



**MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 31 at 7PM VIA ZOOM**

PRESENT:

Nancy Goldberg, Meg Loftus Suchan, Robert Diken, Deb Kmetz, Mark Harris, Charu Bakshi, Carolyn Hamming, John Sharp, Lynn Mueller, Joanne Stern, Terry Kohl, Grace Shackney, Catherine LaMoreaux, Judy Lee, Aaron McCoy, Joel Branch, Cody Grabe, Nunzio Moudatsos, Aaron McCoy, Mara Rosencrown.

WELCOME:

Co-Chair Bob Diken opened the meeting at 7:03pm with a welcome to all and New Year greetings as well as an acknowledgement of the Sunshine Open Meeting Practice.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW ARTS COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Bob Diken welcomed the new council members and asked that they give a brief introduction:

- Aaron McCoy
- Nunzio Moudastos
- Joanne Stern
- Meg Loftus Suchan

Bob also introduced Mara Rosencrown: She will be helping with social media and the website. Bob Diken commented that Joel Branch will be the new liaison to Borough Council, taking over for Sheri-Rose Rubin. Mr. Diken went on to announce that Nancy Goldberg, the current recreation department lead, will be retiring after 31 years with the Borough. February 28th will be her last day. Nancy Goldberg spoke briefly and commented that she plans to join FOMAC in the near future. Bob Diken thanked her on behalf of the MAC for all of her hard work.

Lastly, Bob Diken re-affirmed his announcement from the previous meeting that he plans to step down from the Arts Council Board as to eliminate potential conflict of interest regarding his transition to the FOMAC Board. Judy Lee thanked Bob for his leadership and hard work.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 15, 2021 MEETING:

Bob Diken asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Terry Kohl so moved. The motion was seconded by Lynne Mueller and approved by all members present.

VOTE ON SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2022

Grace Shackney called for a vote to approve the slate of new officers. The new slate was approved by majority vote. The new officers are:

- Co-Chairs: Judy Yin-Chi Lee and Grace Shackney
- Vice Chairman: Mark Harris
- Record Secretary Meg Loftus Suchan

CONFIRMATION OF MDA BOARD APPOINTMENT

The liaison will stay the same: Lynn Meuller.

FINANCIAL / BUSINESS REPORTS

Grace Shakney reported on the 2022 Program Budget: Our projected budget shows expected expenditures of \$20,000. This includes \$500 from the windows of understanding that were not used, the thought is to re-allocate those funds toward a future project. The budget shows a projected income of \$14,850, leaving a remaining balance of \$5,650 to raise from sponsorships, donations and ticket sales.

**At this point Joel Branch joined the meeting, he gave a brief hello and expressed his enthusiasm to be working with the Metuchen Arts Council.*

REPORTS/PROGRAM UPDATES:

- FRIENDS OF METUCHEN ARTS COUNCIL (FOMAC) REPORT (Bob Diken):

Bob previously sent a report to Judy Lee and Grace Shackney which he shared on the Zoom screen, (FOMAC will share a monthly report going forward). The FOMAC current account Balance is \$6947. A new software system (Network For Good) was purchased as well as the accompanying coaching component. This software will aid in the creation of fundraising campaigns, communication with donors, etc. Bob explained that FOMAC had effectively taken a break because of COVID but they are ready to start fundraising for 2022/2023. FOMAC did have one campaign in 2021, Giving Tuesday which earned \$2924 in donations which exceeded their expectations.

2022 FOMAC Fundraising Plans: Membership drive in March, Gala auction sometime in Sept/Oct, end of the year campaign strategy Nov/Dec.

Upcoming Meeting: Feb 11th 11am-12pm with the Arts Council Executive Committee. FOMAC will present a more detailed strategy during this meeting.

Bob Diken mentioned FOMAC will be cognizant of schedules as to not conflict with MAC fundraising efforts.

- **WINDOWS OF UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC ART PROJECT REPORT (Grace Shackney):**
The current exhibit is in the windows of Berkshire Hathaway on Middlesex Avenue. The Arts Council will, once again, join with the Metuchen Human Relations Commission to present a “Community Conversation” about the work of the community agencies spotlighted in the Metuchen exhibition as inspiration for the artwork. The “Conversation” will take place on March 10th at 7:30pm via Zoom. Grace asked everyone on the Arts Council to attend. Bob Diken invited Joel Branch to attend as well. The Zoom link will be sent out and posted on the Arts Council Website. Thanks were given to Berkshire Hathaway for their sponsorship.
- **MDA REPORT (Lynne Mueller)**
Highlights from the past Board meeting held January 14th:
 - Parking meter kiosks which will replace the current meters are being installed in the Pearl Street lot but there’s a delay due to the ongoing concrete shortage.
 - \$75,000 grant is being requested from Main Street NJ. If granted, funds will be used for store front improvements and revamping of Imagination Alley.
- **MDA PUBLIC ART REPORT (Charu Bakshi)-** The main discussion was of the mural on the side of Angie’s Café. It has been completed off site, the completion date is set for May 31st. They are planning to have some celebration but the details are TBD.
- **ROTUNDA GALLERY REPORT (Nancy Goldberg)** Feb 14th is the plan to reopen Borough Hall to the public, at which time the hope is that Joe Castranova can go back to planning when he can install the new gallery sign which has been approved by Public Works and is ready to go up.
- **TEEN ARTS COUNCIL REPORT (Judy Lee):** Sam McDonald was the leader of the project but he has resigned as he no longer lives in Metuchen. Judy Lee requested that people reach out to her with ideas for a replacement.

NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Judy Lee: Encouraged members to come up with creative programming ideas to support the town.

Charu Bakshi: Spoke about the Return To Love show, (an annual show done by Gallery Westerhoff) which will be remote again this year. The last date of submission is February 7th.

Bob Diken: The Forum Theatre/Arts District project is ongoing from a planning standpoint. Bob expressed the importance that the Arts Council be involved in the planning in some capacity.

Grace Shackney: Mentioned that the MAC is going working on the ArtCycle Gallery project and that the next meeting about this will be on Feb 2nd at 7:30pm via Zoom. She asked anyone to join that might be interested.

All business being completed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm. The next Arts Council meeting is scheduled for: **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2021.**

Submitted by,
Meg Loftus Suchan, Secretary
Metuchen Arts Council