

**SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
**Wednesday, January 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes – Virtual Zoom Meeting**

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**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. Swearing In**

Cultural & Heritage Manager Kaitlin Bundy administered the oath of allegiance to two new commissioners, Donetta Johnson and Marge Wolan-Sullivan

**IV. Roll Call**

**Commissioners:** Don Esposito, Rory Britt, Kathy Faulks, Phyllis Fittipaldi, Donnetta Johnson, Dennis Quinlan, Edwin Scannell, Marge Wolan-Sullivan

**Absent:** Peter Stavrianidis

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

**Members of the Public:** Sean Blinn, Brad Fay, Jessie Havens, Hilary Klimek, Rikki Massand, Kathleen Palmer, Ray Sanderson, Tim Stollery

**Commissioner Liaison:** Melonie Marano

**V. Approval of December 2, 2020 Minutes**

Motion to accept the amended minutes made by Rory Britt and seconded by Ned Scannell. Passed.

Marge Wolan-Sullivan recommended amending the report on the Historic Preservation Grant program to name the structure in Rocky Hill – Borough Hall, and the 4 additional grants approved by the County Commissioners: the Jury Assembly Room Stained Glass Window project; the Duderstadt site; the Fleischman Carriage House restoration; and cleaning the Lord Memorial Fountain.

**VI. Election of Officers**

**Nominating Committee:** Rory Britt Chairman; Kathy Faulks and Peter Stavrianidis

**President:** Don Esposito

**Vice-President:** Rory Britt

**Treasurer:** Phyllis Fittipaldi

**Secretary:** Kathy Faulks

Hearing no nominations from the floor, the slate was passed by acclamation.

**VII. Correspondence**

Tom D'Amico received notice from Richard Grubb & Associates of a Somerset County road project on Hillcrest Road in Warren and Watchung requiring a Section 106 historic preservation review since the project may involve a federal wetlands permit. It was determined this project has no historic preservation impacts.

**VIII. Reports and Old Business**

**The following reports were made by Tom D'Amico:**

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**Historic Preservation Grant Program**

We are waiting for County Counsel's review of the 2020 municipal projects contracts for the Rocky Hill Borough Hall and the Van der Veer-Harris House in Hillsborough. The 2021 Historic Preservation Grant Program Guidelines and Application Form will be sent out in early February and will be due on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Historic Preservation Master Plan**

Tom D'Amico stated that the County is undertaking an update of the County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, the Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan and the development of a new Historic Preservation Plan. The Historic Preservation Plan element and the Open Space Preservation Plan element have been sent to the Steering Committee. A Zoom meeting was held with the Steering Committee where we received their input. Tom expects the Agricultural Preservation Plan to be completed and transmitted to our office this week. We will then transmit this plan to the Steering Committee and set up another Zoom meeting late this month or early March. There are still some other chapters that have been drafted but need final review including the Tourism and Education chapters. After all chapters have been reviewed by the Steering Committee and finalized, they will be posted on the County website and distributed for public review. We will hold the appropriate public hearings and the plans will be adopted by the County Planning Board as part of the County Master Plan. The Historic Preservation Plan will be submitted to the Cultural and Heritage Commission for its endorsement.

**County Historic Preservation Projects**

Tom reported that the last piece of the stained-glass window from the Jury Assembly Waiting Room which is being restored, was to be installed this weekend. The installation has been postponed.

**Historic Marker Program**

County representatives met with Raritan Borough and Raritan Library officials on December 14<sup>th</sup> to pick out a location for the Raritan Library's (General John Frelinghuysen House) historic marker. All parties agreed on a location. Tom sent the Borough the installation specifications. The Borough's Public Works Department will call for a mark out for utilities; Tom has not heard the results of the mark out at this time.

