

SOMERSET COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION
Thursday, Sept 1, 2022, Meeting Minutes – Virtual Zoom Meeting

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 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, Dennis Quinlan, Edwin Scannell, Marge Sullivan
Excused: Don Esposito, Jonathan Hress,

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

Advisory Members: Aldo Adriazola, Sean Blinn, Brian Faulks, Hilary Klimek, Rose Kopf, Sharon Onderko, Kathleen Palmer, Lori Sequeria

Members of the Public: Jessie Havens

Commissioner Liaison: Melonie Marano

IV. Approval of July 7, 2022, Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes made by Natalie Pineiro and seconded by Donnetta Bishop-Johnson. Passed.

V. Correspondence

1. Kaitlin Bundy received an email from Paul Soltis requesting a letter of support for Old Dutch Parsonage in a National Park Service grant application.
2. Tom D’Amico received the Van Harlingen Historical Society Newsletter.

VI. Staff Reports/Old Business

The following reports were made by Tom D’Amico:

Historic Preservation Grant Program. The County received six applications for the 2022 Historic Preservation Grant program totaling \$1,263,234. A meeting of the County Historic Preservation Grant Program Advisory Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, September 7, 2022 to discuss the 2022 applications

All 2021 Historic Preservation Grant Program contracts have been executed by the grant recipients except for one municipality.

County Preservation Projects. Van Horne House: The County Public Works Department continues to work on the east wing of the Van Horne House in Bridgewater. The County is waiting for the delivery of the gutters. Once they are received the gutters and siding, the east wing can be completed.

Lord Memorial Fountain: The State Historic Preservation Office has approved the Authorization to Proceed Application for the Lord Memorial Fountain cleaning project. The project has been completed.

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Stained Glass Windows: The State Historic Preservation Office has approved the Authorization to Proceed Application for Phase IV of the stained glass window project. The project is expected to begin in October.

The following reports were made by Kaitlin Bundy:

Local Arts Program Grant. 2022 Grant: Staff is currently preparing final report forms to send out to re-grantees. 2022 CHPP Final Reports are due on January 10, 2023 but Special Project Re-grantees may submit their reports once their project is complete. Staff is also working with the one re-grant organization that needs to modify its original grant contract.

2023 Grant: The Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission was awarded \$217,000 in LAP grant funding from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts for calendar year 2023. Applications for the 2023 grant round are live and are due at 4:00 p.m. on September 15, 2022. Three technical assistance workshops took place on August 16, 18 and 25, 2022 to provide guidance to potential applicants. After the deadline, copies of all received applications will be packaged and sent to the independent peer panel that will review them and then meet to discuss and make funding recommendations. The panel is scheduled to meet on October 18, 2022 via Zoom.

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). This grant is limited to six awards of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) each. Applications were due on July 12, 2022. The Commission received nine applications, all of which have been reviewed by an independent peer panel. The Commission will go into closed session to discuss the panel's recommendations for funding.

History on the Green. The Commission hosted 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 of the event was the Washington Rochambeau Pop-up Encampment. Staff worked with W3R-NJ for this event which included:

- 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

The event saw a great turn out from the public and staff received positive feedback from those who attended and participated in the event.

Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 Study. The Commission is one of many New Jersey organizations participating in the Americans for the Arts, Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) study. This study will measure the economic impact of arts and culture in Somerset County and provide essential data for securing funding and other support for the arts in Somerset County.

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Staff has been working with our various re-grant organizations and preparing a package so that our re-grant organizations can help collect surveys for this study. Staff had conducted a trial run with the surveys during the Juneteenth event. Staff is in need of volunteers to assist with the collection of surveys for the Americans for the Arts AEP6 study. Surveys must be collected at events, performances and facilities. The survey cannot be sent via mailing lists or posted online. Volunteers are currently needed for the following events:

- The Somerset County Jazz Festival in Downtown Somerville on September 11, 2022 from Noon to 6:00 p.m. (C&H partially sponsors)
- Riverfest in Downtown Bound Brook on September 24, 2022 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (hosted by C&H Re-grantee Bound Brook Cultural Arts Committee)
- The Somerset County Diversity Festival on October 16, 2022 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (performing artists funded by C&H)

Volunteers would approach members of the public, and request that they fill out the survey. Staff will provide brief talking points to facilitate the process. Any time that can be devoted to this effort is essential and much appreciated. Please let staff know any availability as soon as possible. The Commission was thanked in advance for their help.

