

SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION
Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021, Meeting Minutes – Virtual Zoom Meeting

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 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, Marge Sullivan; **Absent:** Edwin Scannell (excused), Peter Stavrianidis

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

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

Members of the Public: Jessie Havens

Commissioner Liaison: Melanie Marano

IV. Approval of October 7, 2021, Minutes

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

V. Correspondence

1. Kaitlin Bundy announced three upcoming programs:

a) "Female Spies of WWII" Tuesday, November 9, 2021, 6:30 p.m. at the Raritan Public Library

b) "Tribute to Veterans" Saturday, November 13, 2021, 2:00 p.m. Manville Public Library

c) "Looking Back, Looking Forward" Wednesday, November 17, 3:30 p.m.- 4:30 p.m. ZOOM Webinar NJ Historical Commission and Crossroads of the American Revolution

2. Tom D'Amico received the Friends of NJ Transportation Heritage Center Newsletter Vol 13 November 3, 2021, with an article about a railcar built in 1912 for the Delaware, Lackawanna & Millstone Railroad. It's been fully restored and on display in Whippany at the Route 10 & Whippany Road railroad station.

3. Walter Lane & Kaitlin Bundy have scheduled a meeting with County Counsel Joe DeMarco about the SCCHC Bylaws.

VI. Staff Reports/Old Business

The following reports were made by Thomas D'Amico:

Historic Preservation Grant Program. Tom reported that the 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 to the following organizations:

Rocky Hill Borough Hall, \$41,073

Kennedy-Martin-Stelle Farm House, \$141,078

Bound Brook Railroad Station, \$106,250

Van Doren Farm House (Howe), \$174,480

Van Liew-Suydam House, \$146,835

Dr. John Vermeule House, \$34,690

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Vail Trust House, \$187,525
Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum, \$28,731
Rocky Hill Fire House, \$55,822
Daniel Robert House, \$124,031
Abraham Staats House, \$89,628

The contracts are currently being drafted and after they have been approved by County Counsel they will be sent to each recipient for execution.

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 will be replacing the metal roof on the porch on the back side of the building.

1st Dutch Reformed Church Stained Glass windows: The stained glass artisans have been selected: J & R Lamb Studios whose main office is in Midland Park New Jersey. 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.

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

The County is also working on hiring consultants for planning work for the Baker-Duderstadt Farmstead in the East County Park in Warren Township and the Fleischmann Carriage House in Colonial Park in Franklin Township.

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 is reviewing these comments and is 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 Cultural and Heritage Commission for 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 2021 Grant: Final report forms have been sent out to all 2021 re-grantees and are due back January 7, 2022. Staff continues to work with all of the organizations to help them complete this final stage of the grant so that final payments can be released.

2022 Grant: On October 26, 2021 an independent peer panel reviewed the 19 LAP grant applications received for the 2022 grant cycle. A special meeting of the Cultural & Heritage Commission will be

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held on November 8, 2021 to discuss all recommendations before presenting them to the Board of County Commissioners.

New Jersey Division of Travel & Tourism Cooperative Marketing Grant. Staff received the award notice from the New Jersey Division of Travel & Tourism that the Commission has been awarded a Cooperative Marketing grant for 2022 in the amount of \$12,900.00 this is a \$900 increase from 2021. These funds are used to supplement local marketing efforts for Journey Through the Past, extending them statewide and to surrounding regions.

Excellence in the Arts. Last month the winners of the Excellence in the Arts awards were officially announced:

- Marcia Jennings, Arts in Education
- Qing Yang Dance Studio, Arts in Education
- Mitali Bhawmik, Arts in the Community
- Arts on Division, Arts in the Community
- Bound Brook Cultural Arts Committee Arts in the Community
- Downtown Bernardsville, Arts in the Community
- Frontline Arts, Arts in the Community
- Music in the Somerset Hills, Arts in the Community
- Srinaath Kidambi Perangur, Aspiring Young Artist

Staff is currently working to finalize all details of the virtual event, taking place on December 7, 2021. Registration for the even can be found at <https://bit.ly/ExcellArtsCeremony21>. Staff is currently working with the Constituent Aide to the County Commissioners to set up a date to award all of the winners' citations.

