



MEETING MINUTES
August 19th, 7:30pm
At the Metuchen Senior Center

Voting Members Present: Carmen Balentine, Joel Branch, Carol Gaffney, Carolyn Hamming, Mark Harris, Terry Kohl, Meg Loftus Suchan, Chuck Lopez, , Grace Shackney, John Sharp

Auxiliary/Guests/Liaisons Present: Bob Diken, Lynne Mueller, Wendy Richards, Tobi Santagado, Brianne Ludlow-Molnar, Dylan Thurston

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Mark Harris called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm and acknowledged the Sunshine Law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: In the absence of Secretary Deb Kmetz, Meg Loftus Suchan request approval of the minutes from the prior months meeting. Lynne Mueller read her updates and asked that Deb Kmetz update with these changes and recirculate to the group. With those adjustments taken into account, the minutes were approved with a motion by Chuck Lopez and Terry Kohl.

Prior to the program reports, Mark Harris asked everyone present to introduce themselves briefly to Brianne Ludlow-Molnar, the new Director of Recreation & Senior Services for Metuchen. She thanked everyone and gave a brief overview of her background, which she said is mostly recreation based. She expressed her interest and enthusiasm for the arts.

PROGRAMS/REPORTS:

- Mark Harris expressed the importance for everyone on the Arts Council to try and attend as many of the MAC events as possible.
- Mignolo International Culture Da(nce)y: Tobi Santagado reminded everyone of the event Oct 6th, 3pm at the Plaza. They will represent different cultural dances through four different dance styles: Yiddish folk dancing, Indian dance/hip hop fusion, Latin ballroom and tap. The event will have individual pieces and end with a collaborative group piece(s). It is a free event and there is no rain date. Tobi also passed out a flyer that detailed a week of events starting October 5th. Charlie asked that the Arts Council come and support. Mark said that any volunteers are most welcome from MAC for the 10/6 event.
- Jazz Festival: Lynne Mueller brought flyers for the 5 – town Middlesex County Jazz Festival. She reported they are well on their way as far as planning. They will be using the Middlesex County showmobile on New Street near Pearl, facing the Metuchen Plaza and she commented their plan is to have a baby grand piano, at which point Tobi Santagado of Mignolo Dance offered use of theirs. Lynne Mueller encouraged people to get dinner at local restaurants in town and noted the rain location is the auditorium of Metuchen HS. She spoke of a raffle drawing for a gift certificate for a local shop for people who buy T-Shirts ahead and wear them to the event but location details for the shirt sales are still TBD for the time being. Ms. Ludlow-Molnar confirmed the insurance went through for the stage. Ms. Mueller passed around a flyer that listed the performers as: Russell Malone Quartet, Mariel Bildsten Septet, Metuchen HS Jazz Ensemble + Metuchen HS Chamber Orchestra and Prana Arts dance troupe. The Metuchen section of the jazz festival will be held on Saturday, 9/28/24 starting at 6 PM and finishing at 9:30 PM.
- A Cappella Performance (Grace Shackney): Grace commented on the success of the event saying the performance was remarkable and the performers were very happy to connect with

Metuchen. She said it was unfortunate that it rained and had to pivot to St. Lukes as there would have been a larger crowd, but even with the venue change, it was a wonderful event.

- Windows of Understanding (Bob Diken and Grace Shackney) Bob Diken spoke about the social justice project they do with surrounding towns. He gave some history of their involvement. Bob said that he and Grace decided to step back from being involved at a higher level and explained there will be an opportunity for someone else from MAC to take their seat. He said the work will be less than what they've done as it will only involve the Metuchen side and not the whole event.
- Porch Fest (Meg Loftus): Meg Loftus explained that the homeowners and performers have been confirmed for the event which will take place around town on Saturday, 9/21. Meg said that an email will be sent out shortly to MAC asking for volunteer help.
- MAC Web Site and Social Media (Mark Harris): Mark explained that he talked to Brandon Uhlig who is in charge of the Borough website and was told that good progress is being made and it may be live in the next couple of weeks. He said they are in the "final stages of data transfer".
- Family Art in the Park Paint Out: Carol Gaffney reported that she and Grace Shackney are working out the details for a community paint out. Oct 20th is the proposed date at Tommy's pond from 2-4pm. They hope to have it be an annual event. Anyone is welcome, everyone bringing their own supplies. She mentioned they will ask Ed Wetzel to come back because of his skill regarding how he talks about his process. If he agrees, it would be ideal for him to come the week before the Paint Out at the Farmers Market, Oct 12th to help promote the event. Lynne Mueller expressed concern about having a conflicting event with a Jazz event that is happening at the same time at the Library.
- Gallery Walk (Deb Kmetz): Mark Harris spoke for Deb in her absence. Deb and John Sharpe propose waiting until spring to do it. The group agreed that this makes sense, particularly considering the busy fall schedule for MAC.
- Chalk Walk at Street Fair (Meg Loftus): Meg explained that the local Girl Scouts of Metuchen volunteered to man the Chalk station during the Street Fair for the Arts Council. The Girl Scouts will be providing supplies for the community using additional cookie sale funds. Mark asked if Meg could ask the MDA if they would like a pop up chalk event at the Metuchen Pops event on the 28th.

CURRENT PROGRAMS/REPORTS:

- Jazz Programming (Lynne Mueller): Next Cornerstone jazz event features Alto Saxophonist Bruce Williams Quartet on Sunday, October 20, 2024 at 2 PM at the Metuchen Library. Registration will be on Eventbrite as space is limited.
- Classical Concert Series/FOMA: Judy Yin-Chi Lee submitted in writing that she has been working with FOMA to submit the Middlesex County grant for a Classical Concert Series for 2024-2025. She said they are aiming for 4-5 concerts, including one with the library. She had a meeting with Jordan Klotz at the First Presbyterian Church to map out some programming for next year. One will be in February and another tentatively in October. The whole series will be presented by FOMA and Westerhoff. At the meeting, Bob Diken commented that they hope that Westerhoff will become the primary sponsor. Bob also commented about FOMA in general and that their focus will be on presenting more classical music options to the community and that they hope to develop a community theatre in the future as well, though that is some time in the future still. Bob said that programming events and teaching will be their two main focuses. He also said they will hold another Gala this year.
- MDA Report (Meg Loftus Suchan): Meg let the council know about the following events: 9/14 Wrestling on the Plaza, 9/28 Metuchen Pop Art Event (to be done cooperatively with Jazz Fest and in observance of quiet hours), 10/26 Haunted Downtown, 11/30 Small Business Saturday

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

-Tobi Santagado shared about Arts and Craft Nights at mignolo dance: Wednesday nights in September from 7-9pm

-Terry Kohl spoke about Rise Up Chorus and Rising Phoenix which is their new educational wing. She shared some upcoming performances: 9/29 at St. Lukes, 10/30 at First Presbyterian. Rise Up Chorus will also host a gala on March 1st at the Pines, it will be a Mardis Gras theme.

ADJOURNMENT

All business being conducted, the meeting was adjourned by Mark Harris at 8:37pm. The next Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 16th at 7:30pm.

Submitted by,

Meg Loftus Suchan, Vice Chair