Long Range Plan. Staff has received and reviewed the draft of the Commission's Long Range Plan. Staff expects to share an updated version of the draft with the Commission in early September, with the hope of the Commission endorsing the plan Fall of 2022. Once endorsed by the Commission, the plan will proceed to the Somerset County Planning Board in hopes that it will be adopted as an element of the County Master Plan.

1770's Festival. Staff was contacted by the Park Commission to discuss the annual 1700's Festival. The Park Commission has been struggling to find exhibitors and other participants, as many have not returned post-COVID. This festival traditionally takes place the first weekend of October (the weekend before Journey Through the Past). C&H has traditionally always tabled at this event, as it is a great way to do a final promotional push for Journey (with many members of the public actively attending the festival to get the booklets for Journey). A list of contacts and various exhibitors Staff has worked with in the past was sent to the Park Commission in an effort to help them find participants.

Bylaws. The Bylaws Committee met to discuss amendments and updates to the C&H bylaws (which has not been done since 2008). Staff will be presenting the changes to County Council but expects to send out the draft amended bylaws to the Commission in the coming weeks for approval at the Commission's October meeting.

The following reports were made by Natalie Zaman:

County History Partnership Program Grant. 2022 Grant: Staff is currently preparing final report forms to send to re-grantees. 2022 CHPP Final Reports are due on January 10, 2023 but Special Project Re-grantees may submit their reports once their project is complete.

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2023-2025 Grant Cycle: The Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission was awarded \$87,750 in CHPP grant funding from the New Jersey Historical Commission for calendar year 2023. This is an increase of almost \$10K from the last application cycle (2020-2022). The state requires that \$63,750 of this funding goes to re-grants. The remaining \$24,000 will go to C&H operations.

2023 Grant: Applications for the 2023 grant round are live and are due at 4:00 p.m. on September 15, 2022. Three technical assistance workshops took place on August 16, 18 and 25, 2022 to provide guidance to potential applicants. After the deadline copies of all received applications will be packaged and sent to the independent peer panel that will review them and then meet to discuss them and make funding recommendations. The panel is scheduled to meet on October 13, 2022 via Zoom.

Cooperative Marketing Grant. 2022 CMP Grant: The Cultural & Heritage Commission was awarded \$12,900 in Cooperative Marketing Grant funds from the NJ Division of Travel and Tourism to additionally promote Journey Through the Past to audiences in the greater tristate area. 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.

4-H Fair. The 4-H Fair returned in 2022 and was held on August 10, 11 and 12, 2022. C&H Staff passed out lots of literature and actively promoted the upcoming Journey Through the Past. Staff also made buttons, paper tri-corn hats and paper flowers with Fair visitors—families loved these activities. Cultural & Heritage also funded the appearance of reenactors in the government tent: Members of the First Rhode Island Regiment and living history educator Noah Lewis, who portrayed African American Revolutionary War Hero Ned Hector, interacted with visitors to the tent. Mr. Lewis also gave several well attended presentations throughout the day on August 12, 2022. Staff thanked Tom D'Amico for suiting up and coming out as well. Staff also thanked the Commissioners and Advisory Board members who took time out to volunteer at the Fair.

Journey Through the Past. The 17th Annual Weekend Journey 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. 31 historic sites have confirmed participation. Staff is currently working with the Graphics Department to update the guidebook, activity brochure, posters, trading cards and gallery exhibit for this year's event. 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. The 2022 Senior Art Show officially opened on August 3, 2022 in the Cultural & Heritage Gallery at 20 Grove Street in Somerville. This year's exhibit featured 38 senior artists across a variety of mediums, including acrylic paintings, digital artwork, photography and sculptures. This gallery shows the wide array of talented seniors that live in Somerset County, with our oldest participant being 102 years old. 16 senior artists have been selected to move on to the State Senior Art Show which will open on Friday, September 23, 2022 and run through the end of October. Staff

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would like to thank The Office on Aging and Disability Services for helping set up a closing reception to celebrate this year's artists. The reception is scheduled for September 13, 2022 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and will feature remarks from Commissioner Deputy Director Marano and Commissioner Drake. Attendance at the reception is limited to the senior artists and their guests. Commissioners and advisory members are encouraged to view the gallery before it closes.

