

**SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
**Thursday, January 13, 2022, 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:** Rory Britt, Don Esposito, Kathy Faulks, Donnetta Johnson, Natalie Pineiro, Dennis Quinlan, Marge Sullivan; **Absent:** Edwin Scannell, Peter Stavrianidis

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

**Advisory Members:**

**Members of the Public:** Jessie Havens, Jonathan Hress, Aldo Adriazola, Sean Blinn, Brian Faulks, Hilary Klimek, Rikki Massand, Kathleen Palmer

**Commissioner Liaison:** Deputy Director Melanie Marano

**IV. Approval of December 2, 2021, Minutes**

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

**V. Election of Officers**

**Nominating Committee:** Don Esposito Chairman, Kathy Faulks

**President:** Rory Britt

**Vice-President:** Donnetta Johnson

**Treasurer:** Natalie Pineiro

**Secretary:** Kathy Faulks

No nominations from the floor.

Motion to accept the Nominating Committee's recommendations made by Marge Sullivan and seconded by Dennis Quinlan. Passed.

**VI. Correspondence**

Kaitlin Bundy received a letter dated January 6, 2022, from Peter Stavrianidis announcing his resignation from the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission. This letter will be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint another individual.

**VII. 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 and are being reviewed by County Counsel. Once approved by County Counsel, they will be sent to the Board of County Commissioners for authorization and then to the recipients with the appropriate voucher. We are working on payments for the Kennedy-Martin Stelle

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---

---

Farmstead in Bernards and the Dirck Gulick House in Montgomery for which a *Conceptual Landscape Plan and Archaeological Report* has been submitted.

**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.

**Lord Memorial Fountain:** The County has retained the services of Mills and Schoering 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 for this project will be J & R Lamb Studios; their 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.

**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 from the meetings and from comments submitted to the County. Staff is currently reviewing and entering all comments into a data base and 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:** Staff received final reports from all eleven (11) 2021 LAP Re-grantees. Staff are reviewing the reports and contacting those organizations whose reports require modification or releasing final payments if the reports are satisfactory. Release of a final payment will

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**Thursday, January 13, 2022, Meeting Minutes – Virtual Zoom Meeting**

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formally close out an organization’s 2021 grant. Any organization also receiving funding in 2022 is required to close out their 2021 grant before any 2022 funding can be released. Staff is also preparing our final report for the NJ State Council on the Arts which is due on February 11, 2022.

**2022 Grant:** On December 21, 2021 through resolution of the Board of County Commissioner’s authorized the 2022 Local Arts Program Re-grantee awards. The following awards were authorized:

American Theater Group	\$37,640.00
Bernards Township Parks and Recreation	\$3,500.00
Bound Brook Cultural Arts Committee	\$3,500.00
EmPoWER Somerset	\$5,500.00
Friends of the Kennedy Martin Stelle Farmstead	\$52,292.00
Light Opera of New Jersey	\$10,000.00
Music in the Somerset Hills	\$25,000.00
Raag Rang	\$6,403.00
Raritan Valley Choral Society	\$3,800.00
Raritan Valley Symphonic Band	\$5,000.00
RVCC Arts & Design Department	\$5,000.00
Somerset County Parks Commission	\$3,500.00
Somerset Valley Players	\$15,000.00
The Arc of Somerset County	\$2,000.00
Ukrainian History & Education Center	\$15,000.00

2022 LAP grants totaling \$193,135.00 will be distributed to local arts organizations and for arts programs in Somerset County. All 2022 re-grant organizations have been notified of their grant awards. Staff is currently preparing all contracts for the 2022 grants. All organizations that were not granted a 2022 award have additionally been notified.

**Arts and Economic Prosperity Study:** Somerset County will be participating in the Americans for the Arts’ *Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 Study*. This study will measure the economic impact of spending by the nation’s nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and the event-related spending by their audiences during fiscal year 2022. By participating in the study we will get a customized report on the unique economic impact findings for Somerset County. It will also analyze the difference in spending between resident attendees and cultural tourists. Staff will be working with Americans for the Arts to help collect much of the data required to help generate this report. The County felt that participating in this study was a strong step in the direction of understanding the economic impact generated by the arts and cultural communities in Somerset County. This initiative falls under the new priorities of the Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development under which the Cultural & Heritage Office resides.

**C&H Long Range Plan:** The Commission’s consultant, Mercer Planning Associates, has provided staff with an initial draft of strategies and actions for the Commission’s Long Range Plan. Staff will meet with the consultant team in February to go through this initial round before submitting them to the

**SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
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Steering Committee for discussion. The County extended our contract with Mercer Planning Associates by 6 months so that we did not have to rush through the plan. This has been especially crucial as much of the C&H staff is also highly involved in the County's Preservation Plan.

