

**SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
**Thursday, July 7, 2022, Meeting Minutes – Virtual Zoom Meeting**

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**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Commission President Rory Britt in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Notice Act, Chapter 231, PL 1975.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

**III. Roll Call**

**Commissioners:** Rory Britt, Donnetta Johnson, Kathy Faulks, Natalie Pineiro, Don Esposito, Jonathan Hress, Dennis Quinlan, Edwin Scannell, Marge Sullivan

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

**Advisory Members:** Sean Blinn, Brian Faulks, Hector Herrera, Rose Kopf, Sharon Onderko

**Members of the Public:** Jessie Havens

**Commissioner Liaison:** Excused – Melonie Marano

**IV. Approval of May 5, 2022, Minutes**

**Motion** to accept the minutes made by Don Esposito and seconded by Jonathan Hress. Passed. Marge Sullivan abstained.

**V. Correspondence**

1. Kaitlin Bundy received a letter of thanks to the Commission for facilitating the Juneteenth event and supporting Stoutsburg Sourland African America Museum Stoutsburg (SSAAM) from Donnetta Johnson.

**VI. Staff Reports/Old Business**

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

**Local Arts Program Grant. 2022 Grant:** Throughout June staff conducted interim conversations over Zoom with 2022 re-grant organizations to check in with each organization and make sure they are on track for the remainder of 2022. Only one re-grant organization needs to submit a modification to their originally proposed contract. Staff will continue to work with this organization to make sure funding is used properly. Deputy Director Marano, Director of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Walter Lane, and Commission Manager Kaitlin Bundy met with our New Jersey State Arts Council representative Mary Eileen Fouratt as part of the Commission's interim meeting requirement with the State.

**2023 Grant:** Application guidelines for the 2023 grant round are currently being reviewed by the County Purchasing Department and County Counsel. Once the applications have approval from both, the applications will go live for the 2023 grant round. Three technical assistance workshops will be scheduled to provide guidance to any potential applicants.

**NEA ARP Sub-granting for Local Arts Agencies Grant.** The Commission received \$150,000.00 in funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). These funds are intended to help support jobs in the arts sector, keep the doors open to arts organizations, and assist the field in its response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This grant is limited to six (6) awards of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) each. Applicants will be allowed to use funding to support:

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- Salary support, full or partial, for one or more staff positions.
- Fees/stipends for artists and/or contractual personnel for services they provide for specific activities in support of your organization’s general operations.
- Costs associated with health and safety supplies for staff and/or visitors/audiences (e.g., personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, etc.).
- Facilities costs such as rent and utilities, e.g., electric, phone, gas bills. (NOTE: Costs related to home offices, upgrades to HVAC/ventilation systems, and other capital improvements are UNALLOWABLE.)
- Marketing and promotion costs.

Applications have been live since May and are due on July 12, 2022. Staff held two separate technical assistance workshops regarding this new grant and have answered several potential applicants questions.

**Historic Preservation Grant Program.** Staff received six (6) applications for the 2022 Historic Preservation Grant program with requests totaling \$1,263,234.00. Applications were received for the Pluckemin School House, the Dunster-Squibb Property, Washington Camp Ground, the Van Doren Howe Farmstead, the Van der Veer-Harris House and the Reasoner-True House. Staff is currently preparing the applications for panel review.

**County Historic Preservation Projects. 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. Analysis of the structure is ongoing; County professional staff had a zoom meeting with the consultants on July 6, 2022 to review potential re-use concepts for the structure.

**Lord Memorial Fountain/Stained Glass Windows:** Staff expects the authorization from the State Historic Preservation Office to proceed with the cleaning of the Lord Memorial Fountain to arrive early next week. Staff is still working with the State on the application for the stained glass in the First Reformed Church.

**History on the Green.** The Commission will host its first-ever History on the Green at the Courthouse Green in Somerville from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on July 30, 2022. The theme is the Washington Rochambeau Pop-up Encampment. Staff is working with the Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route of New Jersey (W3R NJ) for this event which will include:

- Revolutionary War Soldiers
- Fife and Drums
- Children’s Activities
- Hand-cut colonial style silhouettes
- Canon and Musket demos
- Meet and greet with George Washington and French General the Comte de Rochambeau
- And more!

