



MEETING MINUTES  
November 20th 2023 7:30pm  
At the Metuchen Senior Center

Members Present: Carmen Balentine, Joel Branch, Lenore Boyarin, Robert Diken, Mark Harris, Terry Kohl, Meg Loftus Suchan, Nunzio Moudatsos, Lynne Meuller, Rick Perrine, John Sharp, Grace Shackney, Joanne Stern, Judy Yin-Chi Lee, Victoria Chala, Julia Win, Nicole Meyers, Dylan Thurston

CALL TO ORDER: Co-Chair Judy Lee 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. Mark Harris made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Nunzio Moudatsos.

#### **2024 PROGRAM/BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Grace Shackney went through the documents that she passed around to the group and explained more about the events themselves and the resources that might be needed to achieve them. Bob Diken spoke briefly about the Plein Air event and his hopes that it will start to gain more interest with time. It was suggested by Nicole Meyers that they do a teaser event at the Farmers Market early in the season to publicize a larger event happening closer to the fall. There was also a discussion about volunteerism, prompted by a comment by Carmen Balentine. It was generally agreed upon that planning early and communicating needs sooner rather than later will lead to greater volunteer participation and overall success. There was also a discussion about funding. Grace explained the Borough had to cut funding during the economic downturn along with every other commission but funding was subsequently raised which was and is greatly appreciated. However, the hope is that our budget can continue to grow to support more expansive programming. In the meantime, however, programming will need to be cut. The electrical box project, for example has been removed from the 2024 proposal. Funding for other projects may need to be reduced across the board in order to stay within the current budgetary constraints. Judy Lee asked that all new ideas for programming be submitted by December 15<sup>th</sup> in order to allow time for careful consideration. Joel Branch reminded the group of the importance to communicate all final proposals to the Borough as soon as possible to allow for proper allocation of resources.

#### **2024 SLATE OF OFFICERS**

Grace Shackney said she'd be sending out an email with a request for nominations. All nominations should be submitted by January 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **CURRENT PROGRAMS/REPORTS**

- Programming with the Westerhoff School: Judy Lee explained she has continued to communicate with them discussing MAC's openness to support/collaborate on any 2023 programming but their hasn't been a good time for any events thus far. She said MAC will continue to be ready and willing to help facilitate any classical programming that might come up in 2024 and she will

continue to stay in communication with them on this. Lynne Mueller expressed her hope that the residents of Metuchen have access to more classical music programming in the coming year.

- Painting-Out Event at Farmers Market Report: Bob Diken expressed his satisfaction with the event itself and relayed the positive response of those involved. He added his hope that there will be more of these events in the future.
- Cornerstone Jazz at the Library: Lynne Mueller spoke about the event on October 22 with pianist James Austin. She said it was a successful event and passed around the poster. It was a full house. People came from all over and she said this marks the second time he has played for Metuchen. Ms. Mueller gave a heads up that on Jan 21<sup>st</sup> 2024, there will be a film event at the library, "Max Roach: The Drum Also Waltzes". Cornerstone Jazz will start in March with Dave Striker.
- FOMA REPORT: Bob Diken explained they have their giving Tuesday and year end campaigns coming up. He also mentioned they postponed the gala/party to March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024 at the Metuchen Golf and Country Club with a Spring Fling theme.
- MDA REPORT: Meg Loftus Suchan spoke about the continued efforts on behalf of both MAC and the MDA to find ways to coordinate/collaborate. She also reported that she is now sitting on the Art Committee for the MDA.

#### **NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Julia Win spoke about a piece of art she has been commissioned to do by the MDA and the Arts Institute of Middlesex County. The piece will be three panels that will be mounted and installed on Pearl Street in front of the business center. She also mentioned her involvement in the proposed creation of a Central Jersey Children's Museum. She and several other mothers in Metuchen are working on gaining their nonprofit status. They have met with Mayor Busch and the Middlesex Arts Institute. They are thinking of having pop up events in 2024 to display the different types of ideas they are considering for their exhibits.
- Terry Kohl announced the Rise Up Chorus Cabaret performance on January 27<sup>th</sup> at St. Luke's Church. They will also be performing "The Unarmed Child" on March 9<sup>th</sup>
- Several people spoke about the 10x10 fundraiser being held at the library on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Everyone was encouraged to go and support this excellent event and the Friends of the Metuchen Library.
- John Sharp commented that St. Luke's Church will have it's Christmas Fair on December 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Carmen Balentine mentioned that on December 4<sup>th</sup> he will be doing another staged reading of "An American Tree" at the Holmdel Theatre and welcomed anyone to join.
- Grace Shackney announced the Arts Council's holiday party will be held on December 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:30pm at Carolyn Hamming's home.
- Meg Loftus Suchan mentioned the next "When We Create" event will be held 11/30 at Creative Twist

At this point in the meeting some new faces were invited to introduced themselves. Nicole Meyers said she moved to Metuchen in 2018 and is looking for ways to get involved in the community. Dylan Thurston is a local musician who has played at the library before and hopes to collaborate with the Arts Council on future events. Meg Loftus Suchan and Grace Shackney both commented on how excellent his last performance was. Julia Win is a Metuchen artist and elementary school teacher by trade. She enjoys working with recycled materials.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

All business being conducted, the meeting was adjourned by Judy Lee at 8:50pm. The next Arts Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30pm.

Submitted by,

Meg Loftus Suchan, Secretary