting them while they are here which includes busing, food, hotel stay and insurance. Other ideas Mr. Pisarski had were exhibitors for the kids and events for the reception associated with the concert. There could be a sushi chef, a tea ceremony, the hodaiko drummers, Buddhist dancers, and potentially a calligrapher. Mr. Pisarski has spoken to the college and they are on board for both the Performing Arts Center and the Luciano Center. The Banquet room can

be used for the reception.

A motion to proceed to form an Ad Hoc committee was made by Jean Jones. The motion was seconded by Flavia Alaya and passed unanimously.

Teen Arts Recap and Discussion – Carolyne Krull & Michael Cagno

Mr. Pisarski welcomed Mike Cagno and Carolyne Krull, they were both coordinators for this year's event and were assisted by Jillian Swartz. Ms. Swartz compiled a pro and con suggestion list from the evaluation forms that the teachers and students provided. Mr. Pisarski gave a recap of the event; there were approximately 150 students in attendance, the day went off with out a hitch, and that is due in thanks to Mr. Cagno, Ms. Krull, and Ms. Swartz, and the pre-registration process.

Mr. Pisarski discussed some of the issues for preparation for the event next year. The tents are an exuberant expense. The cost was close to \$6,000.00 this year and there were some vandalization issues with the tents that cost an additional \$500.00. If there were more than 150 students in attendance, the tents would not be feasible. Some of the instructors still request a piano rather than a keyboard and a true stage versus the tenting stage.

Mr. Pisarski wanted to get everyone's perception on where the Commission would like to go with this particular event in the future. Mr. Pisarski has checked with the college and unfortunately, they cannot accommodate the event in late April or early May. Mr. Pisarski has also spoken with Susan Gogan at Wheaton Arts. Her reply was she would love to host the Teen Arts Festival. There would have to be some accommodations made and the possibility of the need for one or two small tents to hold workshops. They do have a piano, the event center could be used for staging space, and it would help Wheaton Arts. Mr. Pisarski stated the other option would be to keep the event in the Millville Arts District and Marianne Lods has offered her department to assist with the administration in future years.

Mike Cagno noted that at the current location we would not be able to accommodate any more students than what they had this year. This year Cumberland Regional could not attend and they usually have at least 70 students participate and Vineland schools backed out and they were going to send 50 or more students. Mr. Cagno felt the college would be the perfect location and his only concern with Wheaton Arts would be the separation of the different events going on. There were good reviews from the teachers and students, but felt that in the future there should be some change in the classes offered so the students were not doing the same thing year after year. On the state level, there are huge challenges. The State Council is no longer funding the festival and all of the classes are now in the evening at a cost of \$25.00 per student. Gloucester County is no longer participating and Atlantic County is in the same situation as

Cumberland County.

Mr. Pisarski mentioned that in the Focus Group discussions and Long Range Planning, it was suggested that the students love the participation of the event and they gain a lot out of it, especially the teenagers. The schools are a little more difficult to deal with and it has always been a problem trying to get through to the school districts. One of the suggestions made in order to increase the interest from the students even more would be to create a Fringe Festival component to the Teen Arts Festival. The suggestions made by the students were to have additional workshops and a lot of those revolved around film, hip-hop and digital photography. The possibility of marketing it as a Fringe Festival would bring in even that much more interest to the event. Mr. Pisarski stated it would take care of two issues for the Commission: it would continue the Teen Arts component, but it would also bring in an additional event similar to an avant-garde event, which has been discussed by the Commission in the past.

The Commission discussed establishing an Academic Ambassador, someone who is from the school districts that has networking connections to all the county schools. That person would then have the responsibility of making sure the schools are aware of the program. Patricia Gale suggested contacting the person/persons who are in charge of the art departments. Tricia Dufford's name was brought up as a possibility for the ambassador.