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**Historic Preservation Master Plan.** On May 17, 2022 the Somerset County Planning Board formally adopted the Somerset County Preservation Plan as an element of the county master plan. This plan included an update of the County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, the Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan and developed a new Historic Preservation Plan. The plan has been added to the County website.

**4-H Fair.** The 4-H Fair is scheduled for August 10, 11 and 12, 2022. Staff will be providing various arts and history demonstrations throughout the fair, including presentations by living history educator Noah Lewis, who will portray African American Revolutionary War Hero Ned Hector on August 12, 2022. Commissioners and Advisory Members are encouraged to volunteer for a shift at the fair to help engage the public in the importance and services of the Commission. A virtual sign up will be sent out to all Commission and Advisory members. This year only Commission and Advisory members will be invited to volunteer so that engagement with the public will focus on the Commission itself. Local nonprofit arts and history organizations are allowed to send brochures and fliers to display at the table. Additionally, shirts will not be provided to any non-staff volunteers.

**Historic Preservation and History Awards.** The 2022 Historic Preservation and History Awards nomination forms are available on the County website and were sent out to the Commission's mailing list. Nominations are due back August 22, 2022. Staff is currently working on securing a venue for the awards and will continue to follow State and County health and safety protocols as they work on this event.

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

**County History Partnership Program Grant. 2022 Grant:** 2022 Interim reports were due on June 10, 2022. All five (5) 2022 re-grantee reports were submitted and approved. The Commission submitted its interim report to the state on June 23, 2022. The Commission was given an extension due to the cyber event that took place at the end of May in which staff had no access to email, internet or files for over a month. Staff is currently preparing final report forms to send to re-grantees. 2022 CHPP Final Reports are due on January 10, 2023.

**2023-2025 Grant Cycle:** Staff submitted the Commission's application for the 23-25 CHPP grant on Monday, May 2, 2022. The New Jersey Historical Commission will meet on July 27, 2022. Notification of award status should follow shortly after that.

**2023 Grant:** Application guidelines for the 2023 grant round are currently being reviewed by the County Purchasing Department and County Counsel. Once approval has been given by both, the application will go live for the 2023 grant round. Three technical assistance workshops will be scheduled to provide guidance to any potential applicants.

**Cooperative Marketing Grant. 2022 Grant.** The Cultural & Heritage Commission was awarded \$12,900 in Cooperative Marketing Grant funds from the NJ Division of Travel and Tourism. Funds were used to purchase ad space in digital and print media with target audiences in the greater tristate area to promote the 2022 Journey Through the Past event and economic development in Somerset County. Ads for the 2022 Journey Through the Past event have started to run in Bucks County, Edible Jersey, The Hook and Hudson Valley magazines. Digital ads will run via Edible Jersey and Preservation Magazine's e-newsletter closer to the event.

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**2023 Grant.** Staff applied for a Cooperative Marketing Grant funds from the NJ Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism for 2023. The application was submitted on June 17, 2021. Staff was able to submit the application on time in spite of the cyber event that took place in late May.

**Juneteenth.** Somerset County held its second Juneteenth Celebration on Thursday, June 16, 2022 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 the artists engaged for the event. C&H Commissioner Donnetta Johnson worked with C&H staff, the County Public Information Office and Graphics Department to create another unique and engaging program that was well attended and received. Many thanks were given to the Commissioners who were able to attend.

**Journey Through the Past.** The 17th Annual Journey Through the Past will take place on Saturday, October 8, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, October 9, 2022, from Noon to 4:00 p.m. 28 historic sites have confirmed participation with two more pending. Staff is currently working on updating the guidebook, posters, trading cards and gallery exhibit for this year's event. Arts and History inclusion funding will be available on a first come first served basis. Applications were sent out to participating organizations earlier today and are due back on or before August 19, 2022. The Museum of the American Revolution will erect an exact replica of George Washington's war tent on the Courthouse Green in Somerville as a part of this year's Journey. Staff is finalizing the details of this initiative with the museum.