Historic Preservation and History Awards. Staff has received eight nominations for the 2022 Historic Preservation and History Awards. A date has been set for the History Awards Committee to meet and select the winners. Staff is in the process of securing a venue for the awards ceremony, which is tentatively scheduled for October 20, 2022 at the Environmental Education Center in Lord Stirling Park. Staff is also exploring the possibility of having a keynote speaker and will finalize details about the event with the committee.

VII. New Business/Action Items

C&H Remaining 2022 Meetings Discussion

It was determined the meetings should remain virtual through the end of the year and be re-addressed in January 2023.

Teen Arts Festival

A **Motion** to charge the schools more for Teen Arts and increase the artists' stipend amounts allowing the Budget Committee to determine the amounts made by Kathy Faulks and seconded by Natalie Pineiro. Passed.

Old Dutch Parsonage

A **Motion** to write a letter of support on behalf of the Old Dutch Parsonage per Paul Soltis for a restoration grant application to the National Park Service made by Marge Sullivan and seconded by Kathy Faulks. Passed. Liaison Melanie Marano requested information be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for their support as well.

Park Commission

A **Motion** to enter into discussion with the Parks Commission to consider funding, like the Office on Aging and the Library System, to support programs of the Park Commission and allow the Budget Committee to determine the amounts annually, removing the Parks Commission from the C&H grant process, made by Kathy Faulks and seconded by Natalie Pineiro. Passed.

Tom D'Amico announced the County Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development has received the Achievement in Planning Award from the New Jersey Planning Officials for Somerset County Preservation Plan.

Kaitlin Bundy announced there will be a Preservation Event to celebrate the award on Sept 19, 2022, at the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum. Details forthcoming.

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VIII. Commissioner Comments

1. Commission Liaison Melonie Marano thanked everyone for their support of Somerset County's History on the Green at the Somerville Court House Green.
2. Natalie Pineiro thanked everyone for supporting the Central Jersey Jazz Festival and noted that they partnered with *Arts on Division* in Somerville.
3. Marge Sullivan announced that the Crossroads of the American Revolution launched their "Washington Slept Here Driving Tour" app which features many historic sites in Somerset County. <https://revolutionarynj.org/audiotours/>
4. Donnetta Johnson thanked everyone for their support of Somerset County's culture and arts and of the upcoming Journey Through the Past.
5. Kathy Faulks thanked the C&H Staff and Commission for making the commission run so much more effectively.

IX. Advisory Committee Comments

1. Kathleen Palmer offered to host the "Farm Framed" exhibit which is premiering in the C&H Gallery in March 2023 and afterwards will travel for six weeks.
2. Aldo Adriazola commented that it was great to meet everyone in person at the 4-H Fair.
3. Sean Blinn announced that he will be at the AASLH Conference next week in Buffalo, NY and at their on-line conference in November.
4. Jessie Havens reported that the next program of the Van Harlingen Historical Society features "The Keith Line" with Joe Grabas and Bruce Blair on Saturday, Sept 10, 2022, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the new Montgomery Library Meeting Room. <http://vanharlingen.org>; Jessie also noted that the Montgomery Historical sites recently listed on the State and National Registers have not been listed in the County Directory List of Historic Sites. Tom D'Amico assured Jessie they will be added in the next edition; additionally, Jessie stated that she prefers in-person C&H meetings because of the exchange of information prior to and after each meeting; Jessie enjoyed Dr. Robert Selig's presentation on August 26, 2022, "The War of Independence in Raritan Landing & New Jersey 1781-1782" at East Jersey Old Town's Indian Queen Tavern.

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

The next SCC&H meeting will take place VIRTUALLY on Thursday October 6, 2022.

XI. Closed Session Meeting

Motion to close the meeting to the public to made by Donnetta Bishop-Johnson and seconded by Marge Wolan-Sullivan. Passed.

1. 2023 National Endowment for the Arts American Rescue Plan Grant Recommendations

XII. Reopen Meeting

Motion to come out of closed meeting and reopen the meeting to the public made by Natalie Pineiro and seconded by Donnetta Johnson. Passed.

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XIII. Adjournment

Motion made by Donnetta Johnson and seconded by Natalie Pineiro

Natalie Pineiro. Passed.

Adjournment 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Faulks, Secretary

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