Jillian Swartz suggested pushing the event to the month of May, because many of the schools have testing in April and spring break. As for different locations, the American Legion, Millville Public Library and the old Rescue Squad building were mentioned as possibilities. Marianne Lods stated that the pedestrian bridge across the river would be complete and it is possible to erect a tent in the parking lot at her building. Mr. Pisarski felt that having it in the Millville Arts District is a definite benefit due to the fact of cost sharing, as the Arts District paid for half the cost of the tents this year. In addition, the help that was received from Marianne Lod's staff and the RRCA'S is a wonderful venue space for the Visual Arts are also draws.

The Commission members agreed that the Commission should find an Academic Ambassador. It was also felt that there be a contract and the person chosen should receive a stipend of which the amount can be discussed at a later date. Mr. Pisarski asked Mike Cagno and Carlyne Krull if they would be willing to be the coordinators again next year. Mike Cagno suggested the possibility of offering scholarships or a monetary award. Mr. Pisarski mentioned that it does not seem the cost of the event will be reduced any, and in fact, the budget will be increased. The possibility of bringing in a sponsorship component to help offset some of the cost was discussed.

Mr. Pisarski stated that he would put together for next month's meeting a proposed work list for next year's event. Mr. Pisarski asked the Commission if a

Teen Arts Committee should be formulated separate from the Commission. Everyone felt that would be a good idea.

Long-Range Plan Focus Group Meetings Recap

Mr. Pisarski discussed the recent meeting that was held with the two focus groups. Flavia Alaya attended the larger group, and felt Nancy Moses was a wonderful facilitator, and had a real sense of art activism around the county. Ms. Alaya felt there was a bit of foot dragging on the notion of synergy of the organizations.

Mr. Pisarski mentioned that the evening began by him giving a presentation of what the Commission provides to the county now. The presentation included block grant funding, re-grants, and charts of the year in review, the operating budget and events the Commission facilitates.

Nancy Moses then took over and discussed the need to establish rubrics based on our new planning methodology and the question was asked if any one had any stellar grant experience and none of the attendees did. The next questions asked of the group were if the Commission could provide them anything they wanted, what would it be. Their response was that they feel intimidated dealing with Trenton, and would prefer dealing with the Commission and felt that South Jersey gets a bad rap in Trenton artistically. The group enjoys the workshops but would prefer them to be a one-day long event instead of having them in the evenings throughout the year. The group liked the idea of tweaking the re-grants so mini grants can be provided for a variety of purposes, with one being transportation and the other being volunteer development.

Mr. Pisarski noted that he will be having a telephone conference next week with Nancy Moses to discuss the notes and she plans to get the draft of the Long Range Plan ahead of schedule, which should be by mid summer.

Morris County Preservation Trust Familiarization Tour Discussion

Mr. Pisarski mentioned that letters have been mailed out to everyone from Freeholder Trout. On Thursday May 31, 2007 there will be a bus tour of Morris County – Foster Fields. This will be a familiarization tour of Morris County's Preservation Trust Program. The purpose of the trip is to familiarize administration, the Commission, the implementation team and certain members of the community about the viability of a similar grants program here in Cumberland County. It is meant to familiarize ourselves with what has to be done to further the process of establishing a grants program in Cumberland County. Morris County was chosen because they have one of the most active and successful grants programs. Gordon Dahl and the South Jersey Economic

Development District are providing a grant of \$700.00 to help offset the cost. Mr. Pisarski asked the Commission for a resolution for the cost of the bus and continental breakfast, which should not exceed a cost of \$500.00.

A motion to not exceed \$500.00 for the cost of transportation and continental breakfast was made by Marianne Lods. The motion was seconded by Jean Jones and passed unanimously.

Correspondence

Mr. Pisarski mentioned that in everyone's packet there is a variety of useful information that everyone can read at his or her leisure.

Adjournment

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

The next regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission will be held on Tuesday, June 19, 2007 in the Freeholder Meeting Room in Bridgeton, New Jersey.