**The following reports were made by Robert Meyer:**

**C&H Gallery.** On June 14th the 2022 Teen Arts exhibit officially opened in the Cultural & Heritage Gallery at 20 Grove Street. 38 pieces in total are being shown from 8 schools throughout Somerset County and includes paintings, drawings and sculptures, as well as two craved wooden tables. The call for artists has officially opened for the 2022 Senior Art Show. All Somerset County based artists over the age of 60 are welcome to participate. An online application form and FAQ page are available on our website. This year's gallery will run from August 3 to September 12, 2022.

**Teen Arts.** In late May, the adjudication videos for this year's virtual Teen Arts festival were sent to the school coordinators to distribute to their students. This year there were 243 submissions, with each receiving its own unique adjudication video from one of 22 professional artists. Overall, 527 students participated from 11 Somerset County schools. Additionally, a creative writing anthology was produced and distributed to participating schools. The State Teen Arts Festival was held on June 1 and 2 and featured 24 pieces of visual art from Somerset County as well as a few performances from other disciplines. On June 2, 2022 Robert Meyer attended the State Festival and helped Marisell Thomas, the State Coordinator, with the school sign-in table and directing schools and students to their performance spaces.

**VII. New Business/Action Items**

A **Motion** to continue to remove the match requirements for the State/County Partnership Local Arts Program Grant (LAP) and the County History Partnership Program (CHPP) grants made by Marge Sullivan and seconded by Natalie Pineiro. Passed.

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Kaitlin Bundy will check on room availability for physical meeting through the end of 2022. The September meeting will be Zoom but a decision will need to be made then as the change in meeting venue must be advertised to the public in advance of the meetings.

**VIII. Commissioner Comments**

1. Donnetta Bishop-Johnson thanked everyone for their support of Somerset County's Juneteenth, which occurred on Thursday, June 16, 2022, at the Somerville Court House Green, and Stoutsburg Sourland African America Museum (SSAAM).
2. Rory Britt reported that police informed him of a tombstone which was left at a shopping center with the name Kitzer, dated 1894-1907.
3. Don Esposito informed the commission that the Raritan Library now has digitized copies of the Raritan Valley News dated 1935-1950.
4. Kathy Faulks announced U.S. Flood Control will have a demonstration of "Tiger Dam System" at the Abraham Staats House, 17 von Steuben Lane, South Bound Brook, NJ 08880 on Tuesday, July 19, 2022 from 10am-12pm.
5. Jonathan Hress complimented the Manville Library Arts Show, which occurred on June 10, 2022. He also commented that the Juneteenth event went well, and that it was nice to see so many young people and hear the music.
6. Natalie Pineiro thanked everyone for supporting the Juneteenth event. She also announced two events. First, an Artisan Market in Somerville, which will occur on August 7, 2022; second, the Central Jersey Jazz Festival, partnering with *Arts on Division Street*, Somerville, New Brunswick and Flemington, will occur on September 11, 2022.
7. Marge Sullivan announced that the Wallace House successfully submitted their grant application to the National Park Service and should hear the results by October 1, 2022. On May 30, Paul Soltis lead a graveside service from the Wallace House to the Old Cemetery for Civil War nurses from Somerville. One of the graves is for Arabella Wharton Griffith Barlow, a descendant of both the Frelinghuysen and Wallace families. "Flashback", the Heritage Trail Newsletter, is available on their website.
8. Don Esposito's asked about the Commission's bylaws. Staff responded that the bylaws committee meeting needed to be rescheduled, as it was originally schedule when the county experienced some cyber issues.

**IX. Advisory Committee Comments**

1. Sean Blinn announced that the Jacobus Vandever House unveiled a scale model of the Pluckemin Cantonment. He offered congratulations to the Stoutsburg Sourland African America Museum.
2. Sharon Onderko thanked Natalie Zaman and Jonathan Hress for attending Manville Library Arts Show on June 10, 2022.

**X. Open Meeting to the Public**

1. Jessie Havens asked about the Commission's mapping project. Staff indicated that because of the county's recent cyber issues they would not have the map prepared for the 4-H fair this year.

**Announcements/Other News:**

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The next SCC&H meeting will take place VIRTUALLY on Thursday Sept. 1, 2022.

**XI. Adjournment**

**Adjournment 8:50 p.m.**

Motion made by Don Esposito and seconded by Natalie Pineiro. Passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Faulks, Secretary

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