

SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION
Wednesday, December 2, 2020 Meeting Minutes – Virtual Zoom Meeting

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Commission President Donald Esposito in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Notice Act, Chapter 231, PL 1975.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

Commissioners: Don Esposito, Robert Bouwman, Rory Britt, Kathy Faulks, Phyllis Fittipaldi, Dennis Quinlan, Edwin Scannell, Peter Stavrianidis

Staff: Walter Lane, Thomas D'Amico, Kaitlin Bundy, Natalie Zaman, Robert Meyer

Freeholder Liaison: Brian Gallagher

Advisors: Sean Blinn, Brad Fay, Jessie Havens, Hilary Klimek, Kathleen Palmer, Ray Sanderson, Marge Sullivan

IV. Approval of November 4, 2020 Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes made by Phyllis Fittipaldi and seconded by Peter Stavrianidis. Passed.

V. Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission 2021 Commission Meeting Dates

Motion to approve the 2021 commission meeting dates made by Rory Britt and seconded by Robert Bouwman. Passed.

VI. Treasurer's Report

Phyllis Fittipaldi submitted the report of the Virtual Finance Committee Meeting of the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission, Monday 7:00 p.m., November 9, 2020:

- Of the total Budget of \$98,580 for year 2020, \$80,000 was encumbered to fund the Cultural & Heritage Commission Long Range Plan.
- \$18,000 Budgeted to provide funding for the usual costs of line items such as advertising, postage printing, office supplies, conferences & meetings and other miscellaneous line items. Funds not expended, such as for the 2020 Teen Arts Festival, revert to the County. The Permanent Art Collection funds utilized annually to purchase artists' works have been put on hold.
- The LAP Grant budget by the State of NJ of \$72,349 was regranted to recipients by the Regrant Art Committee and must be expended by Year end 2020.
- The CHPP Grant budget of \$37,808 of the State of NJ, was regranted to recipients by the Regrant History Committee and must be expended by Year end 2020.
- The Cares Act Funding of \$9,400 was distributed to qualifying 2020 LAP Re-grantees.

VII. Correspondence

- Kaitlin Bundy reported receiving a letter from Ann Osterdale Rosenblum resigning from the C&H Commission on November 5, 2020 due to moving to Delaware.
- Jessie Havens set a letter requesting better technical assistance at the C&H Commission meetings to ensure all people are heard during the public session. Jessie requested help with opposing cell a tower near historic sites and historic district.

2021 SCCHC Meeting Dates:

Jan 13, Feb 3, Mar 3, April 7, May 5, Jun 2, Sep 8, Oct 6, Nov 3, Dec 1

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- Don Esposito, President SCC&H Commission, sent a letter of appreciation to the Public Works director, Paul McCall and Vinny Russo for erecting a sign at the Voorhees property.

VIII. Reports and Old Business

The following reports were made by Tom D’Amico:

Historic Preservation Grant Program

The Board of Chosen Freeholders have awarded six county historic preservation grants totaling \$601,000. There were two municipal grants: \$125,000 for the Van der Veer Harris House in Hillsborough and \$76,000 for Rocky Hill Borough. The Freeholders also approved four additional grants for the Jury Assembly Room stained glass window project, \$90,000 for the Duderstadt site, \$160,00 for the Fleischman Carriage House restoration and \$50,000 for cleaning the Lord Memorial Fountain. We are currently drafting contracts for the two municipal projects and staff is in initial discussions with Park Commission engineering staff on the Duderstadt site project.

Historic Preservation Master Plan

The County received the draft of the Open Space Master Plan and the Historic Preservation Master Plan and transmitted them to the Steering Committee. The Preservation Plan Steering Committee met on November 23, 2020; their comments are being incorporated into the final draft. Tom completed some minor changes to the chart and map showing all the sites open to the public, and the chart listing the Historic American Building Survey and Historic American Engineering Record sites in the County. We expect to transmit the Agricultural Preservation Plan in mid-December to the Steering Committee. After their review and any recommended changes are made, the Plans will be posted on the County website and distributed for public review.

County Preservation Projects

Tom reported that part of the large stained-glass window on the west side of the 1st Dutch Reformed Church (Jury Assembly Room) in Somerville was restored by Leo Art Studio in Clark, New Jersey and was reinstalled. It had been removed on June 20th. The remainder of the window should be installed this fall. Tom also stated that he is working on the wording describing the County’s historic bridges as part of the Rock Brook Project. The State Historic Preservation Office required that we prepare information on stone arch bridges for our website, but we are including all county historic bridges including stone arch, metal truss, metal plate girder and concrete bridges.

