

**SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
**Thursday, Sept. 09, 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 of new Cultural & Heritage Commissioner, Natalie Pineiro**

**IV. Roll Call**

**Commissioners:** Don Esposito, Rory Britt, Kathy Faulks, Donnetta Johnson, Natalie Pineiro, Dennis Quinlan, Edwin Scannell, Marge Sullivan; Absent: Peter Stavrianidis

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

**Advisory Members:** Brad Fay, Hilary Klimek, Kathleen Palmer; Excused: Ray Sanderson, Sean Blinn

**Members of the Public:** Jessie Havens

**Commissioner Liaison:** Melanie Marano

**V. Approval of June 3, 2021, Minutes**

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

**VI. Correspondence**

Kaitlin Bundy shared the Somerset County Agriculture Development Boards September 14, 2021 Influencing Agriculture: Women in Ag flyer.

**VII. Staff Reports/Old Business**

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

**Historic Preservation Master Plan.** Thomas D'Amico reported that the County is updating the County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, the Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan and developing a new Historic Preservation Plan. The County has contracted with Heritage Strategies to coordinate the report along with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation to develop the Open Space Plan, Land Stewardship Solutions to develop the Farmland Preservation Plan, and Barton Ross and Partners to develop the Historic Preservation Plan. The GIS mapping is being handled by Washington College with assistance from the Planning Division's Office of GIS.

The final draft of the plan has been completed. It is available for review online at <https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-works/planning/current-projects> and at 15 libraries throughout the County. There are four public meeting scheduled, Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m., Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m., and Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. We will schedule the Historic Preservation Master Plan for discussion at the next Commission meeting.

We will hold the appropriate public hearings and the plans will be considered for adoption by the County Planning Board as part of the County Master Plan.

**2021 SCC&HC Meeting Dates:**

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

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

**Local Arts Program Grant. 2021 Grant:** The 2021 Local Arts Program Grant (LAP), is currently on track. Staff held zoom meetings with all re-grant organizations to check in with each organization over the summer. Final report forms will be sent out to re-grantees in late September.

**2022 Grant:** The New Jersey State Council on the Arts announced that the Commission will receive \$217,047.00 in LAP grant funds for 2022. This is triple the amount of previous grant awards. Kaitlin asked that the Commission hold off on any motions to determine how much funding will go to the re-grant program until October, when the total grant request from 2022 applicants will be available to discuss. 2022 LAP grant applications are due on September 14<sup>th</sup>.

**C&H Long Range Plan.** Throughout the summer staff has been working with our consultant Mercer Planning Associates on a number of public outreach opportunities for the Commission's long range plan. This included nine focus groups, a symposium, a virtual open house, seven different pop up events throughout the county and a survey and mapping tool for the public to engage with.

**Excellence in the Arts.** The Commission has received 9 nominations for review for the Excellence in the Arts Awards. The Awards Committee will be meeting on September 27<sup>th</sup> to discuss the awards and the ceremony, which staff believes will need to be held virtually.

**C&H Summer Activities. History Programming:**

**Juneteenth:** Somerset County held its first ever Juneteenth Celebration on Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. on the Courthouse green, in front of the Historic Courthouse in Somerville. The Cultural & Heritage Commission was able to utilize grant funding to provide honorariums to a number of artists being engaged for the event. C&H Commissioner Donnetta Johnson worked with county employee Lauren Guastella to create a very engaging program that was well received by all.

**Knox-Porter:** For the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Knox-Porter Resolution (the document signed by President Harding ending US involvement in WW1), we worked with the Raritan Library and Wallace House in Somerville on two separate events in June and July. On June 20<sup>th</sup> a live musical performance, The Songs of WWI was presented at the Wallace House and then on July 10<sup>th</sup>, a re-enactment of the signing of the Know-Porter Resolution occurred. Both events were well attended.

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

**County History Partnership Program Grant. 2021 Grant:** The 2021 County History Partnership Program Grant (CHPP), is currently on track. Interim reports were filed by all re-grantee organizations. We also filed our Interim Report with the New Jersey Historical Commission in June. Final report forms will be sent out to re-grantees in late September.

**2022 Grant:** The New Jersey Historical Commission announced that the SCC&HC will receive \$77,962.00 in CHPP grant funds for 2022. By order of the New Jersey State Historical Commission, \$52,962 of these funds will go to re-grants and \$25K will go to operations. This is a \$30K increase from last year's award. We ask that the Commission hold off on any motions to determine how much funding will go to the re-grant program until October, when the total grant request from 2022 applicants will be available to discuss. 2022 CHPP grant applications are due on September 14<sup>th</sup>.

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**C&H Gallery.** Our building just reopened this summer, and staff curated a temporary gallery. Today we installed works from our 2021 Senior Art Show. This year, we have 64 participating Somerset County senior artists. This exhibit is a hybrid exhibit consisting of our in-person gallery, and an online gallery. Thirty eight works can be seen at the County Administration Building while all works can be viewed in the online exhibit.

Commissioner Marano asked if any Commission or Advisory members had art exhibit experience and would be willing to help the LGBTQ+ advisory committee. Advisory members Sean Blinn and Hilary Klimek provided their information to help.

**2021 Journey through the Past.** The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Journey through the Past will take place over the month of October. If it is allowed and safe to do so, the traditional Weekend Journey will take place on Saturday, October 9<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM and Sunday, October 10<sup>th</sup> from Noon to 4:00 PM. We have 24 sites participating in person this year, however, this number may change because of the damage caused by Hurricane Ida. We've heard from several sites—most are doing okay, but we are still waiting on updates. We mailed out posters and postcards earlier this month, and banners and large posters are available for pick up. We are hoping to have all other materials available for pick up by the end of the month.

**VIII. New Business/Action Items**

1. None

**IX. Open Meeting to the Public**

**Announcements/Other News:**

**The next SCC&H meeting will take place VIRTUALLY on Thursday October 7, 2021.**

1. Brad Fay said that 2021 is the 240<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route march. There were events in Griggstown and Trenton and Westfield, a bike ride from New York to Philadelphia through Somerset County with a rest stop at Colonial Park in Franklin. The event was August 28<sup>th</sup>.
2. Tom D'Amico said that 2021 is the 240<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route was also celebrated in Westfield with Congressman Malinowski present August 29<sup>th</sup>.

**X. Closed Session**

Motion to close the meeting to the public made by Rory Britt and seconded by Marge Sullivan. Passed.

1. 2021 Historic Preservation Grant Recommendations

**XI. Reopen Meeting**

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**XII. 2022 Historic Preservation Grant Committee**

President Don Esposito appointed Janet Foster, Max Hayden, Rory Britt, Don Esposito, Tom D'Amico and Cultural & Heritage Staff to the 2022 Historic Preservation Grant Committee for 2022.

**XIII. Friends of Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Appointments**

President Don Esposito appointed the following Commissioners to the Somerset County Friends of Cultural & Heritage: Don Esposito, Rory Britt, Kathy Faulks Peter Stavrianidis and Marge Sullivan. Motion made by Natalie Pineiro and seconded by Rory Britt. Passed.

**XIV. Adjournment**

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

Motion made by Donnetta Johnson and seconded by Natalie Pineiro. Passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Faulks, Secretary

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