



MEETING MINUTES

July 17th, 2023 7:30pm

At the Metuchen Senior Center

Members Present: Carmen Balentine, Lenore Boyarin, Joel Branch, Robert Diken, Adam Fensterheim, Carolyn Hamming, Mark Harris, Deborah Kmetz, Terry Kohl, Catherine LaMoreaux, Meg Loftus Suchan, Chuck Lopez, Nunzio Moudatsos, Wendy Richards, Mara Rosencrown, Grace Shackney, John Sharp, Joanne Stern, Mickey Waring

Members of the Public Present: Dylan Thurston

CALL TO ORDER: Co-Chair Grace Shackney called the meeting to order at 7:35pm and acknowledged the Sunshine law.

Meg Loftus Suchan asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous month. Carmen Balentine commented that he was disappointed to see the last arts council meeting fall on a holiday (Juneteenth). Grace responded that she agreed but was told that the Borough was open for business and to keep all meetings scheduled. It was generally agreed upon that everyone would like to see meetings postponed in observation of Juneteenth next year. Joanne Stern made a motion to accept the minutes, Carolyn Hamming seconded.

PROGRAM REPORTS:

- Elliott Girin's High School DJ event on the Plaza postponed (Grace Shackney): Grace explained that the Borough cannot approve any more events on the Plaza for the rest of the year. Instead, we will add Elliot Girin's event to our schedule for next year. This prompted a conversation about how MAC needs to re-think our scheduling and have a more complete vision of our plans earlier than usual.
- At this point in the meeting Grace asked Joel Branch to speak about the new Simplicity App that will work as a communication tool from the Borough regarding upcoming events. This app will cover events that fall under the umbrella of the Borough. Bob Diken mentioned that perhaps FOMA could think about creating a community calendar that would include information about other clubs/societies as well.
- Middlesex County Jazz Festival (Bob Diken): Bob says that this project is moving along very well, the committee meets every couple of weeks. The focus has now moved to marketing as the musicians are set. Bob also mentioned that the Metuchen High School Jazz Band will be involved.
- Plein-air House Painting Event (Grace Shackney/Bob Diken): Grace explained that at their last meeting they decided to pare this event down a bit to make it more of an extension of Billy Seccombe sketch night at Hailey's Parlor. They will offer an opportunity for artists to gather at

the farmers market on October 14th. There will be no applications and everyone is welcome. If the event is successful, Grace and Bob said the hope will be to have more of them in the future.

- Summer Concerts Series (Grace)
 - July 12 – Tiffany. Grace talked briefly about the success of this lovely event and how it has allowed us to learn a lot for our upcoming Jazz festival.
 - July 19 – Taylor Swift Cover Band – Grace mentioned our plan to meet on the plaza for the volunteers of this event
 - Aug. 2 - Music from Broadway
- The Heart Festival August 12 3-6pm (Grace Shackney). – Grace explained this is something we do with New Brunswick and that it is a large arts festival, much like our old June bug. MAC will have a table and Grace will send out an email for volunteers. Bob explained how this came about through the windows of understanding event.

REPORTS:

- FOMA REPORT (Bob Diken)- Bob reported a successful collaboration with the MDA for “Kids Takeover”. FOMA will continue with Brainy Borough sketch night July 26 6-9pm. It will be held the last Wednesday of every month. FOMA co-sponsors it with Billy Seccombe. FOMA is also working on setting up its first ever Gala for fund raising, they are currently looking for a location. They have a committee set up, but are still in early planning stages. Anyone that wants to be a part of the committee should reach out. Bob mentioned they need help organizing and fund raising. Charu and Reena Wade are on the committee at present. Lonore Boyarin has volunteered to help as well.
- MDA REPORT (Meg Loftus Suchan)
 - NJ State just passed its Budget and Metuchen was given \$5.25mm. \$250k toward pocket park, \$3mm for arts district, \$2mm for EMS
 - The MDA received a \$26k grant to beautify the alleyway between Traibos and Menya. There will be a Mural and ‘stamped concrete cobblestone’ road. Ricardo Roig has been commissioned to do the mural this summer. Roig has a pop up gallery at Papillon. During the VIP hour of 6-7 on Wednesday, July 26th, he will demo his technique and do finishing touches on the work.
 - New wrestling date is October 7
 - Bob Diken spoke about the pocket park: Bob said that Julia Win is going to be an artist that will help define that space. He talked about how the space might be imagined and his enthusiasm for the project.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Westerhoff music programming (Charu)- Charu was unable to attend but Bob Diken spoke about a meeting that will be set up in August to do a chamber music event collaboration. It will either be held at the Presbyterian church or St Lukes in late fall. Bob asked that for any future events under our banner that is done with Westerhoff, to make sure we all are aware of the dates so that we can come and show our support.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Nails in the Wall Gallery: Deb Kmetz passed around information about the Edith Hodge retrospective. The show will run July 15th through August 13th. Deb also passed around information about a call to artists for an upcoming show entitled "Home: Security/Insecurity". Submissions are due August 15th.

Metuchen Milers Club: Carmen Balentine announced a murder mystery party being hosted on Saturday, July 29th at 6pm at Papillon. The party will have an 80's theme and tickets are \$60.

All business being concluded, the meeting was adjourned by Grace Shackney at 8:34pm. The next Arts Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 21st, 2023 at 7:30pm.

Submitted by,

Meg Loftus Suchan, Secretary