**The following reports were made by Kaitlin Bundy:**

**Local Arts Program Grant**

**2020 Grant:** Staff received final reports from fourteen (14) of the sixteen (16) 2020 LAP Re-grantees and are in the process of following up with the two missing reports and reviewing the reports that were received. As reports are reviewed and approved, final payments will be released to the 2020 Re-grantees closing out their 2020 grants. Our final report is due to the State Arts Council on January 29, 2021.

**2021 Grant:** The Grants Committee met via zoom on December 16<sup>th</sup> to review the 2021 LAP applications and grant panel comments. We have 17 applications, with requests totaling \$206,500.00 (only \$61,880.00 to re-grant). The committee's recommendations will be brought to the entire commission in a closed session after which the Commission's recommendations will be brought to the County Commissioners for final review. Staff also submitted our 2021 contract to the State Arts Council, but the Council has requested we submit a contract extension since we could not submit a

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complete list of our 2021 re-grantees at this time. The extension request was approved by the Arts Council.

**C&H Visioning Plan Update**

Staff received Commissioner comments on December 11, 2020. Edits and comments have been incorporated into the document where appropriate. The final draft of document will be made available to the Commission and Advisory members for final review and comment before the document is formally adopted by the Commission.

**Other**

**Long Range Plan:** The Commission will be moving forward with its required Long Range Plan. This plan is required in order to continue applying for state grants. A contract has been signed with Mercer Planning Associates to lead the Commission in this task.

**Attendance:** The County is implementing a new system for tracking meeting attendance. Staff will have to log all Commissioner and Advisory member attendance into the system. The system has three options: Present, Absent, Excused. If a Commissioner or Advisory member does not want to be marked with an absent, they will need to notify Commission staff prior to the meeting that they will be unable to attend. Staff will then mark them as excused.

**Reminders:** Advisory members were reminded to make sure their townships send their appointments to the County Commissioners' office so that the appointment can be made official at the County level. Staff will be sending out individual emails to all Commissioners and Advisory members to double check that the contact information we have on file is correct.

**250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** Nonprofit organization Crossroads of the American Revolution will be holding a Revolution NJ virtual meeting Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. Natalie will forward the information to everyone at the end of this meeting. Additionally, Staff hopes to present the County's next step ideas to the Commission at the February meeting.

**The following reports were made by Natalie Zaman:**

**NJ Historical Commission County History Partnership Program Grant**

**2020 Grant:** We received final reports from all 9 2020 CHPP Re-grantees and are in the process of reviewing them. As reports are reviewed and approved, final payments will be released to these re-grantees, closing out their 2020 grants. We are also working on our final report to the State which is due on January 29, 2021.

**2021 Grant:** The Grants Committee met via zoom on December 16, 2020 to review the eight 2021 CHPP applications we received and the accompanying grant panel comments. We received requests totaling \$124,416.00 but only have \$35,308 to re-grant. The committee's recommendations will be brought to the entire commission in a closed session, after which the Commission's recommendations will be brought to the County Commissioners for final review. Additionally, the Historical Commission has made the 2021 contract available, and staff is working with the County finance department to fill out and submit our contract to the State.

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**C&H Gallery**

Since the County Administration Building has been closed the public, the County's Facilities & Services Division redid the walls of the Cultural & Heritage Gallery in the hallway that joins the parking deck to the building. The wallpaper was removed, and the walls are now painted. We are currently waiting for them to repair the lighting before we install anything on the walls; however, because the building is closed to the public until further notice, we are not currently engaging new groups to exhibit yet. When the gallery is up and running to the public again it's going to look wonderful.

**2021 Teen Arts Festival**

As discussed at the last Cultural & Heritage meeting, the 2021 Teen Arts Festival will be held virtually this year. We met with the schools' festival coordinators to get an understanding of what they thought would work best for them and their students. In mid-December, initial interest forms were sent to schools that have traditionally always participated to help us get an idea of how much participation we should expect. Those are due back at the end of this week. We will also be contacting the County Superintendent of Schools to reach additional schools that have not traditionally participated but may be interested in the virtual format. Our preliminary plans for the 2021 festival include publishing an anthology of creative writing, hosting a virtual gallery (like what was done for the 2020 Senior Art Show), providing virtual adjudication to students in seven different arts disciplines and possibly creating a video compilation of performances.

