

SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION
Thursday, May 6, 2021 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, Rory Britt, Kathy Faulks, Dennis Quinlan, Edwin Scannell, Marge Sullivan; Absent: Peter Stavrianidis; Excused: Donnetta Johnson,

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

Advisory Members: Sean Blinn, Brian Faulks, Brad Fay

Members of the Public: Jessie Havens

Commissioner Liaison: Melanie Marano

IV. Approval of April 1, 2021 Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes made by Rory Britt and seconded by Marge Sullivan. Passed.

V. Correspondence

1. Kaitlin Bundy reported that the County Commissioners passed Resolution #R21-413 appointing Advisory Members to the Cultural & Heritage Commission Advisory Board.

2. Presentation "Government in Petticoats" online discussion Crossroads of American Revolution was recorded and is available online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2r0qDusw-M>

VI. Staff Reports/Old Business

The following reports were made by Tom D'Amico:

Historic Preservation Grant Program. Tom reported that we have received thirteen applications totaling \$1,327,951 for the 2021 Historic Preservation Grant Program. This is the greatest number of applications that we've received in the past 12 years; we only received two applications in 2020. Staff is currently reviewing the applications and preparing summary documents for the Grant Program Advisory Committee. We will schedule a Committee meeting for the end of May or early June. Their recommendations will be transmitted to the Cultural & Heritage Commission for review, and both recommendations will be transmitted to the County Commissioners for their action.

We have processed payments for the Mount Bethel Baptist Meeting House which closed out the 2017 grant and made a payment on the 2019 grant.

Historic Preservation Master Plan. Tom told the Commission that we expect to have drafts of the Introduction, Land Use Planning Context, Public Education and Outreach and Tourism chapters of the Preservation Plan from Heritage Strategies early next week. These chapters will be transmitted to the Preservation Plan Steering committee and a meeting will be scheduled for the last week in May. The only chapters to be completed are the brief introduction chapters for each of the major sections of the plan (Open Space, Farmland Preservation and Historic Preservation).

2021 SCCHC Meeting Dates:

Jan 13, Feb 3, Mar 4, April 1, May 6, Jun 3, Sep 9, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2

SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION
Thursday, May 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes – Virtual Zoom Meeting

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 endorsement.

County Historic Preservation Projects. Tom reported that the last piece of the restored stained-glass window on the first Dutch Reformed Church which is the Jury Assembly Room in Somerville has been installed. We have requested cost estimates for the four windows on the east side of the structure. The County has allocated \$100,000 for the next phase of the project.

Work will begin this spring on the east wing of the Van Horne House in Bridgewater. The contractor has been selected and some field work has been completed. Work on the House will include replacing the siding, installing a new cedar roof and replacing the gutters on that side. The County will also be reparging the top of the brick oven, repointing the foundation on the east side, and replacing the metal roof on the back side of the building.

Historic Marker Program. A mark-out has been completed for the Raritan Library (General John Frelinghuysen House) historic marker. We hope it can be installed shortly. We previously transmitted installation specifications to the Borough. Tom has contacted Warren Township about the installation of the historic marker for the Kirch-Ford-Terrill House on Mount Bethel Road in Warren Township.

The latest marker has installed at the Moses Craig Limestone Kilns on Main Street in Peapack. A dedication ceremony will be held at the site on May 11, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.

The following reports were made by Kaitlin Bundy:

Local Arts Program Grant. 2021 Grant: Kaitlin reported that the 2021 LAP Re-grant Contracts were due on April 30, 2021. To date we have received nine of the eleven expected contracts. Staff has been in touch with the two organizations that are missing contracts; we expect to receive them shortly. As staff reviews all the contracts, they are either approved and sent up for signature in the County Commissioners' office, or staff notifies the organization of required changes needed.

Annual Report. C&H Staff thanked those commissioners and advisory members who provided feedback on the Annual Report. Staff is working with the County graphics department to implement the suggested changes.

Arts Committee Report. The Arts Committee met at 7:00 p.m. on April 22, 2021. Staff reported in detail on current projects and future projects were discussed.

History Committee Report. The History Committee met at 7:00 p.m. on April 12, 2021. Staff reported in detail on current projects and future projects were discussed.

2021 SCCHC Meeting Dates:

Jan 13, Feb 3, Mar 4, April 1, May 6, Jun 3, Sep 9, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2

SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION
Thursday, May 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes – Virtual Zoom Meeting

The following reports were made by Natalie Zaman:

NJ Historical Commission County History Partnership Program Grant. 2021 Grant: 2021 CHPP Re-grantee contracts were due on April 30, 2021. We are currently reviewing the four (4) completed contracts and are requesting more information and corrections where needed. Once corrections are made, the contracts will be sent to the County Commissioners for authorization, after which first payments will be released.