Technical Assistance Workshop. On November 10, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. we are hosting a virtual technical assistance workshop How Succession Planning Builds Organizational Sustainability and Strengthens Staff and Board Leadership. The workshop will explore various aspects of succession planning including emergency succession plans, leadership succession plans for staff and the board, as well as planned executive transition.

Diversity Festival. C&H Staff helped run the Somerset County Diversity Festival, which will take place on Saturday, October 9, 2021 from noon to 4:00 p.m. All C&H run staff activities were well received throughout the day.

The following reports were made by Natalie Zaman:

NJ Historical Commission County History Partnership Program Grant. 2021 Grant: Staff continues to check in on all 2021 re-grant organizations. Final Report Forms for the 2021 County History Partnership Program Grant (CHPP) are due on January 7, 2022. Staff will work with all of the organizations to help them complete this final stage of the grant so that final payments can be released.

2022 Grant: An independent peer panel reviewed the six CHPP grant applications we received on October 12, 2021. Summaries of the grant applications and requests and panel comments and

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recommendations were sent to the Commission on October 21, 2021. The Commission will meet on November 8, 2021 to discuss these items after which they will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners.

C&H Gallery. Currently on display in the gallery is an exhibit from Frontline Paper, an initiative of the Somerset County nonprofit arts organization Frontline Arts. Frontline Paper is a program for veterans, that is also run by veterans. Participant-artists use an ancient process turns fabric—in this case, military uniforms—into handmade paper that they then use as a canvas. This exhibition is timely not only will be up for Veteran's day, but it is also Frontline Paper's 10th anniversary which is being marked by our exhibit, an exhibit at their facility in Branchburg, and the release of a film, *This Is Not A War Story* that can be viewed on HBO.

Journey through the Past. This year's Journey Through the Past was presented in a, "choose your own adventure" format. Visitors were able to visit participating historic sites in person on October 9 and 10, 2021, take a self-guided driving tour of the Millstone Valley National Scenic Byway created by the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition, participate in a History Hunt and take a virtual journey through the past through our story map. All JTTP materials—maps, guidebooks, activity guides, etc. can still be accessed on our website (www.schistoryweekend.com). Natalie then shared virtual and in person engagement stats for those sites that submitted feedback forms.

VII. New Business/Action Items

1. Kaitlin Bundy announced that the New Jersey State Council on the Arts has awarded the Commission \$217,047.00 in Local Arts Program funding for 2022 (\$144,698.00 increase from previous grant awards). The Arts Council does not designate the amount of funds to be utilized for re-grant versus operating. The Commission has received \$440,496.00 in funding requests for calendar year 2022. Kaitlin asked the Commission to move that \$200,000.00 of the \$217,047.00 be utilized for the Commission's re-grant program. **Motion** to use \$200,000 for re-grants and \$17,047 toward grant operating expenses made by Marge Sullivan and seconded by Natalie Pineiro. Passed.

VIII. Open Meeting to the Public
Announcements/Other News:

The next SCC&H meeting will take place VIRTUALLY on Thursday December 2, 2021.

1. Marge Sullivan announced that the WWI Monument in Somerville was cleaned and replanted after Hurricane Ida by Boy Scout Alex Cleveland in time for Veterans Day earning him his Eagle Scout Award.
2. Brad Fay announced that the Van Horne House will receive a new sign through the Crossroads of the American Revolution funded by NJ Manufacturers.
3. Tom D'Amico attended Friends of Bridgewater History presentation by Dr. Richard Viet "What Lies Beneath" about the Middlebrook Cantonment and the research in his just published book. An audience of 20 was expected but there were about 65 people on October 27, 2021 at the Blessed Sacrament Church Bridgewater.

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4. County Commissioner Melanie Marano congratulated volunteers and staff and virtual for a great *Journey Through the Past plus Diversity Event* this year.
5. Sean Blinn announced that he will be making a presentation at the National Council of Public History Conference in Montreal on behalf of the Jacobus Vandever House.

IX. Adjournment

Adjournment 8:15 p.m. Motion made by Marge Sullivan and seconded by Donnetta Johnson. Passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Faulks, Secretary

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