



MEETING MINUTES  
METUCHEN ARTS COUNCIL (MAC)  
Oct. 21, 2024 7:30pm  
At the Metuchen Senior Center

**Voting Members Present:** Chair Mark Harris, Vice Chair Meg Loftus Suchan, Secretary Deborah Kmetz, Carmen Balentine, Carol Gaffney, Carolyn Hamming, Nunzio Moudatsos, Grace Shackney, John Sharp

**Auxiliary/Guests/Liaisons Present:** Danny Adlerman, Robert Diken, Brianne Ludlow-Molnar, Lynne Mueller, Wendi Richards, Tobi Santagado, Katherine Wu

**CALL TO ORDER:**

- Chair Mark Harris called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm and acknowledged the Sunshine Law.
- Katherine Wu, a guest and a Metuchen PorchFest volunteer, was introduced and welcomed.

**MINUTES:** Secretary Deborah Kmetz asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. All voting members present at the previous meeting voted to approve.

**PROGRAMS/REPORTS:**

- Grace Shackney, Windows of Understanding: she and Robert Diken will be less involved in the central committee, but will stay involved. The Girl Scouts will do a project on Climate Change for it. Details and display venues are being worked out.
- Meg Loftus Suchan, PorchFest: It was a beautiful day with many volunteers. The post-mortem with the Borough went very well, addressing adjustments for future events, for example: no political signs on the property for that day, keep people from standing in the streets, musicians stop at assigned times to allow participants time to get to the next event. Mark Harris thanked FOMA for paying the artists a total of \$2400. The event was featured in the 08840 magazine.
- Lynne Mueller, JazzFest: 353 people attended the event, which was moved to MHS due to rain. According to formal and informal surveys, attendees liked the indoor venue. Lynne thanked the volunteers. Brianne Ludlow-Molnar reported that the ShowMobile fee had been refunded.
- Tobi Santigado, Mignolo Da(nce)y event: The performance on the Plaza and the whole week of events went well. Several hundred attended the plaza event. They will do Art Week next year, hoping to collaborate with other arts organizations. The Indian dance group received especially good feedback, having led the audience in a participatory dance lesson. The performance involved four different styles and cultures separately and then together for a combined finale. Thank you to MAC and FOMA for support.
- Carol Gaffney, Metuchen Paint-Out: About 30 people attended, bringing their own art supplies for a community experience. Local artist and art teacher Ed Wetzel attended, bringing his own easels and materials for anyone who wanted to use them He also set up an art station for kids to create a group artwork. One attendee brought a large scroll of paper she put on the grass for kids to collaborate on as well. Many attendees suggested doing it again. MAC secured a permit for the event and DPW swept the property before the event, otherwise no Borough resources

were needed. In the future, MAC or FOMA may pay the artists who are specifically asked to assist the attendees.

#### **LIAISON REPORTS:**

- Lynne Mueller, Jazz: about 60 people attended the Bruce Williams Quartet event at Metuchen Public Library. 2025 dates are being confirmed.
- Bob Diken, Friends of Metuchen Arts (FOMA):
  - The group is rebranding with a new logo.
  - They will continue to support MAC and would like to set that budget ahead of time rather than reacting as things come up.
  - They started a sponsorship program to help local artists, starting with 8 artists in 2024. The program will support specific programs of artists and organizations.
  - FOMA Gala will be March 8, 2025, **Reena** Wade chair.
  - Westerhoff School of Music and Art has pledged \$7500 to FOMA.
  - **Westerhoff will sponsor the Metuchen Classical series of concerts, and FOMA has applied for a Middlesex County grant for the series.**
  - The Community Arts Calendar is now live on their website.
- Meg Loftus Suchan, MDA:
  - The PopArt festival went well and dovetailed nicely with Mignolo's dance event.
  - The New Year's Lantern project is progressing nicely.
  - The mural at Starbuck's will be unveiled on Oct. 26
  - On Oct. 27, a bird walk led by a National Audubon Society guide will begin at the Starbuck's mural and proceed along the greenway.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- Mark Harris: Linda LaStella will get names of companies for cleaning and minor repairs to the mural on Oakland and Grove. Sponsorship will be considered in the 2025 budget.
- A preparatory meeting **will be held, consisting of the executive boards of MAC and FOMA.** There will be an emphasis on seeking out new artists and organizations to support. To this end, as has been done in the past, a public notice will be posted on social media and individual people and groups we know about will be contacted. A public call allows heretofore unknown entities to propose ideas, and is how PorchFest came to be.
- Mark Harris: the MAC FaceBook page will stay active, per the Borough, with Brandon Uhlig as administrator. Thank you to the Borough for recognizing its benefit as an Arts Council space. We are working on the possibility of getting an email address from the Borough.
- Mark Harris: He and Deborah Kmetz met members of an LGBTQ arts organization, Out Front Metuchen, while attending the MDA's Metuchen Pops event. They are interested in working with us. Mark will follow up with them before next month's meeting.
- Grace Shackney: she met with the owner of Parkside Eats and he would like to see more arts programming on the South side of town.

**ADJOURNMENT:** All business being conducted, the meeting was adjourned by Mark Harris at 8:42 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 18, at 7:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Deborah Kmetz, Metuchen Arts Council Secretary