

Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission
MINUTES
Regular Monthly Meeting
9:30 a.m., Thursday January 29, 2015
Historic County Court House, 71 Main Street Flemington., NJ

Present: Lora Jones, John Kuhl, Jim Davidson, Frank Curcio, Maeve Pambianchi, Freeholder Suzanne Lagay,

3 Vacancies open on Commission

Executive Director: Carrie Fellows

Staff Present: Susan Holcombe-Pena, Rick Steffey

Absent: Beth Rice

O.P.M.A.

At 9:34 a.m. Executive Director Fellows declared the meeting open and properly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT & ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Commissioner Curcio reported that the Nominating Committee made recommendations for the replacement of the Chair and Vice Chair at the December meeting, the slate was accepted and the nominations were closed at that time. Nominated for Chair, Lora Jones; Nominated for Vice Chair, Maeve Pambianchi. Both accepted. **All voted in favor to elect the slate as presented.** Commissioner Davidson noted that there will be 2 more Commissioners leaving us this year. Commissioner Rice will be moving to Canada in June and Commissioner Kuhl's term is up in December.

APPROVAL OF 2015 MEETING DATES & DESIGNATION OF NEWSPAPERS

I. APPROVAL OF December 3rd, 2014 REGULAR MONTHLY MINUTES

Moved by Davidson to approve, Seconded by Kuhl, Motion Carried.

II. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Jones reported that the Freeholders have not approved any of the nominated commission members as of yet. The next Freeholder meeting is on February 3rd and Commission appointments are scheduled for discussion.

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Fellows reported that she has meet with County Counsel and a final draft was submitted on January 28, 2015 for a revised "Standard Operating Procedure" when reserving the courthouse for special events.

A tentative calendar that grew out of conversations between Chair Jones and Director Fellows was issued, with an outline of events taking place each month. Freeholder Lagay asked if there was a strategic partnering with organizations within in Hunterdon County in regards to drawing people in? Director Fellows stated that she has started to set up meetings beginning in February after the grants are finished. Commissioner Curcio recommended that the County Fair be added to the month of August; noted and schedule will be adjusted to reflect.

A session proposal was submitted for the 2015 conference in Williamsburg Virginia. "Doing & Telling the Living History Toolbox". Decision as to whether or not the session is accepted is anticipated in February. If the session is accepted, Fellows will apply for a fellowship to attend, since the county does not support travel expenses outside state

boundaries; the 2015 budget requests that the County support salary while attending the job-related conference. Freeholder Lagay offered her support and advocacy, if needed.

Local Arts Program (LAP) and Special Projects grant forms will be updated this year based on re-grantee and reviewer feedback. Executive Fellows said that she has been reviewing other agencies' forms. Commissioner Curcio asked if we would be sending alerts to our re-grantees about upcoming deadlines.

The County's Conflict of Interest Policy was distributed and reviewed.

The Large Foundation made an un-solicited generous donation of \$5,000.00 that was deposited into the Commissioners' Trust account with no restrictions of use. Chair Jones asked about the (2014) \$5000.00 grant that the Tricentennial Committee awarded Stephanie Stevens; Director Fellows stated that that it is also within the Trust account. Freeholder Lagay requested that someone from the Commission attend the next Freeholder meeting held at the courthouse, and announce those generous donations so they could go into the public meeting minutes.

A reminder was given that all purchase orders and quotes must go through the Cultural & Heritage office for approval. A purchase order voucher must be obtained for all purchases, including all in-house orders so the budget may be adhered to.

Updates for the move to the Historic Courthouse: copier/printer and phones computers are installed. Furniture is scheduled to ship on the 20th of February and it's looking like March for delivery and installation. Book inventory: some daily files and Art Goes to School materials have not been moved yet. A decision has not been made about the location of the research collection. In reply to Commissioner Kuhl's query, Executive Fellows stated that the office doors will remain locked when staff is not present.

