

SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION
Wednesday, March 4, 2021 Meeting Minutes – Virtual Zoom Meeting

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 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, Rory Britt, Kathy Faulks, Donnetta Johnson, Dennis Quinlan, Edwin Scannell, Marge Wolan-Sullivan;

Excused: Peter Stavrianidis

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

Members of the Public: Sean Blinn, Brian Faulks, Brad Fay, Leslie Floyd, Jessie Havens, Hilary Klimek, Kathleen Palmer, Ray Sanderson

Commissioner Liaison: Melanie Marano

IV. Approval of February 3, 2021 Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes made by Marge Wolan-Sullivan and seconded by Donnetta Johnson. Passed.

V. Correspondence

1. Kaitlin Bundy received a letter from Phyllis Fittipaldi who resigned from the C&H Commission due to personal reasons.
2. Don Esposito complimented Walter Lane, Tom D'Amico and Kaitlin Bundy on their ZOOM presentation for the Preservation NJ "Q & A with PNJ & Somerset County Planning Division; County Level Supports for Historic Preservation" earlier today March 4, 2021.

VI. Staff Reports/Old Business

The following reports were made by Tom D'Amico:

Historic Preservation Grant Program

2020 Grant: Tom reported that we have sent out the two contracts for the 2020 grant round and have received the executed Hillsborough Township contract (for the Van der Veer Harris House) which has been sent to the County Commissioners' Office to be executed. When we receive the executed copy we will process the first payment.

2021 Grant: The 2021 Historic Preservation Grant Program Guidelines and Application Form have been sent out and they are due on April 30, 2021.

Historic Preservation Master Plan: Tom reported that we have transmitted our final comments to Heritage Strategies on the Tourism and Education chapters. We have received the historic preservation maps for final review. A Steering Committee meeting was held on February 11, 2021 concerning the Farmland Preservation chapter. Staff made comments on the Introduction chapters

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and we have received the revised introductions. 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 your endorsement.

County Historic Preservation Projects: The last piece of the stained-glass window in the Jury Assembly Waiting Room which is being restored was to be installed last month, but it has been postponed.

Work will begin this spring on the east wing of the Van Horne House in Bridgewater. This will include replacing the siding and installing a new cedar roof and replacing the gutters on that side. The County will also be re-parging the top of the brick oven, repointing the foundation on the east side will be replacing the metal roof on the back side of the building.

Historic Marker Program: Tom reported that we are still awaiting the mark-out from Raritan Borough concerning the Raritan Library's (General John Frelinghuysen House's) historic marker. All parties involved had agreed on a location and Tom sent the Borough the installation specifications. The Borough Public Works Department is to call for a mark out for utilities, but Tom has not heard the results of the mark-out at this time. Tom will also be contacting Warren Township for the next marker installation at the Kirch-Ford Terrill House.

The following reports were made by Kaitlin Bundy:

Local Arts Program Grant

2020 Grant: Final payments have been released for fourteen of the sixteen 2020 re-grant organizations. Staff has reached out and is working with the remaining two organizations to get all required revisions so that final payments can be released. The Commission's final report to the State Arts Council was submitted and the County received its final payment from the State for the 2020 grant.

2021 Grant: The 2021 LAP grant applications are in the final stages of approval. Resolution for these 2021 grants will be finalized at the County Commissioner Meeting on March 9, 2021. Staff is currently preparing all of the documentation, including award notices for distribution after the grants have been formally approved.

Strategic Visioning Plan: Staff thanked all of the C&H Commissioners and Advisory Members for submitting comments on the Strategic Visioning Plan. Staff complied all of the submitted comments and reviewed same with the C&H Executive Committee. A revised draft will be submitted to the Commission in the coming weeks, with an accompanying chart of what changes were made in preparation for the Commission to approve and adopt the plan by April.

Long Range Plan: C&H Staff held its official kick off meeting with the consultant for the Commission's Long Range Plan on February 25th. County Administrator, Colleen Mahr, Director of Planning, Walter Lane, and C&H Commission President, Don Esposito, were in attendance as the consultant outlined their steps for this project. Staff will be reaching out to various C&H Commission and Advisory Members to participate in various steps of this plan.