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

**County History Partnership Program Grant. 2021 Grant:** Staff received final reports from all four (4) 2021 CHPP Re-grantees. Staff has started reviewing all reports and contacting those organizations whose reports require modification or releasing final payments if the reports are satisfactory. Release of the final payment will formally close out the organizations 2021 grant. Any organization also receiving funding in 2022 is required to close out their 2021 grant before any 2022 funding can be released. Staff is also preparing our final report for the NJ Historical Commission which is due on January 31, 2022.

**2022 Grant:** On December 21, 2022 through resolution of the Board of County Commissioner's authorized the 2022 County History Partnership Program Re-grantees. The following awards were authorized:

Borough of Bound Brook	\$4,600.00
Bound Brook Revitalization Partnership	\$5,000.00
Historical Society of the Somerset Hills	\$5,000.00
Somerset County Historical Society	\$35,362.00
Ukrainian History & Education Center	\$3,000.00

2022 CHPP grants totaling \$52,962.00 will be distributed to local history organizations and for history programs in Somerset County. All 2022 re-grant organizations have been notified of their grant awards. Staff is currently preparing all contracts for the 2022 grants. All organizations that were not granted a 2022 award have additionally been notified.

**C&H Gallery.** Currently on display are the Camera Naturalists in the gallery and an exhibit of wood-turned objects in our display cases. These exhibits will be up through February 24, 2022. Due to COVID related issues the group we'd scheduled to exhibit this month had to bow out, and the current exhibitors graciously agreed to extend their exhibit. The remainder of 2022 and a portion of 2023 are tentatively scheduled. We like to be ahead of things, but known that all is subject to change because of the ongoing pandemic. One of the exhibits we are planning for 2023 is an initiative called Farm to Frame, a collaborative effort with the Agricultural Development Board. This exhibit will highlight the County's farmland preservation efforts and celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Farm Preservation Act. We are starting the process in 2022, which will involve a call for artists who will paint Somerset County Farms throughout the seasons. We're looking at getting the call out during the first quarter of 2022 so that artwork can be ready for display in March of 2023.

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**SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
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**2022 Teen Arts Festival.** On January 6, 2022 staff met with participating schools to discuss logistics for the 2022 Teen Arts Festival. Based on this conversation, we learned that schools are currently struggling with a mix of issues, including bans on field trips, shortages of staff and bussing issues. Based on these findings we will be moving forward with virtual adjudications, a digital and printed creative writing anthology and a hybrid (online and in-person) gallery of visual art. Staff will be contacting the County Superintendent of Schools to reach additional schools that have not traditionally participated but may be interested in the virtual format. Additionally, we are looking into the possibility of holding an in-person showcase of student performances in late May or early June. Staff is currently researching potential venues for this venture and will check in with participating schools in March to see if there is a more favorable outlook of schools being able to participate in in-person field trips and events.

**VIII. New Business/Action Items**

1. 2022 Meeting Dates: Kaitlin asked the Commission for a motion to set the 2022 (and January 2023) meeting dates. Motion to approve the 2022 meetings on the first Thursday of the month as well as the January 13, 2023, by Don Esposito and seconded by Natalie Pineiro. Passed.
2. Kaitlin Bundy reminded the Commissioners and Advisory Committee that the county tracks attendance. Staff will have to log all Commissioner and Advisory member attendance into the system. The system has three options: Present, Absent, Excused. If a Commissioner or Advisory member does not want to be marked with an absent, they will need to notify Commission staff prior to the meeting that they will be unable to attend. Staff will then mark them as excused.
3. Donetta Johnson asked about grants for municipalities for the 250<sup>th</sup> of NJ and was told of LAP for arts and CHPP for history, Somerset County Historic Preservation Grants for bricks and mortar projects.
4. Kathy Faulks commended Robert Meyer for the great job with publicizing events for the arts and history non-profit organizations.
5. Kaitlin Bundy encouraged the advisory members to have their municipalities end in a letter recommending them to the Cultural & Heritage Commission addressed to the Board of County Commissioners.
6. Kaitlin Bundy noted that there will be an email sent to commissioners and advisor requesting confirmation of contact information.

**IX. Advisory Committee Comments**

1. Kathleen Palmer announced there will be a ZOOM meeting tomorrow at 1pm for the AACG because 2022 is the International Year of Glass all over the world.
2. Jessie Havens questioned the status of the Howe Property in Franklin Township. A county/nonprofit partnership has been formed with Somerset County Historic Society. They have applied for and will be receiving a Somerset County Historic Preservation Grant for barns stabilization.
3. Brian Faulks asked about the status of the Old Stone Bridge in Bound Brook. It is in active negotiations for the county to acquire the property.

**SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
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- X. Open Meeting to the Public  
Announcements/Other News:  
The next SCC&H meeting will take place VIRTUALLY on Thursday February 3, 2022.
- XI. Adjournment  
Adjournment 8:24 p.m.  
Motion made by Marge Sullivan and seconded by Donald Esposito. Passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Faulks, Secretary