



MEETING MINUTES

March 21st, 2022 at 7:30pm

Metuchen Borough Hall (Second Floor Conference Room)

PRESENT: Mark Harris, Deb Kmetz, Grace Shackney, Nunzio Moudatsos, Meg Loftus Suchan, Carolyn Hamming, Terry Kohl, Aaron McCoy, Judy Lee, Joanne Stern, John Sharp, Cody Grabbe, Lisa Hyman, Rick Perrine, Bob Diken, Charu Bakshi, Mickey Waring, Elizabeth Pallito, Tobi Santagado, Lynne Mueller.

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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 28TH, 2022 MEETING:

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

***At this time, Rick Perrine, the new Director of Recreation and Senior Services said a few words introducing himself. He will work in coordination with Wendy Richards, the new Program Coordinator.*

FINANCIAL / BUSINESS REPORTS

- **FRIENDS OF METUCHEN (FOMAC) REPORT (Bob Diken):** Bob reported that the FOMAC Board voted to approve a maximum of \$6,000 of support for 2022 MAC events. He worked with Grace Shackney to get a better understanding of when these funds might be most helpful in an effort to efficiently allocate those funds throughout the year. Charu Bakshi spoke briefly about the Brand Campaign they are working on in the hopes of introducing themselves to the community prior to fundraising. She spoke about their hopes for fundraising events/membership drives and that they will also be applying for grants. They will continue to seek out new board members with a goal of 9 total members.

REPORTS

- **WINDOWS OF UNDERSTANDING (Grace Shackney/Bob Diken):** Grace spoke about the successful and lively discussion that was had during the March 10th "Community Conversation" Zoom with the HR Commission. She also spoke about the Closing Reception coming up on April 1st at the American Hungarian Foundation from 5-7pm. Sarah Teti will perform and Mayor Bush has promised to make an appearance. She also reminded the council of the Newark Museum Event on April 23rd where MAC will have a table. Lastly, she spoke about the Fundraiser Concert for the food pantry on May 21st at 3pm. There will be a \$15 entrance fee and she is in the process of looking for a band. All proceeds will be donated to the food pantry.
- **ARTCYCLE (Grace Shackney):** Plans are moving forward, the call to artists was sent out and conversations about logistics are ongoing.
- **ROTUNDA GALLERY REPORT (Grace Shackney):** Joe Castranova was unable to attend but Grace noted the beautiful exhibit downstairs. She asked for any volunteers who might want to help out.
- **GOSPEL CHOIR/NJSO CONCERT: (Judy Lee)** Judy explained that this event (A collaboration between the Count Basie Gospel Choir and 5 symphony musicians, to be held May 15th at 3:30pm) is already so organized that all we need to do is help the local community know it's happening. This is a free event is sponsored by PSEG.

- JAZZ PROGRAMMING (Lynne Mueller): Lynn explained that April is Jazz appreciation month. On 4/30 at 2pm the Mike Lee Quartet will perform at the library for International Jazz Day. The event is free but you need to sign up in advance due to a limited capacity of 50 people. Judy Lee asked about the possibility of live streaming the event which Lynn thought could be doable given the pre-existing technology at the Library.
- MDA REPORT (Lynne Mueller) Lynn explained the Pearl Street Parking lot will be repaved April 4-7th and the Metuchen Bank at New and Main will be demolished sometime at the end of May/early June. The AARP livable community grant applications were due 3/22/22. The \$750,000 Borough grant will be used toward things like having the sidewalks fixed and a new push button for the crosswalk at New and Pearl Street installed. Lynne mentioned that applications for funding to revitalize/improve Metuchen businesses can be found at downtownmetuchen.org. She spoke about upcoming events: Spring Bazaar, 5/21/22, Pre-Prom 5/26, Breakdancing on the Plaza, 6/4/22, Juneteenth 6/18 or 6/19/22 and Restaurant week being held in July. She also explained a change that the banner over Main Street can now only be done for events on Main Street or the Metuchen Plaza due to fact that it is difficult for the DPW to manage more than that.
- MDA PUBLIC ART REPORT (Charu Bakshi): Charu explained that the Mural at Angies Café is set to be completed sometime in May. There will also be a temporary installation on the fencing when the Bank does its renovations. March 23rd was the Art Opening at the Bowery Art Collective on Main Street.
- TEEN ARTS COUNCIL: Initha Selvakumar was unable to attend the meeting. Judy Lee wondered if the program would continue. There were additional thoughts about having someone from Metuchen High School act as a liaison of sorts. Meg Loftus Suchan volunteered to reach out to gauge interest.

NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Bob Diken: Bob and Grace Shackney are meeting with Gloria Dittman, the President of the Edison Arts Society to discuss how to better collaborate on events, etc. Bob also mentioned the great Drink and Draw event that was held at the Old Franklin School House as a benefit for a local family. There was discussion about wanting to see more of this, perhaps through MAC in the future.

Tobi Santagado: April 1st, 7:30pm Mignolo will show a feature film at the Soldier Island Film Premier. April 22nd: Bike-a-thon where they are raising money for Mignolo. She spoke about the Mignolo Resident Membership program and also spoke about using their space for future events should it be helpful. Lastly, she mentioned that Tiny X is back and they are looking for people to volunteer to join the sub-committee. She asked anyone interested to email her.

All business being completed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm. The next Arts Council meeting is scheduled for: MONDAY, APRIL 18TH 2022 AT 7:30PM. The thought is to have it at the Senior Center but details will be confirmed closer to the date.

Submitted by,
Meg Loftus Suchan, Secretary
Metuchen Arts Council