

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE
COMMISSION MINUTES**

May 25, 2023

The regular meeting of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission was held on Thursday, May 25, 2023, at 3:00p.m., via teleconference and/or in-person at The County Administration Building located in Bridgeton, NJ.

Present: Robert Dragotta * (November 2023)
Michael Cagno * (January 2023)
Suzanne Merighi (November 2023)
Marianne Lods * (November 2026)
Maria Cerda-Moreno * (November 2025)
Penny Watson * (August 2025)
Karen Barnett * (August 2024)
Yogesh Thakur (November 2026)

Commissioner Victoria Lods
Commissioner Doug Albrecht

Matt Pisarski, Department Head/Director *
Elena Gable, Assistant Planning Director *
Omarey Williams, Shared Services Coordinator *
Wanda Riviera, Confidential Assistant *
Matt Horowitz, Recording Secretary *

Guests:

Note: Asterisk () indicates members present at the aforementioned meeting.*

Approval of Minutes – April 27, 2023

Mr. Dragotta indicated, following Roll Call, that a quorum was met and would like to entertain a motion to approve the April 27, 2023 Cultural & Heritage (C&H) Commission meeting minutes. A motion to approve the April 27, 2023 meeting minutes was made by Ms. Lods, seconded by Ms. Watson, and passed unanimously by the Commission. Ms. Cerda Moreno abstained.

Discussion of Seabrook Film – Helga Merits

Mr. Williams explained within the packet was an extremely well-done article from the Atlantic City Press highlighting Hela Merits' Seabrook Farms film project. Mr. Williams added that Mr. Dragotta and his company were the unit who applied to the New Jersey Historical Commission (N.J.H.C.) for a \$20,000.00 grant to help supplement the costs of Ms. Merits' film. Mr. Williams said the application was submitted on April 13, 2023, but the involved parties would probably

not hear a result until after the Budget was submitted and the fiscal year started. Mr. Williams added they had heard nothing yet and the Budget would be enacted as of July 1, 2023. The Commission members thanked Mr. Williams with his assistance in submitting the application. Mr. Williams thanked Mr. Dragotta for producing the film and helping with the application. Mr. Dragotta said Vincent Jackson, who wrote the article, was instrumental in the process, as well.

Discussion of Cumberland County On Canvas (2023)

Mr. Williams stated he was very excited about the upcoming Cumberland County On Canvas event. He said the Commission members could see some of the past years' event submissions on display throughout the 4-H building after the meeting. Mr. Williams thanked the Riverfront Renaissance Center for The Arts (R.R.C.A.) for having the Commission back to co-host and sponsor the event once more, along with the County Recreation Commission. Mr. Williams said if there were no changes, both his office and the R.R.C.A. would be releasing the event flyer the following day. Mr. Williams said the drop off dates would be July 15th and July 17th with a reception scheduled for July 21st and would be on-display through July & August up until the 3rd Friday event held in September.

Mr. Williams posed the question to the Commission if this event should be held annually or biennially moving forward. He said the current award amount were as follows: First Place - \$700.00, Second Place - \$500.00, and Third Place - \$300.00 with five (5) Honorable Mentions - \$100.00 each. Ms. Watson suggested making an online digital art gallery photographing, cataloging, and displaying the top three places annually. Following a brief period of discussion, it was decided to hold the Cumberland County On Canvas competitions biennially and increase the prize amounts as follows: First Place - \$1,000.00, Second Place - \$500.00, and Third Place - \$300.00. It was decided this year's competition's First Place prize amount would be upped to \$800.00 and for the next event (to be held in 2025,) First Place prize would be \$1,000.00. It was agreed on by both the Commission and County staff that it would be best to change the Cumberland County On Canvas competition to be moved to biennially. It was specified that 3-D art would not be accepted (just 2-D) and Mr. Williams would add this information to the flyer.