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Ag Day Event: C&H staff has been asked to help with the Agricultural Development Boards Ag Day activities, taking place in March. This mainly entails helping to promote the Board's events but also reviewing materials that were produced: Influencing Agriculture – a celebration of Somerset County's vibrant agricultural history as seen through the eyes of female farmers.

Other: Walter, Tom and Kaitlin presented County Level Supports for Historic Preservation for Preservation NJ on March 4, 2021.

The following reports were made by Natalie Zaman:

NJ Historical Commission County History Partnership Program Grant

2020 Grant: Final payments have been released for seven organizations of the nine re-grant organizations. Staff has reached out and is working with the remaining two organizations to get all required revisions so that final payments can be released. The Commission's 2020 final report to the New Jersey Historical Commission was submitted and its final payment received from the State for the 2020 grant.

2021 Grant: The 2021 CHPP grant applications are in the final stages of approval. Resolution for these 2021 grants will be finalized at the County Commissioner Meeting on March 9, 2021. Staff is currently preparing all of the documentation, including award notices for distribution after the grants have been formally approved.

2021 Teen Arts Festival: Staff continues to work on the 2021 Teen Arts Festival which will be held virtually this year. We plan to publish an anthology of creative writing, host a virtual gallery and provide virtual adjudication to students in seven different arts disciplines for the 2021 festival. Staff is also exploring the possibility of creating a video compilation of performances. Guidelines and applications went out to all school coordinators in Mid-February and are due next week (March 12, 2021). Commitments from the schools are due in Mid-March with student work being due in Mid-April. The forms and guidelines are also posted on the county website. We also reached out to the County Superintendent of Schools to spread awareness of the festival to additional schools that have not traditionally participated but may be interested in the virtual format. Staff has also started reaching out to artists to engage them for the festival.

VII. New Business/Action Items

250th Update: Kaitlin Bundy reported planning will start with an internal task force first then expand group size with public engagement. Melanie Marano noted Walk Bike Hike; Connecting Vibrant Communities, arts, culture and heritage, and tourism will all be connected together.

Journey through the Past: Chose logo #1 with darkening the ink of "Somerset County" and "Through". Motion passed by roll call: Don Esposito, Rory Britt, Kathy Faulks, Donnetta Johnson, Marge Sullivan; five ayes, Dennis Quinlan, Ned Scannell; 2 abstentions.
Kaitlin Bundy reviewed the process of sites participating in the events.

VIII. Open Meeting to the Public

Announcements/Other News:

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Next SCC&H meeting will take place VIRTUALLY on Thursday April 1, 2021.

1. Kathy Faulks announced that the ADA accessibility video of the Abraham Staats House paid in part by the CHPP grant is now available on the website:
<https://www.staatshouse.org/house/history-the-old-kitchen-at-the-abaham-staats-house-a-window-into-slavery-in-newjersey/>.
2. Kathy Faulks announced that the Battle of Bound Brook will be on April 10, 2021 with all of South Bound Brook's activities to be on the site of the Abraham Staats House, 17 von Steuben Lane.
3. Melanie Marano thanked the C&H Commissioners for changing the C&H meetings dates to accommodate her schedule.
4. Donnetta Johnson asked how the C&H supported the monthly themes (i.e., Black History Month, Women's History Month, Arts & Humanities Month). Kaitlyn Bundy explained that the committees needed to be restructured due to the departure of a commissioner, but they would begin soon. Non-profit groups' events are publicized through the Somerset County's Public Information office.
5. Les Floyd, a local artist based in Somerville and soon to be C&H Advisor, introduced himself. Some of his artworks are on the website. <http://www.lesfloydfinearts.com/>
6. Ray Sanderson announced a grant for historic restaurants sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Sites: <https://savingplaces.org/historicrestaurants#.YEGsSi1h1ls>

IX. Adjournment 8:35 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Faulks, Secretary