

**SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
**Thursday, Dec 2, 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. Roll Call**

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

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

**Advisory Members:** Sean Blinn, Brad Fay, Brian Faulks, Hilary Klimek, Kathleen Palmer

**Members of the Public:**

**Commissioner Liaison:** Melanie Marano

**IV. Approval of November 4, 2021, Minutes**

Motion to accept the minutes made by Natalie Pineiro and seconded by Marge Sullivan. Passed.

**V. Correspondence**

Tom D'Amico received a letter from Richard Grubb Associates announcing they will be undertaking an archeological review of the lot at 1423 Route 27 in Franklin Township near Bennet's Lane.

**VI. Staff Reports/Old Business**

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

**Historic Preservation Grant Program.** Tom reported that based on the recommendations of the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee and the Cultural and Heritage Commission, the Board of County Commissioners allocated 11 historic preservation grants in the amount of \$1,130,143. The contracts have been drafted; contracts and vouchers will be sent to all recipients after they have been approved by County Counsel. Additionally, we are working on payments for the Kennedy-Martin Stelle Farmstead in Bernards and the Dirck Gulick House in Montgomery (the attendant organization has submitted its *Conceptual Landscape Plan and Archaeological Report*).

**County Preservation Projects. Van Horne House:** The County Public Works Department is working on the east wing of the Van Horne House in Bridgewater. After a long delay the siding has been received. The contractor has been selected and basic wood and foundation repairs are continuing. The project includes replacing the siding, installing a new cedar roof and replacing the gutters on the east wing. 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 porch on the back side of the building.

**Lord Memorial Fountain:** The County has retained the services of Mills & Schnoering Architects LLC to develop recommendations and techniques to clean the Lord Memorial Fountain which is part of the historic County Courthouse Green.

**1<sup>st</sup> Dutch Reformed Church Stained Glass Windows:** The stained glass artisans have been selected, J & R Lamb Studios. Their main office is in Midland Park New Jersey, and they will be restoring a large round window and three other windows below it on the west façade of the building. The application to SHPO is underway.

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**Fleischmann Carriage House:** The County has awarded a professional Service Contract to Mills & Schnoering Architects, LLC for a Historic Preservation Plan and a design study for the Fleischmann Carriage House in Colonial Park in Franklin Township.

**Baker-Duderstadt Farmstead:** The County is working on hiring consultants for planning work for the Baker-Duderstadt Farmstead in the East County Park in Warren Township. We did meet with a consultant at the Duderstadt site and expect to receive a proposal shortly.

**Historic Preservation Master Plan.** As noted at the last meeting, the final draft of the Historic Preservation Plan has been completed. It was available for review online and at 15 libraries throughout the County. We had four virtual public meetings and received considerable public input both from the meetings and from comments submitted to the County. The County's professional staff has been reviewing all comments and entering them into a data base. Staff will make appropriate changes to the various plan elements based on the comments. The revised plans will be submitted to the Preservation Plan Steering Committee for their review and comment. After any recommended changes from the Steering Committee are incorporated into the Plan, the revised Historic Preservation Plan will be submitted to the Cultural and Heritage Commission for its endorsement. 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.

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

**Local Arts Program Grant. 2022 Grant:** On November 8, 2021 a special meeting of the Cultural & Heritage Commission was held to discuss all recommendations on the 19 applications submitted for the 2022 LAP grants. Staff has presented the recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners and expects the grants to be formally passed via resolution at the Board of County Commissioners meeting on December 21, 2021.

**National Endowment for the Arts – ARP Sub-grant:** Staff received notice that the county will be awarded \$150,000.00 from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Grants to Local Arts Agencies for Sub-granting program. The NEA announced ARP grants totaling \$20,200,000. to 66 local arts agencies for sub-granting to help the arts and cultural sector recover from the pandemic. The agencies will use this funding to distribute grants in their communities to eligible recipients to save jobs and to fund operations and facilities, health and safety supplies, and marketing and promotional efforts to encourage attendance and participation. The Cultural & Heritage Commission is the designated Local Arts Agencies for County of Somerset and will act as the primary agency in sub-granting these funds to our local arts organizations. Only three entities in NJ received this funding (Somerset County, Middlesex County and the Jersey City Arts Council).