**IX. New Business/Action Items**

1. Tom reported that we have two proposed reallocations of funds from the Historic Preservation Grant program:

The Friends of Historic Bernardsville have reported that they have \$10,134 remaining from their completed 2018 Cottage Barn project from a total grant award of \$41,650. For the Dunster-Squibb House. The 2016 grant was for improvements to the exterior envelope of the cottage barn structure, including repairs to all the original wood windows, removing and replacing split and missing siding, repairing the porch post and trim, and painting the entire exterior. The Friends group would like to use \$6,334 to upgrade the existing furnace and install air conditioning in the cottage barn structure. Once completed the barn will be used for the Friends group monthly meetings. The remaining funds the Friends would like to use for several smaller projects on the main house structure including window repair. Tom recommended that the reallocation be approved since it is consistent with our guidelines. All work will have to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and, if it has not been done so already, approved by the State Historic Preservation Office. Motion made by Kathy Faulks and seconded by Rory Britt to reallocate \$6,334 to upgrade the furnace and air conditioner for the cottage/barn as well as repairs and window work on the Main House of Dunster-Squibb. Passed by roll call, all ayes.

Hillsborough Township has reported that they have \$74,000 from the 2019 Historic Preservation Grant totaling \$298,780 for the Van der Veer-Harris House in Hillsborough. This grant was for roof repairs as well as the installation of a new slate roof on the main center section of the house. In addition, they also have \$33,928 from three additional grants totaling \$33,938 for a total surplus of \$107,928. The Township would like to use these funds to complete the exterior work on the

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house including window restoration and repair, storm windows, shutters, screens and plans and specifications. They applied to the county and received \$125,000 for this work which was approved and also, they applied to the New Jersey Historic Trust for the remaining amount to complete the exterior which was denied. This reallocation of funds would complete the exterior. Tom recommended that this reallocation be approved since it is consistent with our approved 2020 grant. We should, however, inform the Township that if there are unexpected cost over runs during the roofing project they may not be covered by the County. Motion made by Phyllis Fittipaldi and seconded by Donetta Johnson to reallocate these funds to complete exterior work on the house. Passed by roll call, all ayes.

2. Kaitlin Bundy recommended a closed session meeting of the C&H Grant Committee prior to the February 3 regular meeting. Motion made by Marge Sullivan and seconded by Phyllis Fittipaldi. Passed.
3. Don Esposito welcomed our two newly installed commissioners, Donetta Johnson and Marge Wolan-Sullivan, and the new County Commissioner Liaison to the Cultural & Heritage Commission, Melonie Marano. Each introduced themselves.

**X. Open Meeting to the Public**

**Announcements/Other News:**

**Next SCC&H meeting will take place VIRTUALLY on February 3, 2021.**

1. The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Salute to Tourism sponsored by the Somerset County Business Partnership will be held virtually January 27, 2021 from 10am to 1:30am. <https://www.scbp.org/salute-to-tourism/> Brad Fay will speak on the topic, "Journey Through the Past – Creative Ways of Adapting to the COVID Environment". Brad posted a link to the SCBP Tourism Board and noted that there is a fee to login to see the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Salute to Tourism program.
2. Kathleen Palmer reported the SC Local Arts Grant recipient, Bernardsville started painting their mural project; Kaitlin shared photos of the mural in progress.
3. Kathleen Palmer is encouraging the C&H to provide more funds to Dunster-Squibb.
4. Jessie Havens asked about resuming the Bicentennial Map project. Rory Britt is the chair with Jessie Havens and Ray Sanderson on the committee. Tom D'Amico stated that the forms that Rory developed will be sent to the committee.

**XI. Adjournment 8:45 p.m.**

Motion made by Marge Wolan-Sullivan and seconded by Rory Britt. Passed

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Faulks, Secretary