

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**September 8, 1998**

**3:30 P.M.**

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

**Present:**

Jean Jones	Joseph Polhamus
Sunkie Oye	Penny Watson
Suzanne Merighi	Mel Brody
Pat Gale	Austin Gould
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, September 8, 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 August 11, 1998, after noting a correction needed under the heading "Children's Book." This correction will be made. A motion to accept the Minutes as corrected was made by Joe Polhamus, seconded by Jean Jones, and passed unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**CHILDREN'S BOOK:** Mrs. Watson reported that the Cumberland County Historical Society had finished their review of the book and are ready to meet with the author.

A discussion was held on the CCC&HC options, as some members expressed concern about the content of the book. It was felt that the Commission must honor its commitment to the author, but questioned as to whether or not they had to go ahead and print the book. Freeholder Griffiths stated that if the Commission is going to take some kind of assertive action, it must be confident of its legal grounds. He said that there was no doubt in his mind that the Commission can stop distribution as the it has distribution rights, but not editorial authority, and that makes it complicated. He further stated that the Commission's best bet may be to just cut our loses and accept what we have now. Mel Brody stated concern that to date \$5,000. has been spent, and we must find a way to make this project work.

It was agreed that Director Wood would meet with the County Attorney, Richard Geiger, go over the Commission's legal options, and report back to members at the October meeting.

GRANT COMMITTEE FOR VINELAND CULTURAL FUNDING: Suzanne Merighi, Chairperson of the Committee, and Committee members, Mel Brody, Sunkie Oye, Marie LaBoy and Lois Perren met last week and have come up with the following suggestions on spending the \$45,000. for cultural programming in Vineland:

1. Expand upon the 250th celebration that was held at the County College. People in the community were very responsive to this performance. Perhaps some top-quality professional group(s) that could do multi-cultural performances could be brought in that would echo some of the same ethnic groups that performed at the College; or perhaps one of the local groups who performed at the College could be used.
2. Performance(s) that would help the Vineland School District meet their requirements for the core curriculum standards. Some of the themes being studied are immigration in various cultures; the underground railroad; Japanese-American detention/relocation; and African American topics.
3. An Opera performance such as opera for children which would have some sort of explanation of what is going on; or perhaps an evening of multi-cultural opera.
4. A celebration of Hispanic music, emphasizing that the word "Hispanic" encompasses different groups including Puerto Rican, Cuban, Jamaican, Costa Rican, Mexican, etc., and expand on that theme.
5. A Jazz Festival is something that might appeal to many people at all different ages.
6. Traveling theater performances similar to what goes on at Rowan University each year when children from this area are bused over to attend these performances.
7. Some kind of program done in conjunction with the Cumberland County Jewish Federation of Women. This organization has approached the CCC&HC about partnering some kind of event.
8. Focus on the talented youth of this area by providing for some kind of competition or venue for performances to highlight what they can do and to encourage them in their efforts. Perhaps this could be done in conjunction with the Teen Arts Festival.

Mel Brody reported that one of the things they discussed at their meeting was that one-half of the money be used for one big function which could be perpetuated every year, and divide the balance up for other smaller scale events.

Mrs. Merighi stressed that not all of the suggestions have to be acted upon, but that Vineland has been granted this money and she felt that the Commission should come up with something of quality that we could be proud of and will be well supported by the community. It should also be something that can be perpetuated on an annual basis, and that people would look forward to each year. But it would also have to be an event that could be done differently each year to hold the interest of the community.

Joe Polhamus pointed out that Curtis is right across the Bay and the students have a wealth of talent. If this Commission is thinking of an Opera Festival, he feels they would be happy to have a venue to perform in. Austin Gould commented that there is also the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia.

Mel Brody commented that a student's workshop could be given during the day, and a general performance open to the public at night.

After a general discussion on the merits of each suggestion, a motion was made by Pat Gale, seconded by Suzanne Merighi and passed unanimously, to approve the recommendations of the Committee, and that \$22,500. be allotted for an annual Opera Festival that would include a workshop, and the balance divided between several of the other recommendations. Mrs. Wood will put the contract together and submit it by the October 5th deadline.

In reference to proposal #7, Director Wood spoke to Ann Lipton, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Women, who is requesting \$2,000. to put on a Book Signing/Festival. This event would be to "celebrate literature, authors and books in general to highlight new books as well as classics and encourage people to purchase, own and read books of every type." There is a children's sections and parents are assisted in finding quality literature for their children. Freeholder Griffiths commented that this was a different type of program that is open to the public, is for children, would be held in Vineland and would therefore qualify under the Grant guidelines.

OPERA: The CCC&HC has approved \$5,000. for the Scholarship to perform An Eving of Opera "A Night of Stars" on November 17, 1998.

TOWN MEETING: The Director stated that if members had any suggestions to add to the Long Range Plan, please get it to her as soon as possible as she is ready to fax the material to Eduardo Garcia. Chairperson Watson stated that she did have some suggestions, and that she would FAX them to Mrs. Wood. Freeholder Griffiths asked if any publicity is being done in regard to this meeting? A Press Release was sent to the papers and notices have been sent to approximately 125 people in the Artists Directory. Mrs. Wood also requested that each member of the Commission call two people, especially those in the "Arts" community who may be interested and urge them to attend.

NEWSLETTER: Mrs. Wood reported that the Newsletter is being mailed out today.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**TRADE MISSION TO MEXICO:** Director Wood received a phone call today from David Fleming who runs the New Brunswick Culture Center. He has been approached by the Governor and the State Commerce Commission about a Trade Mission to Mexico. They would like to add Culture and the Arts as a component of this Mission. Mr. Fleming is looking for artists, either a group or individuals, in all different areas of art, to go to Mexico for a type of cultural exchange and where some artists from Mexico will come here and share their culture through art with us. Funding for this trip will come from private corporations. He stated that he is aware that CCC&HC is doing a lot of cultural diversity type of things and thought we might be a good source of information. Mrs. Wood was not able to give him any particular names of artists, but told him about Jack Shortlidge of the Down Jersey Folk Center, and she did ask that if it came down to a venue, that he consider Cumberland County College for one of the Mexican performances that would come to New Jersey. Jean Jones asked the question of how many artists and for what period of time. Mrs. Wood did not know the answer to these questions, nor did he. Mr. Shortlidge stated that he had 30 days to put the proposal together, the administration has no idea of what they want, and they called upon him to create a plan and do it.

**COMMUNITY CULTURE CONFERENCE:** Mrs. Wood is planning to attend a Community Cultural Conference in Newark on October 8, 9, 10, & 11th. This Conference should be very helpful in putting together the different programs for the City of Vineland.

**MAURICE RIVER TOWNSHIP CELEBRATION:** Pat Gale asked the Commission for permission to use the CCC&HC display for this celebration, this was OK'd and she will pick it up and return it following the event.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Cannone,  
Acting Secretary