2021 Teen Arts Festival. Natalie reported on the continued coordination of the 2021 Virtual Teen Arts Festival:

- 18 Schools with 865 students are participating across 8 disciplines. From this year's entries we have received 282 pieces of student work:
 - 49 pieces of Creative Writing. These will be published in our annual Anthology which will be printed for the students. It will also be available digitally on the County website. Prior to sending the writing pieces out for adjudication, staff read each piece. Student writings often address sensitive subjects. In some cases, staff did reach out to the school coordinators to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the student whose writing raised a flag. While none of us are trained therapists or health care professionals, these modes of expression must be handled with care and hopefully plays a part in addressing any potential issues.
 - 170 pieces of Visual Art which will be showcased in an online gallery like that which was done for the Senior Art Show last year.
 - 15 Films
 - 9 Dance performances
 - 16 Vocal performances
 - 8 Instrumental performances
 - 5 Theatrical (drama) performances
 - 10 Musical Theater performances
- Many of the participating students have provided releases which will allow us to share their work on the County's social media platforms. We are also looking at creating a short video to showcase student work.
- We have engaged sixteen diverse artists to do video adjudication of each student's work. Videos are due back on May 14th and will be reviewed by staff before they are delivered to the Coordinators. In addition to critiquing student work, the artists will be making recommendations for students to move on to adjudication at the 2021 state festival.

2021 Journey through the Past. Natalie reminded everyone that the 16th Annual Journey through the Past will take place over the month of October 2021. Based on the success of last year's initiatives, we are planning to hold the 2021 Journey through the Past both in-person and virtually:

- If allowed and safe to do so, the traditional Weekend Journey will take place on Saturday, October 9, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, October 10, 2021, from Noon to 4:00 p.m.
- We will create another Virtual Journey story map which will feature brief narratives, lots of visuals and have active links to websites and videos. The map will also include GIS maps of sites participating on October 9th and 10th and history hunt sites. Other initiatives may be added.

2021 SCCHC Meeting Dates:

Jan 13, Feb 3, Mar 4, April 1, May 6, Jun 3, Sep 9, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2

SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION
Thursday, May 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes – Virtual Zoom Meeting

Guidelines and commitment forms were sent out in mid-March. Organizations can participate in person, virtually or both. Commitment forms are due back on May 14, 2021. Natalie asked organizations interested in participating to contact C&H staff. So far, 16 potential sites have signed up (potential, because not all forms have been received yet); three will be participating virtually only and thirteen will participate in person (some are also participating virtually.)

VII. New Business/Action Items

1. **2022 LAP and CHPP Grants.** Motion made by Kathy Faulks and seconded by Marge Sullivan to remove the match requirements for the 2022 LAP and CHPP Grants. Passed.
2. **Other.** Motion made by Marge Sullivan and seconded by Kathy Faulks to have the C&H create a list of historic sites in Somerset County to submit as potential sites to be included in the Sankofa Collaborative African American Heritage Trail Project. Passed.

VIII. Open Meeting to the Public

Announcements/Other News:

Next SCC&H meeting will take place VIRTUALLY on Thursday June 3, 2021.

1. Jessie Havens asked the status of the Topology project for the Semiquincentennial. Tom D'Amico will discuss the progress with Jessie and Rory Britt.
2. Jessie Havens asked for an update of the 1989 census compendium book. The Trends and Indicators Report was last released in 2013 by the Somerset County Planning Board.
3. Brad Fay announced that the 240th Anniversary of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route-march anniversary is August 28-29, 2021. The East Coast Greenway and Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition are collaborating. ECG has announced a bike ride from New York to Philadelphia through Somerset County with a rest stop at Colonial Park in Franklin. Commissioner Marano wants coordination with Public Information, Somerset County Parks Commission as well as municipalities and non-profits.
4. Commissioner Marano asked for a status update on the Juneteenth program. Public Information has been in touch with Donnetta Johnson.
5. Kathy Faulks announced an Open House on May 8, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to Noon at the Abraham Staats House, 17 von Steuben Lane. The event is free, all are welcome and COVID guidelines will be followed.

IX. Adjournment 8:15 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Faulks, Secretary

2021 SCCHC Meeting Dates:

Jan 13, Feb 3, Mar 4, April 1, May 6, Jun 3, Sep 9, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2