Historic Marker Program

A field meeting has been set up with County and Raritan library officials to discuss a location for their historic marker.

The following reports were made by Natalie Zaman:

NJ Historical Commission County History Partnership Program Grant

2020 Grant. The 2020 Final Report form was emailed to re-grantees on November 16, 2020. Special Project Grantees may submit their final reports upon completion of their projects, GOS re-grantees must report after December 31, 2020. Final Reports are due on January 8, 2021.

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2021 Grant. The 2021 CHPP Grant panel met on November 19, 2020. They reviewed 8 applications, with requests totaling \$124,416.00. The panel's recommendations will be presented to the Grants Committee at a meeting later this month, after which the committee's recommendations will be brought to the entire Commission.

Local Arts Program Grant

2020 Grant. We have received preliminary information from the New Jersey State Arts Council and are in the process of revising final report paperwork to distribute to all re-grantees. Reports are expected to be out to re-grantees by the end of the week.

2021 Grant. The 2021 LAP Grant panel is scheduled to meet December 3, 2020. 17 applications totaling \$206,500 in requests will be reviewed. The panel's recommendations will be presented to the Grants Committee at a meeting later this month, after which the committee's recommendations will be brought to the entire Commission.

IX. New Business

1. **2021 Teen Arts Festival.** Kaitlin Bundy stated that the annual Teen Arts Festival will need to be held virtually in 2021, and that staff is scheduling a meeting with school coordinators mid-December to discuss options for the festival. Kaitlin then led the Commission in a discussion of the festival options such as providing smaller scale virtual elements, including a virtual gallery and a combined anthology with student artwork. Kaitlin informed the Commission that the State Arts Council indicated that funds the Commission does not re-grant out should focus on arts education. With this information, Kaitlin asked the Commission on dropping festival fees to the schools (but making it clear that this is only due to current conditions presented by the pandemic). Motion to hold the Teen Arts Festival virtually in 2021 and not charge schools was made by Kathy Faulks and seconded by Rory Britt. Passed.
2. **2021 Excellence in the Arts Awards.** Kaitlin Bundy led the Commission in a discussion regarding the Excellence in the Arts Awards, scheduled to be presented in 2021. Previously this event has been held in May. Kaitlin asked the Commission to determine if the event should be held in May (and held virtually) or if staff should look to postpone the event until October 2021, when the event might be able to be held in person. Motion to hold the Excellence in the Arts Awards in October with the option of going virtually was made by Kathy Faulks and seconded by Peter Stavrianidis. Passed.
3. **Cooperative Marketing Grant.** Kaitlin Bundy informed the Commission that staff applied for and received a FY21 Cooperative Marketing Grant from the NJ Division of Travel and Tourism in the amount of \$12,000.00. These funds will be utilized to promote the 2021 Journey through the Past event.
4. **Strategic Visioning Plan.** All Commissioners were presented with a draft of the Strategic Visioning Plan. Commissioners are welcome to provide staff with comments through December 11, 2020. Kaitlin asked if there were any immediate concerns to discuss regarding the current draft. Once comments are collected, required revisions will be made and the draft document will then be made available to the public. A public meeting with consultant Louise Stevens will be held in early 2021 prior to the Commission adopting the plan in February.
5. President Donald Esposito appointed Rory Britt, Chairman, Kathy Faulks, and Peter Stavrianidis to the Nominating Committee.

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X. Open Meeting to the Public

Announcements and Comments:

- **Next SCC&H meeting will take place VIRTUALLY on January 13, 2021.**
- Jessie Havens asks for help from the C&H to combat placement of the cell tower in or near historic sites or historic districts.
- Jessie Havens also is seeking signage for Skillman Park documenting the history of the hospital for treatment of epilepsy.
- Ray Sanderson is concerned about the Lane-Brokaw House owned and being restored by Bridgewater Township. He saw a trailer on the site which appears to be taking brick away from the house. Tom D'Amico explained that Bridgewater Township received a grant from Somerset County Historic Preservation Program for a roof and basic stabilization and moth balling of the Lane-Brokaw House. Tom will call and ask.
- Walter Lane expressed his appreciation on behalf of the full Commission and staff to Freeholder Brian Gallagher for his great service to Somerset County and in particular, the SCC&HC.
- Brian Gallagher graciously responded.

XI. Adjournment 8:35 p.m.

Motion to adjourn made by Robert Bouwman and seconded by Edwin Scannell. Passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Faulks, Secretary