



MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 15, 2021, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

PRESENT: Cody Grabbe, Robert Diken, Helen Xie Geary, Mark Harris, Carolyn Hamming, Deb Kmetz, Judy Yin-Chi Lee, Samuel McDonald, Luciana Mallozzi, Lynne Mueller, Jack Myer, Steve Reuter, Grace Shackney, John Sharp, Catherine LaMoreaux, Charu Bakhi, Tobi Santagado, Robyn Russo, Shaun Suchan, Pattie Freis Ackerman, Kat Davis, Nancy Goldberg, Gina Alcaide, Emily Alcaide, Initha Selvak.

WELCOME:

Co-Chairs Bob Diken and Judy Lee opened the meeting with the acknowledgement of the Sunshine Law open meeting practice. Bob welcomed Gina and Emily Alcaide and Initha Selvak who will address the Council later in the meeting regarding their Girl Scout Gold Star project.

APPROVAL OF ARTS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 22, 2021:

Bob Diken asked for a motion to approve the February 22nd meeting minutes. Lynne Mueller motioned to approve the minutes with recommended corrections. The motion was seconded by John Sharp and approved by all present.

FINANCIAL/BUSINESS REPORT:

Bob Diken reported, and Nancy Goldberg confirmed, that we should know our financial allocation from the Borough by our April meeting. Our budget figures show the assumed amount of \$8,500 along with a carryover of \$2,000 in the trust account. Bob provided a programing budget review summary for 2021 with amounts allocated to programs we hope to do. They include:

- Tiny X (\$100)
- Public Art collaboration with MDA (\$1,000)
- The MAX Education Series (\$500)
- Street Music (\$800)
- Metuchen Rocks! (\$2,500)
- Jazz Fest (\$5,000 from County Grant) (\$4,000 in-kind from MAC)
- Parks Chamber Music Concerts (\$1,000)
- Dance (\$750)
- Theater (\$1,400)
- Rotunda Gallery (\$1,500)

Bob and Judy will set up meetings with each event chair to review the program proposals and support needed. Final budget figures will be presented and voted on at our April 19th meeting.

FRIENDS OF METUCHEN ARTS COUNCIL (FOMAC)

Bob and Lynne Mueller reported that Reena Wade will be joining the Friends of the Metuchen Arts Council (FOMAC) along with Judy Lee. The FOMAC Board will be meeting on March 24th. Also reported: The Friends website address has been changed to info@Freindsofmetchenartscouncil.org. The FOMAC and Metuchen Arts Council (MAC) are taking out an ad together in the new Metuchen/Edison Chamber of Commerce magazine; There will be a FOMAC membership drive in August/September.

2021 PROGRAM PLANNING:

- **Live Events:** Grace Shackney reported that she, Bob and Judy met virtually with Borough Administrator Melissa Perilstein and the Borough's Special Project Manager, Jay Muldoon and were told that Borough Covid sanctions for public assembly are still in place for Borough properties, including the Plaza. We were encouraged to plan our events for late August through September/October. All mentioned music, dance and theater performances will be planned for outdoors. Venue's under consideration are the Woodmont parking deck, town parks, and spaces in the downtown business district for informal "Street Music."

- **Galerie Westerhoff:** Bob reported that our relationship in terms of sponsored events is on hold due to the constraints of the pandemic. Judy Lee is in conversation with David Iskowitz about student/faculty involvement with the proposed Park Chamber Music concerts. Tobi Santagado has offered the Mignolo Arts Center space for Westerhoff student recitals.
- **Papillon Event Update:** Bob reported that Edna Epelu will hold workshops and a book signing as part of the Kamoigne group photo exhibition in her store on May 8, 13, and 22nd. Bob will send information as it is available.
- **Tiny X Public Art Project:** Judy and Nancy Goldberg are waiting on the DPW work schedule for the first Tiny X installation. We hope to have the first installation in April and a second one in late fall.
- **Girl Scout Gold Star Project:** Sam McDonald introduced the high school girls, Initha Selvak, and Emily Alcaide, and their Scout leader Gina Alcaide. Initha is a fine artist and Emily is a musician. Initha is in the 11th grade in J.P. Stevens High School. She is interested in getting teenagers involved in a community creative arts team with our help. Emily plays guitar and has a band and is interested in outlets for young musicians. They plan to reach out to teens in Edison, Metuchen and Highland Park through the Girl Scout organization in these three towns. Sam McDonald has agreed to mentor the girls in the creation of junior arts team that could also be a conduit to Metuchen Arts Council programming. He has encouraged them to come up with a mission statement to begin the process. We look forward to hearing more about their progress and will offer advice and mentorship along the way.
- **Parks Concerts:** Cody Grabbe and Judy Lee reported that they are looking to programming a series of chamber music concerts in green spaces around town toward the end of the summer into the fall, should conditions be favorable for small gatherings. Judy is looking into a collaboration with the Westerhoff School. Cody is looking into musical configurations.
- **MDA Update:** Lynne Mueller gave the following report:
 - The MDA is focusing on getting grants and loans for downtown businesses. \$17,000 of ppp loans through the Manasquan Bank have been forgiven. Papillon & Company qualified for a business loan from the Kiva loan program that uses crowd funding.
 - A series of new videos is on facebook.com/MetuchenDowntownAlliance/videos highlighting seasonal promotions and store events.
 - The Storefront Team is working with businesses to install blade signs in the downtown district.
 - The Public Art Team will invite artists to paint the three pianos that are placed on Main Street during the summer.
 - A grant was obtained to allow Ed Wetzel to complete the mural in Imagination Alley.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Bob Diken asked that those who still need to submit headshots and bios for our website to please do so.
- Catherine LaMoreaux announced that Dragonfly Arts will present a virtual reading of *Spread the News*, an Irish comedy on Wednesday, March 17th.
- Tobi Santagado announced that Mignolo Arts Center had its first residency with an Indian dance company. Mark Harris reported that Mignolo took first place in the Palm Springs International Dance Festival for their film, *Arcadia*.
- Kat Davis announced that MAX classes are on-going with virtual theater classes. A photography class will be added that will include theory classes and nature walks. Lauren Curtis will offer and class on cartooning and a business skills workshop in April. Kat asked those present to share the information when it is posted on Facebook.
- Lynne Mueller announced that MAC – Metuchen Jazz is partnering with the NJ Jazz Society to produce the jazz education series originally scheduled as part of MAX program in 2020 but postponed due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The first lecture will be held virtually and take place June 13 at 3 PM when Ricky Riccardi presents “Louis Armstrong 101.”

All business being completed, the meeting was adjourned. **The next Arts Council meeting is scheduled for April 19, 2021.**

Submitted by,

Grace Shackney, Secretary
Metuchen Arts Council