Update On The Sounds of Cumberland County Compilation (2023)

Mr. Williams indicated the submission deadline for The Second Annual The Sounds of Cumberland County Music Compilation was in less than a week (May 31, 2023.) He stated at the time of the meeting, staff had received nine song submissions. Mr. Williams added both him and Matt Horowitz had been personally reaching out directly to potential County-based musical artists, performers, and bands. Mr. Williams said it would likely be a single-disc compilation with about 15 songs for the 2023 compilation. He stated staff would plan to get less CD's produced from Disc Makers and would get PopSockets for cell phones affixed with QR codes on the back linking directly to the compilation(s) on Bandcamp. The Commission and County staff agreed they would purchase about 1,200 CD's giving 10 CD's to each artist at a cost of roughly \$2,000-2,100.00 and spending about \$2,500.00 towards the QR code PopSockets.

C&H Commissioner Reports

Ms. Lods explained she had contacted all of her organizations and had only heard back from

Chris from the Boys & Girls Club, who had a busy summer planned ahead with camps, events, swimming, and more for local children. Ms. Watson said she had reached out to all of her organizations and had heard back from no one. Ms. Cerda-Moreno explained that All That Dance Studio had a summer dance camp planned, as well as a free summer dance program held from July 11-August 8th on Tuesdays.

Ms. Cerda-Moreno had also spoken with Nancy Patterson Tidy at East Point Lighthouse, who expressed some of the issues she was having with the Department of Environmental Protection (D.E.P.) the public meeting regarding the lease, and the closing of the nearby beach. Both Ms. Barnett & Mr. Cagno stated they would follow-up with each of their organizations to present proper Liaison Reports for the June meeting. Mr. Cagno said a feature he penned on ART-C and Bill Horin's upcoming CUT Film Festival to be held in Downtown Millville would be included within the July 11th issue of New Jersey Lifestyle Magazine.

County Commissioner Liaison Reports

Messrs. Williams & Dragotta indicated there were no County Commissioners present on the call virtually and/or in-person to deliver their County Commissioner Liaison Reports.

Planning Department Update

Mr. Pisarski introduced the Department's new Assistant Planning Director, Elena Gable, who had recently been attending all Departmental meetings in recent weeks. He said Ms. Gable was at their disposal for anything the Commissioners may need. Ms. Gable would be working with Farmland Preservation, Planning Board, and a variety of additional Departmental projects. Mr. Pisarski mentioned a transportation analysis of the Southeast Gateway Neighborhood in Bridgeton, a feasibility analysis for the Nabb Avenue Extension, trail development at The Mid-County Park (formerly known as The County Fairgrounds,) and the Jake's Place Playground in front of the County Library. As well as expansion of the Sewer Service Area(s) within the City of Bridgeton, Hopewell & Upper Deerfield Townships, and the Borough of Shiloh, a Greenway expansion that would run from the old Cohanzick Country Club up through the Southeast Gateway Neighborhood and into the Bridgeton City Park, connecting to Hopewell/Barretts Run Park and ending at the Amish Market, the potential of an eastern park adjacent to East Point Lighthouse, Special Occasion Events on Preserved Farmland, and more.

Other Old/New Business

Mr. Williams shared a list of a selection of upcoming 2023 events Departmental staff would be attending for outreach on behalf of the Commission, the Recreation Commission, and the Tourism Advisory Council. Mr. Williams said 1.) staff would need funding for more give-away items as events season ramped up through the summer/fall seasons and 2.) if anyone had time and would like to help man the outreach booth, staff would greatly appreciate it. Ms. Lods asked Mr. Williams to add the Glasstown Arts District's Plein Air on September 30th to the list, as well.

Mr. Williams explained the Mural Dedication at the Glasstown Plaza would be held on Friday, June 2, 2023 at 5:00pm with Ms. Lods adding additional event details. Mr. Williams invited everyone to attend said mural dedication. Mr. Williams stated the 15th Annual Kite & Color

Festival would be held on Saturday, June 10, 2023 from 11-5:00pm at The Mid-County Park. He invited the Commission to attend and said free passes would be provided by Mr. Thakur on behalf of the Friends of India Society, whose event the Commission assisted funding in part.

Adjourn

Mr. Dragotta asked for a motion to adjourn the May 25, 2023 Cultural & Heritage Commission meeting. A motion to adjourn the May 25, 2023 Cultural & Heritage meeting was made by Ms. Watson, seconded by Ms. Cerda-Moreno, and passed unanimously by the Commission. Mr. Williams, again, thanked everyone for their continued attendance, wished them a great month ahead, and said he would see them all in June at the Extension Center.