



MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 22, 2016

**In Attendance:** Grace Shackney, Ron Grayzel, Robert Diken, Steve Reuter, Deborah Zupan, Ed Wetzell, Elizabeth Pallitto, John Sharp, Linda Vonderschmidt-LaStella, Mark Harris, Terri Kohl, Carolyn Hamming, Shruti Basim, and guests Roman Stefaniew and Catherine LaMoreaux.

**I, II.** Chairperson Grace Shackney announced the observance of the Sunshine Laws, which manifest transparency on the part of the Arts Council. The meeting was officially convened. Motion to approve minutes from the meeting on January 25, 2016 was read and approved.

**III.a. Website development update.**

**Robert Diken**, head of the **website committee**, updated the council on progress of the website <[metuchenarts.com](http://metuchenarts.com)>. In addition to the fact that the website is now *live*, Bob explained how Metuchen Arts Council now has its own online presence, linked to the Borough website and to <[metuchencalendar.org](http://metuchencalendar.org)>. Digitally connecting the community with the local arts scene, the website will serve as a centralized portal to art openings; performances of music, dance and theater; and other performances. In addition to Art, Music, Dance/Theatre, the site features news of Metuchen arts. **The new website** will publicize, brand, and communicate the MAC's endeavors to promote and further the arts in the Metuchen area.

In addition to Robert **Diken** and **Linda LaStella**, **Website Committee** members include **Elizabeth Pallitto**, **Claire McClanahan**, and **Henry Chang**.

A Press release about the **metuchenarts.com** site has been disseminated electronically. **Robert Diken** announced that the subscriber list for <[metuchenarts.com](http://metuchenarts.com)> is up to 353 and growing.

**Reports, continued:-**

Members who are part of the Metuchen Arts Council website development discussed their progress.

**b. Community Mural.** **Linda Vonderschmidt-LaStella** announced that the community mural project has acquired three student intern-assistants. She put out a call for a studio assistant on Sat 10-12 and Sunday 2-4pm on March 6<sup>th</sup>. The public is invited in March to work on Phase Three of the project, entitled "Winter."

The community mural project, a.k.a. MudMakingMagic, won an award from the New Jersey Recreation and Parks Association: Metuchen's Mud Making Magic project was selected as a recipient of the 2016 Excellence in Programming Award -- Cultural Arts Division. The annual Awards ceremony will be held in Atlantic City on Tuesday, March 1st.

**c. Rotunda Gallery update.** **Mark Harris**, as the outgoing director of the **Rotunda Art Gallery**, announced that **Kathy Glaser** will be taking the helm as Gallery Director. Gratitude to Mark for his dedicated service! This was formalized at a meeting on Thursday at Kathy's home.

Also announced in the realm of art galleries: **Jane Leal** will be running the **Annex**.

**Current art exhibit.** **Diane Savona's** exhibition of her unique fabric art pieces will continue through March. Blending ancient and modern history/geography, the domestic and public sphere, and the textures of everyday life, these works provide striking perspective on the past, present, and future. Particularly striking are her cartographic transformations of the world's important cities, metamorphoses of domestic objects such as darning eggs and kitchen implements into "serious" tools; and lighthearted recastings of formal "stationery" invitations and thank-you's -- from an era of hand-written notes of politeness and civility -- as *objets d'art*.

**Upcoming art exhibits:** Local artist **Ed Wetzel's** portraits of people, buildings, and landscapes will go on exhibit at the rotunda Gallery from April to June. Ed is also involved with the planned (June 2016) **Art in the Garden** activity at Woodwild Park, with past and upcoming *plein-air* painting activities, and with fundraisers for local folks such as a benefit for Roman Stefaniew. Future artists' work on exhibit: from July to September, the work of **Eva Tuman** will be on display; **Margaret Cohen** from October through December, and **Boris Reyt** from Jan 2016 to March 2017.

**d. NJSO Children's' Concert.** **Arts Council Chairperson Grace Shackney** announced that the **NJSO's** children's concert on February 7<sup>th</sup> brought in \$830. As anticipated, this concert was a great success; about 100 people attended. Senior citizens as well as children were thrilled; those of all ages enjoyed the concert.

**e. Grace Shackney and Steve Reuter** discussed **JuneBug ArtFest**.

**f. Robert Diken** reported that plans for the **Art in the Garden Tour** have progressed, giving details about the new format, new date of Sunday, June 26, and the centrally-located but varied activities. The day will conclude with an evening of festivities at the Franklin Schoolhouse, where a silent auction of works by local artists -- as well as *plein-air* paintings done that day in June -- will take place. Several other ideas for this upcoming cultural event were discussed, including **Ed Wetzel's and Carolyn Hamming's** inclusion of Julia Hart Beers Kempson in the **Art in the Garden** tour.

**g.** Carolyn Hamming further discussed detailed plans for an April bus trip to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which would include the Barnes Foundation, the Reading Market, and tours of the city's murals. A docent-led tour would also include the Picasso exhibit and "The Great War, Experimentation and Change." Plans for another trip to the New York, possibly to the Brooklyn Museum and Botanical Gardens, are afoot.

**h. Dragonfly Multicultural Arts Catherine LaMoreaux** followed up on **Anna Paone's** introduction, last month, of **Dragonfly** with a detailed proposal for funding and support. Dragonfly, a local theatre company run by Catherine LaMoreaux and Anna Paone, with Matthew Holbert as Producing Associate, have already staged over half a dozen full productions. The next Dragonfly offering, *Arms and the Man* by George Bernard Shaw, will continue in March. The theatre group has paired up with D'Novo restaurant on Main Street, which is offering a *prix fixe* dinner-theatre package. Other projected events include a play (*Autumn Fallin'*), a children's musical, and a classic play (by Shakespeare). For this latter production, Dragonfly is requesting support. Council Members were asked to consider Dragonfly's proposal for a vote at the next meeting.

**IV. Programming.** The upcoming Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>: Singer-Songwriter series event promises to be a well-attended success. Judging from past attendance, music fans should get to the Schoolhouse on time or early (6:30) to snag a seat, enjoy the music, and partake of hors d'oeuvres, soft drinks,

and BYOB libations. Danny Adlerman announced that the Open Mics will continue to run on the last Saturday of the month; the next one will be the last Friday of the month. The last Open Mic, which took place after the Chili Challenge, was a success. **Danny Adlerman** also reported that the Babjak Benefit brought in \$6,000. The benefit was for Betty Babjak, wife of the Smithereens' lead guitarist Jim, for medical expenses related to her cancer treatment.

**Grace Shackney** reported that the dance group **DanceSpora** is still interested in, and excited about, coming to Metuchen. They might perform at MLK Park, near the Library, on a weekend in September.

**The Family Arts Snowflake Series** had a rousing success with "A Squirrel Stole my Underpants," a performance that was attended and enjoyed by many. One of the female actors mimed the story, promptly introducing the audience to the art form of mime. The next **Family Arts** performance, by popular musical artist Bari Korol, will be March 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Linda Vonderschmidt-LaStella** proposed an Artists' Salon in which artists, organizers, and interested people could meet to exchange ideas, tap into the energy and potential of others. As Linda envisioned it, this would establish the Arts Council in both leadership and supportive roles. Her vision is one of collective inspiration:

*"When you bring artists together, things happen!"*

The next meeting of the Arts Council will be March 28, 2016.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth A. Pallitto

(in the temporary absence of Cathy Tardosky, Arts Council Secretary)