**Technical Assistance Workshop:** On November 10, 2021 at 10:0am we hosted a virtual technical assistance workshop *How Succession Planning Builds Organizational Sustainability and Strengthens Staff and Board Leadership*. The workshop explored various aspects of succession planning including emergency succession plans, leadership succession plans for staff and the board, as well as planned executive transition. Participants were very appreciative of this workshop and the support materials provided. Mayor Canose from Bernardsville was among the attendees and stated that she was very grateful that the County offers these types of workshops.

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

**NJ Historical Commission County History Partnership Program Grant. 2022 Grant:** On November 8, 2021 a special meeting of the Cultural & Heritage Commission was held to discuss all recommendations on the 6 applications submitted for the 2022 CHPP grants. Staff has presented the recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners and expects the grants to be formally passed via resolution at the Board of County Commissioners meeting on December 21, 2021.

**C&H Gallery.** Currently on display in the gallery are the Camera Naturalists. Additionally, we have an exhibit of wood-turned objects in our display cases which can viewed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the administration building in Somerville.

**Excellence in the Arts.** The Excellence in the Arts awards will take place virtually on Tuesday, December 7, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Additionally, our winners will be presented with citations at the beginning of the County Commissioners' meeting on Tuesday, December 21, 2021. At that time we will also hand out the crystal awards to all winners who are able to attend.

**VII. New Business/Action Items**

1. **2022 Meeting Dates:** Kaitlin asked the Commission to discuss the meeting dates for 2022, specifically if the Commission would like to continue to meet on Thursday or move the meetings back to Wednesday. Kaitlin also asked if the Commission would like to push the September meeting date due to the Labor Day holiday and for the Commission to move on a motion to set the January 2022 meeting date. Motion to keep the meetings on the first Thursday of the month by Rory Britt and seconded by Marge Sullivan. Passed. Motion to move the January 2022 meeting to January 13 by Natalie Pineiro and seconded by Marge Sullivan. Passed.
2. **2022 Teen Arts Festival:** Kaitlin informed the Commission that staff polled the local schools that participate in the annual Teen arts festival and have received mixed messages regarding the ability to attend an in-person festival. Kaitlin asked the Commission for guidance on how to proceed with the festival. Staff was asked to investigate alternate sites and virtual platforms for the 2022 festival.
3. **2022 Historic Preservation and History Awards:** Traditionally the Historic Preservation and History Awards would take place in May of 2022. Kaitlin asked the Commission to discuss if they would like to proceed with the event in May, and if they would like for the event to be held in-person or virtually. An informal poll resulted in moving the awards ceremony from May to October to tie-in with *Journey Through the Past* and *Arts and Humanities Month*. A decision on how the ceremony will be held will be made closer to the event.

**VIII. Open Meeting to the Public**

**Announcements/Other News:**

**The next SCC&H meeting will take place VIRTUALLY on Thursday January 13, 2022.**

**The Somerset County Commissioner's Reorganization meeting is January 7, 2022.**

1. Sean Blinn announced that the Jacobus Vandever House & Museum will hold a Tree Lighting Celebration Saturday, December 4, 2021 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., 3055 River Road, Bedminster, NJ 07921 <https://jvanderverhouse.org>.

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2. Kathy Faulks announced that the Abraham Staats House will hold *Holiday at the Staats House* Saturday, December 4, 2021 from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. featuring The Madrigal Singers of Franklin Township High School outdoors Saturday only. Sunday hours are the same 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Free event. [www.staatshouse.org](http://www.staatshouse.org)
3. Kathy Faulks also announced that the Abraham Staats House will hold a *Candlelight Tour at the Abraham Staats House* on Saturday, December 4, 2021 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. \$10 per person advance reservation, \$15 at the door. [www.staatshouse.org](http://www.staatshouse.org)
4. Kathleen Palmer announced the Somerset County Business Partnership will hold their *2021 Annual Meeting and Celebration of Success* 11:30 a.m. on Monday, December 13, 2021 at the Palace at Somerset Park, 333 Davidson Avenue, Somerset, NJ. <https://bit.ly/12-2021am>.
5. Kathleen Palmer announced the Ross Farm will hold the *2021 North Pole on North Maple Drive Through* December 10, 11, and 12, 2021 in Basking Ridge.
6. Marge Sullivan discussed the NJ Historic Trust's site *Journey Through Jersey* and wants the Commission to encourage Somerset County historic sites to register there. <https://www.journeythroughjersey.org>

**IX. Adjournment**

**Adjournment 8:30 p.m.**

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Faulks, Secretary

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