



MEETING MINUTES

MAY 17, 2021, 7:00 P.M. via Zoom

PRESENT: Bob Diken, Mark Harris, Nora Pagel, Helen Xie Geary, Grace Shackney, Carolyn Hamming, Judy Yin-Chi Lee, John Sharp, Deb Kmetz, Steve Reuter, Lynne Mueller, Cody Grabbe, Nancy Goldberg, Kelly Murphy, Toby Santagado, Charu Bakshi, Elizabeth Pallitto, Pattie Fries Ackerson.

WELCOME:

Co-chairs Bob Diken and Judy Lee opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m. with a welcome to all and the acknowledgement of our observance of the Sunshine Law open meeting practice.

APPROVAL OF ARTS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 19, 2021:

Bob Diken asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 19th meeting. Steve Reuter so moved. The motion was seconded by Carolyn Hamming and approved by all present.

FINANCIAL/BUSINESS REPORTS:

- **Budget Update:** Nancy Goldberg stated that there is nothing to report since our last meeting other than the Borough's budget for 2021 has not yet gone to the Mayor and Council for approval. This should happen in May or June at which time we will have confirmation of our allotment.
- **Friends of The Metuchen Arts Council (FOMAC):** Bob Diken reported that the FOMAC board is looking at their website with Charu Bakshi's help. They will meet on Monday and discuss the site's overall tone and how it will sync up with the Arts Council site. Tobi Santagado offered her help if needed.

PROGRAM UPDATES/REPORTS:

- **Tiny X Public Art Project:** Tobi Santagado reported that the project has been launched. Three sculptures have been installed downtown in the areas of Borough Hall, the Library and the train station. Tobi indicated the need to post teasers on social media. Nora Pagel will coordinate postings with Facebook. Steve Reuter suggested getting the mayor to do a post. Nancy Goldberg will ask the Mayor.
- **Artfest at Hailey's Pub:** Bob Diken, Judy Lee and Grace Shackney reported that Mo Atzbi approached them about joining with Hailey's on Saturday, June 26th to host an afternoon with art vendors and music on the back parking lot/patio on Station Place. Hailey's will provide food and beverage service. The Arts Council will offer artists an opportunity to have a table to show and sell their work. The artists will be charged \$50 which will go toward paying for the afternoon's music. Hailey's will give the artists a \$20 coupon for food and drink. The festival would run from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. There was general agreement to proceed. It was suggested we get permission from the Parking Authority to use the other section of the Station Place parking lot.
- **METUCHEN ROCKS:** Steve Reuter and Grace Shackney reported that two dates have been set for this concert series: Saturday, August 21st, featuring Tara Donte & the Blind Pioletts with special guest Renee Maskin; and September 26th, featuring The Lonesome Pines. We are looking into the possibility of using the top of the parking deck for the concert on August 21st. The Lonesome Pines concert will take place at their home base at Bill's Ineffable Auto Repair Shop on Jersey Avenue.
- **Mignolo Dance Program:** Tobi Santagado reported that Mignolo's presentation will take place October 7th and 8th in the parking deck. It will be an original work with new music around the theme of mental health. They are working with a visual artist from Metuchen to create the production design.
- **Dragonfly Arts Summer Theatre Production:** Dragonfly will bring their production of *POPCORN FALLS* to Metuchen August 27th – 29th. It will take place on the fifth floor of the parking deck.
- **Jazz Fest –** Lynne Mueller reported that this year we will join Flemington, Somerville and New Brunswick in hosting a portion of the Central Jersey Jazz Fest on Saturday, September 11th on the Plaza. The Marcus Printup Quintet will perform, with Riza Printup on harp. Riza Printup will conduct a family jazz education program with several of the band members prior to the show. We will invite the Metuchen High School Jazz Band to participate.

- **Jazz Education Series:** Lynne further reported that we will launch our Jazz Education Series in June. We are partnering with the New Jersey Jazz Society to offer a live streaming series of lectures that will launch in June. The series, which is free to the public, will air at 3:00 PM once a month on select Sunday through November. A schedule is forthcoming.
- **The Girl Scout Gold Award Project:** There was no new information at this time.
- **Social Media Event Form:** Judy Lee acknowledged the work Nora Pagel has been doing for us on social media. In order to create a system for event chairs to submit information to Nora to post, Judy created a form on Google Doc. Event chairs should contact Nora for a link to the form. Items will be posted on Instagram which will automatically post it to Facebook with event pages made for each event.

NEW PROGRAM PROPOSALS:

- **Metuchen High School Art Walk:** Kelly Murphy, from the Metuchen High School Art Dept. came to ask for the Arts Council's support for a student art show in July. It will feature artwork from graduating students who are pursuing art studies in college. With the Arts Council's help, the work could hang in the Rotunda Gallery and in various businesses around the downtown. The students would interact with professional local artists. Guided tours and a "meet and greet" with students would be scheduled. A virtual exhibit would also be produced. Bob Diken said that Robyn Russo has cleared the way for the use of the Rotunda Gallery and several businesses have already agreed to show the work. Charu reported that the Westerhoff School is prepared to provide three cash prizes for a juried selection of three finalists. Judy Lee suggested that younger student work could be added at a later date. Steve Reuter suggested including businesses on south Main Street. Bob Diken asked for a vote to approve this project. Without any further discussion, all those present voted "Yes" to approve the Arts Council involvement.
- **The "Rhino Project":** Bob Diken reported that he had a conversation with the owner of the rhino sculpture which is presently located in the Halsey Street parking lot, next to the Westerhoff School. The owner, Alan Pollock, is willing to donate it to the Arts Council. The idea was enthusiastically received by those present. Nora Pagel will form a committee to investigate the rhino's refurbishing and placement.

MDA UPDATE:

Lynne Mueller gave the following report:

- Lynne Mueller stated that at a recent MDA Board meeting, she learned that 70% of store traffic in Metuchen comes from outside Metuchen.
- A pre-prom event is planned for May 27 on the Plaza.

Charu Bakshi reported that the MDA Public Art Team has commissioned three artists to paint their three street pianos. The artists are: Lawrence Ciarallo of Hoboken; Shauna Figueroa of Highland Park; Olga Muzician Pacillo of Fords. In addition, a second grader submitted a proposal for a small piano. If the Team can find such an instrument, they would like to give the student the opportunity to work on it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- From Bob Diken – The Papillon's Kamionge photo exhibit opened on Saturday, May 8th. There was a free virtual panel discussion lead by Linda LaStella with the photographers on May 13th. A photo workshop will be held on May 22nd at a cost of \$50. There will be another opportunity to meet the photographers at a closing event on June 12th with a reception at the store.
- From Lynne Mueller – The Parade Commission is selling yard signs to raise money for future parades. Lynne will forward the information to everyone. This year's Memorial Day parade is, once again, restricted due to the pandemic. Fire trucks and emergency equipment are scheduled to roll through neighborhoods beginning at 9:30 A.M. on May 31st. A ceremony at Memorial Park starts at 11:30 a.m. and will be accessible virtually. The student designed posters can be viewed on the Arts Council website.

All business being completed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Submitted by:

Grace Shackney
Recording Secretary