A new cover letter was re-sent with Commission nominations for consideration by the Board of Chosen Freeholders; nominations are scheduled for discussion at the February 3rd meeting. Commissioner Pambianchi suggested candidates be interviewed by the Commission prior to recommendation to the Board. Appointments are made by the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

IV. GRANT REPORTS

State Council on the Arts: The Local Arts Staffing Initiative (LASI) Grant is due on February 4th, we have requested a resolution supporting the application from the Board of Chosen Freeholders. The Resolution was added verbally to the last meeting agenda; once we receive a hard copy, we can submit the full application. The final report for the 2014 General Operating Support Grant (GOS) that funds our re-grantees, is due February 13th. Preparing this report highlighted the areas in the re-grants process and reporting forms that are problematic for both re-grantees and the grants administrator.

Special Projects Grants:

Request being prepared for the Board of Chosen Freeholders to fund the \$22,500.00 Special Projects Grants for grantees, grant amounts pending approval of the annual County budget. Commissioners Curcio, Kuhl and Rice were on the review panel. **Moved: Commissioner Davidson; seconded: Commissioner Kuhl, All in Favor.**

NJHC Project Grant: The NJHC project grant applied for in 2014 for FY2015 was denied. The grant requested funds to cover printing and distribution for the 300th Anniversary mural brochures and DVDs for all the schools in the county. After discussion, the consensus was to investigate with IT the Commission's ability to obtain a YouTube account and make the electronic files accessible to schools in a variety of ways, including possibly via "Virtual Backpack", rather

than expending funds on printing brochures. Executive Fellows will work with the IT department about creating an account. All agreed that publicity and teacher “buy-in” is important.

COMMISSION PROJECTS

Arts

Kids Kulture: Commissioner Pambianchi reported the last performances for 2014 were held in December. “Arm of the Sea” performed at Lambertville Public School and Immaculate Conception School. Commissioner Pambianchi and Davidson are looking into other venues for 2015. Commissioner Pambianchi mentioned that the “Little Theatre” at Hunterdon Central holds about 350 and the Clinton Theatre holds about 950 for shows; a Friday night show was suggested. A full report of the past year’s spring/fall performances will be made available for the February meeting.

Art Goes to School:

Executive Director Fellows and the new AGTS Volunteer Director Evelyn Voget have been working on an “official” letter for parents about the program. The letter explains the program’s mission, its funding, and will be provided to participating schools for inclusion in students’ “Virtual Backpack”. Currently the program is working with 12-14 different schools, gearing the art to mainly 3rd and 4th graders. Freeholder Lagay recommended a press release with photos in the local papers to also help promote the program.

Senior Programs:

Executive Director Fellows reported that 6 shows had been held in 2014 with singer Tom Del Moore. The funding for these shows is paid through surplus NJ State Council on the Arts grant funds (if any) at the end of the year, and that the performances are targeted to facilities with no budget for arts/cultural programs.

Essay Contest: Executive Director Fellows reported that letters for the teachers will be going out soon to the schools. Chair Jones suggested that since this contest was created by Stephanie Stevens, she should continue to present the awards. The Commissioners agreed.

Art/History Expo:

Chair Jones recommended the Art/History Expo remain separate from the Library’s Art Expo, but held on the same date if possible, ideally in June, to improve visitation for both events. The C&H expo would be held indoors at the Route 12 facility and include re-grantees, arts and history organizations from around the County.

Exhibitions and Programs: Executive Director Fellows reported that she and County Architect Frank Bell have requested cost estimates from electricians to install gallery lighting in the historic courthouse. Chair Jones will seek ideas from Commissioners regarding future art exhibitions. Director Fellows said that she was in contact with Historic Morven, regarding the potential for hosting a traveling exhibition on the Lindberghs for late 2016. Chair Jones reported that the 300th Anniversary Committee will continue its lecture series for 2015; Director Fellows stated that the Commission and the 300th have informally agreed to cross-promote programs; the same with the Flemington BID.

