



MEETING MINUTES
February 28th 2022 at 7:30pm VIA ZOOM

PRESENT:

Nancy Goldberg, Meg Loftus Suchan, Grace Shackney, Robert Diken, Joanne Stern, Charly Santagado, Judy Lee, Lisa Hyman, Catherine LaMoreaux, Joseph Castronova, Terry Kohl, Mara Rosencrown, Lynne Mueller, Deb Kmetz, Nunzio Moudatsos, Aaron McCoy, Joel Branch, Wendy Richards, John Sharp, Deb Kmetz, Carolyn Hamming, Helen Geary, Cody Grabbe, Shaun Suchan, Mark Harris

WELCOME:

Co-Chairs Grace Shackney and Judy Lee opened the meeting at 7:34pm with a welcome to all and acknowledgement of the Sunshine Open Public Meeting Act. Grace welcomed the new Arts Councilor Lisa Hyman.

Nancy Goldberg introduced Wendy Richards who will be taking over some of Nancy's roles. It is still to be determined if MAC will fall under Wendy or the new Director, yet to be named. For the time being, Wendy will be at the Senior Center from 8am to 4pm. Wendy's contact information is: 632-8525 wrichards@metuchen.com.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 31, 2022 MEETING:

Meg Loftus Suchan asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Bob Diken so moved. The motion was seconded by Grace Shackney and approved by all members present.

FINANCIAL / BUSINESS REPORTS

- FRIENDS OF METUCHEN ARTS COUNCIL (FOMAC) REPORT (Bob Diken): Bob presented his monthly report detailing their financial, strategic and grant updates. Regarding the planned \$6,000 gift to MAC, Bob requested that MAC provides a timeline for when these funds might be used for FOMAC's budgeting purposes. Bob also explained about the new Shared Services Marketing and Communications team, AKA MARCOM. The hope is to launch that on or around March 20th.

**At this point Lisa Hyman was asked to introduce herself, she spoke briefly about her background and expressed her enthusiasm about being a part of the Metuchen Arts Council.*

- WINDOWS OF UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC ART PROJECT REPORT (Grace Shackney): Grace shared that there will be a "Community Conversation" on March 10th at 7:30pm, Grace will send around a Zoom for anyone that wants to join. During the zoom, artists will share slides of their work and discuss the various agencies/current event/world issues that inspire their work. There will also be a Newark Museum event on April 23rd. Artwork will be selected from neighboring towns to be shown at the museum. MAC will have a table and Grace asks anyone to join that might be interested. Lastly, Grace discussed the Fundraiser Concert for the Food Pantry's building expansion on May 21st. The idea is to have it be a mini arts festival with music and food. Entrance will be \$15 at the gate and all proceeds will go to the Food Pantry. Grace asked that people consider volunteering.
- ArtCycle Outdoor Gallery (Grace Shackney/Bob Diken): Bob gave a brief status update and informed the council that the project is ongoing and moving forward well. The plan is to have the outdoor gallery ready for opening in the fall of 2022.

- MDA REPORT (Lynne Mueller): Lynne spoke about the two promotions that Metuchen saw this past month:
 1. Black history month, for which the human relations commission displayed stories and quotes by prominent black luminaries in shop windows.
 2. Winter Restaurant week, for which she explained you had the opportunity to collect stickers with purchases at participating locations for a chance to participate in a drawing for a gift card.
 Lynne also mentioned the MDA affiliate program where businesses not in “the District” downtown can join the MDA for \$250 with limited benefits. More info can be found in “About Us” at downtownmetuchen.org.
- MDA PUBLIC ART REPORT (Bob Diken for Charu Bakshi): There is still a plan for the Angie’s Café mural. The artist Raul Ayala from Highland Park has been commissioned. The hope is to have outdoor dining facilities updated in conjunction with the mural as well as continuing discussions for better parking possibilities. Bob also commented on future projects which may include a potential mural at the new Pearl Street cleaners. Talks are ongoing.
- ROTUNDA GALLERY REPORT (Joe Castranova): The new sign has gone up and looks great. Joe is looking to have a show go up in mid/late March for which he is currently looking for new artists to join. He is working on programming for the rest of the year including programming group shows. He will keep MAC updated.

NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Judy Lee: Spoke about a possible concert collaboration with NJSO and PSE&G to bring a symphony/gospel choir to our town. PSE&G has expressed enthusiasm and willingness to support. Next steps are securing a venue and date, the hope is to find sometime in May.

Grace Shackney: Spoke about the availability of a table at the farmers market for artists to sell their works. The thought is to help direct artists to this possibility so that they may book their time directly.

Grace Shackney/Bob Diken: New Brunswick Regional Heart Festival, August 13th. Grace and Bob spoke about this two-day event and that having a MAC presence creates greater visibility for the arts.

Lynne Mueller: Informed us that April is Jazz appreciation month and to celebrate (and in conjunction with Int’l Jazz Day) there will be a small concert (50 people max) at the library on April 30th at 2pm.

Charly Santagado: Mignolo Dance has a festival on June 3rd and 4th which will be held at their studio and the Plaza respectively. The event will be free to the public. Mignolo will also be performing at Ramapo University Theatre. Lastly, she mentioned the Tiny-X project for which there seemed to be some interest at revisiting. Grace mentioned that there was a line item in the budget to commission further works.

All business being completed, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm. The next Arts Council meeting is scheduled for: MONDAY, MARCH 21ST AT 7:30PM (The plan as of now is to be in person, hopefully at the Senior Center).

Submitted by,
Meg Loftus Suchan, Secretary
Metuchen Arts Council