



MEETING MINUTES
August 21st, 2023 7:30pm
At the Metuchen Senior Center

Members Present: Carmen Balentine, Lenore Boyarin, Bob Diken, Carol Gaffney, Mark Harris, Deb Kmetz, Terry Kohl, Meg Loftus Suchan, Nunzio Moudatsos, Lynne Mueller, Wendy Richards, Grace Shackney, John Sharp, Judy Yin-Chi Lee

CALL TO ORDER: Co-Chair Judy Lee called the meeting to order at 7:34pm and acknowledged the Sunshine law.

Meg Loftus Suchan asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous month. John Sharp made a motion, seconded by Mark Harris.

PROGRAM REPORTS:

- Middlesex County Jazz Festival: Lynne Mueller passed around some flyers with information and let the group know that the event has moved to the Halsey Street parking lot. She is looking for volunteers. 4 groups will perform: Jill Justin Dance, Metuchen High School Jazz Ensemble, Molly Ryan and Manhattan Premier and the Cyrus Chestnut Quartet. Bob Diken mentioned there will be porta potties on site and that the Westerhoff school is allowing us to use their space as a green room. Nunzio Moudatsos has been helping to get the Drum Kit, Meg Loftus Suchan will be emcee. Lynn discussed general logistics. A photographer/videographer will be on site, shared with the other towns in the festival. Angela Pineiro of Blue Parachute is doing all of the graphics. There will be a banner across Main Street. Grace discussed the networking and press release. Bob Diken explained that Carteret, NJ will join next year.
- Westerhoff School of Music: Judy Lee explained that they are looking at doing the Faculty Chamber Music Concert sometime in November. Terry Kohl informed the group that Rise Up Chorus has a concert November 18th and 19th.
- Plein-air Outdoor Painting Event: Bob Diken said this event will be fairly small but will be a good testing ground for future events.
- Dragonfly Theatre: (Catherine LaMoreaux was absent). Those present that saw the show commented to each other on what a success it was. Wendy Richards is going to follow up on the check for Dragonfly per Grace Shackney's request.
- Heart Festival Report: Mark Harris said it was a successful event, well attended and interest was expressed at the MAC tent. Grace Shackney mentioned that it was good optics-wise as there were several partners from the Windows of Understanding event and it's always good to keep in touch.

REPORTS:

- FOMA REPORT: Bob Diken informed the attendees there is definitely going to be a Gala event this year on Sunday, 10/29 at the Metuchen Inn from 5-9pm. Bob asked for more volunteers. Charu Bakshi and Rena Wade are heading the committee. The theme is a masquerade party. He said they are still working on pricing but they are targeting 100 people. There will be passed hors d'oeuvres, dinner, entertainment and dancing. Bob explained why they decided to not use

Maximodo, (price and they wouldn't close the restaurant). Bob also mentioned another event hosted by FOMA that will be held in January, 2024. It will be a party to thank the donors in a much more intimate setting, Gideon Gelbers house. Lynne Mueller mentioned there will also be a Jazz event at the library 2pm on 10/22/23.

- MDA REPORT: Meg Loftus Suchan reported that the pocket park project continues to move forward as does the electrical box project that will be done in conjunction with MAC. Grace Shackney spoke about electrical boxes, she reached out to a company called Sun Graphics and obtained a quote of around \$1600 per box. Mark Harris said that's similar to the rate he got from a different source. The price included installation. Meg also commented on the positive response to the Ricardo Roig mural on Main Street.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Mignolo Grant Proposal for Spring 2024: Mark Harris said this event would be in lieu of Spring For Spring. Bob Diken said FOMA might be willing to co-support with MAC.
- Art Nook and children's gallery at Berkshire Hathaway: Bob Diken explained the concept, it's a curated art space that may or may not be associated with an event. They have also spoken with Beans and Bread as a possible location. Joe Castronova will be first artist to have his art displayed with Enrique Zaldivar lined up as the second. The idea is to also have a Youth Art Presentation at Berkshire Hathaway. Bob said they want youth-oriented art that will change on a regular basis. He said the need would be to connect with the local art teachers. Carole Gaffney mentioned that it is the start of the school year so we need to give teachers some time with their students.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Grace mentioned that she was contacted by Janice Hoffman who is looking for a calligraphy artist and asked the group for any ideas to offer in response.
- Saturday, August 26 at 7pm FOMA is supporting the local band *Just Cause* that is doing a fund raiser for the Old Franklin Schoolhouse. \$10 at the door.
- 2024 windows of understanding event is now kicking off. Grace expressed that they need committed volunteers to come on board.

ADJOURNMENT

All business being conducted, the meeting was adjourned by Judy Lee at 8:51pm. The next Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 18th at 7:30pm.

Submitted by,

Meg Loftus Suchan, Secretary