History & Preservation

Site Signs:

Commissioner Kuhl reported that he and Rich Miller from the Road Department located site placements for the new (2014) signs. Ten signs will be installed in a few months. For 2015, Executive Director Fellows stated that she wanted to keep the number of new signs to a minimum, suggesting the Commission consider maintenance of existing ones.

V. FREEHOLDER UPDATES/COMMENTS/BOARD DEVELOPEMENT

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Approval of 2015 meeting dates & designated newspapers:

Commissioner Davidson moved to approve the dates for 2015 Cultural & Heritage meetings and the designated newspapers, seconded by Curcio, all in favor.

Request for support:

Chair Jones reported that Lambertville Historical Society requested \$100.00 from the Commission in support of its art awards program as it has done in the past. The Flemington BID requested sponsorship for its 2015 Jazz Festival held in downtown Flemington. Last year the Commission gave \$1000.00 from its NJ Council on the Arts grant funds to the Jazz Festival. The material provided by the BID based on 2014 rates indicated that the C&H Commission logo would be on T-shirts and a variety of other media outlets at the \$1,000 sponsorship level. **Chair Jones requested a motion to approve a \$1000.00 sponsorship for the Jazz Festival. Moved by Commissioner Kuhl, seconded by Commissioner Curcio, Davidson Nay, majority rules.** Commissioner Davidson indicated he preferred a \$500.00 sponsorship, he didn't feel the additional monies warranted to put our name on a T-shirt.

Governor Reading Farm Preservation Project:

Staff member Rick Steffey was present to report about that this parcel (Stothoff) is in the Historic District but it is not ADA compliant. As per the CADB no parcels can be submitted with an active sewer and water availability hook-up. The property is surrounded by urban and industrial development. There is a possibility as staff reported that a waiver can be obtained from the CADB to submit to the state. Writing letters of support to preserve this property is helpful; Pete Kinsella from Raritan Township Historical has already written a letter of support. The message in his letter focused on the history of the 1760 farm house, not the viability of farming it for preservation. **Chair Jones requested a motion to recommend writing a letter in support of preserving the property. Moved by Commissioner Kuhl seconded by Commissioner Davidson, all in favor.**

All Roads Lead to Pittstown:

Chair Jones reported that Stephanie Stevens is writing a new book, All Roads Lead to Pittstown, and had expressed concern over finding a new publisher. Chair Jones assured Ms. Stevens that as Honorary County Historian, the Commission would continue to publish her books.

NJ History Fair:

Discussion and consensus that the NJ History Fair is good exposure for the Commission and we should attend. Executive Director Fellows, Chair Jones, and Commissioner Davidson agreed to attend, it takes place May 9 at Monmouth Battlefield State Park.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

January 6, 2015 exhibition:

Chair Jones and Executive Director Fellows put together a one-day art exhibit for the Freeholder re-organization meeting and Freeholder Walton's swearing in ceremony. The exhibition included a stunning wall of rugs from the Rug Hookers Guild, abstract sculptures in the windows, and Pam Becker's baskets were displayed in the historic courthouse.

Section 106 Reviews – 377 Pittstown Road (update)

Executive Director Fellows reported that DEP's Michele Hughes has requested additional information from Parks & Forestry on this property, which they have not yet received. Nothing is on the Historic Sites Council's agenda for

this project. Chair Jones asked if Commissioners should attend their meeting to voice their opinion; Executive Director Fellows stated that it couldn't hurt.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS / CORRESPONDENCE:

Correspondence:

Received a letter (circulated at the meeting) from Richard Grubb & Associates (RGA), Inc. on behalf of Evergreen Environmental, LLC regarding a proposed wetlands mitigation site on a 25.77-acre parcel in East Amwell Township. In advance of the project, RGA is completing a Phase I archaeology survey in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historical Preservation Act. Chair Jones asked if we needed to act on this, Executive Fellows stated that only if it is warranted. The Commission agreed that no response to letter or action at this time is needed.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Chair Jones moved to adjourn. **Motion carried** Meeting adjourned at 11:35 am.

Respectfully submitted
Susan Holcombe-Pena