



Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2019, 7:00 pm
Room 208, 245 deKoven Drive, Municipal Building
Middletown, CT

Present

Cassandra Day, Chair
Julia Faraci, Secretary
Barbara Arafeh
John Basinger
Franca Biales
Lee Godburn
Joyce Kirkpatrick
Dave Bauer 7:50pm

Also Present

Kisha Michael, Arts Coordinator
Cheryl Hale
Nekita Waller 7:10pm

Absent

Charlotte McCoid, Vice Chair
Crystal Laffan
Pamela Steele
Sebastian Giuliano
Council Member
Robert Santangelo
Council Member

1. Call to Order 7:00pm

2. Public Session: No Members present.

Motion to return to public session, by Godburn at 7:10pm. Nekita Waller, Governor Malloy's appointee to the position of Connecticut State Troubadour, took time from her travels throughout the state to attend this meeting and meet the Commissioners, at an invitation extended by the Arts Commission.

Among her accomplishments, Waller, a 10-year resident of Ferry Street, has composed a song about Connecticut. She worked with Oddfellows Playhouse on the recent successful teen talent search there, which attracted many young people from Middletown and the area. She has been conducting workshops at Oddfellows, and will be serving as musical director to a play that will be presented in May or June.

Waller was invited to attend future meetings; she has been tagged on the City of Middletown website Arts and Culture page. She was provided with the Commissioners contact list, Buttonwood calendar, and Children's Circus registration and job application forms. Arafeh invited Waller to International Women's Day at Russell Library on March 3.

3. Minutes

a. January 23, 2019

Motion to approve by Kirkpatrick, seconded by Faraci, approved unanimously.

4. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve Agenda as written by Godburn, seconded by Biales, approved unanimously

5. Remarks from the Chair

Day remarked that she is looking forward to the Arts Advocacy Award ceremony honoring Stephan Allison and Klekolo Coffee. The Award will mean a lot to Klekolo, celebrating 25 years in business, and to its new owner, Yvette, and its customers, as well as to Steve Allison, the former Arts Coordinator.

6. Old Business

- a. Budget Report – no changes from last year
- b. Program Update

- i. Arts Calendar

Michael circulated the draft of the upcoming calendar for March/April for the Commissioners to review. The calendar will be published in color, in 11 point type. It will be distributed by email and uploaded to the City website. 500 copies will be printed to be available at City Hall, Russell Library, and other prominent places in the City.

The current calendar features a poem about the late Poet Laureate Susan Allison by the new Poet Laureate Cheryl Hale. Also spotlighted is Janine Janaki's pastel of Eli Cannon's, which was recently purchased by the City Art Collection.

Future calendars will showcase public art, with events listings on the inside and "Opportunities" including calls to artists, grant announcements, etc., on the back page.

The Arts Coordinator will upload any event listings sent to the City Arts and Culture website. Facebook posts can be sent to the Arts & Culture Office page via Facebook Messenger.

- ii. Grants

Seven organizations applied for Category 2 and 3 grants by the February 15 deadline, for total \$23,950 in funds. The Arts Coordinator will schedule interviews before the March 27 Commission meeting.

All but two of the September 2018 Category 2 and 3 awards have been disbursed. Two organizations will receive their funding upon receipt of their completed paperwork in the Arts Office.

- iii. Fireworks Festival / Summer Sounds

The Fireworks Festival will be on Saturday, June 29th.

Summer Sounds will be at Harbor Park Gazebo on two Tuesdays in July and two in August. No acts have been booked yet.

- iv. Kids Arts 2019

The Ordinance concerning qualification for free tuition to Kids Arts was out of date. The benchmark formerly was that, children receiving free lunch would receive free tuition to the program, but now because free lunch is universal in the school system, the Ordinance needed to be revised. The new Ordinance has been approved by Common Council, and is now online.

Registration forms were sent to all previous campers; verification of benefits (SNAP/TFA) paperwork is now required for tuition remission. Tuition remains the same.

7. Committee Reports

a. Executive Committee – No Report

b. Public Art Committee

i. MCAAAA Award –

Godburn proposed that the Projects and Planning Committee take the responsibility of the MCAAAA from the Public Art Committee. All of the Commissioners are on the P&P Committee so there will be more Commissioners available to assist. Kirkpatrick said that she would bring the subject up at the next PAC meeting.

Abby Carter's painting in Arts Office –

Discussion of future placement for Abby Carter's painting, which currently is hanging in the Arts Office. All agreed that the Arts Office was a good place for the painting. The Arts Coordinator will follow up to research whether city ordinances permit the painting to remain in the Arts Office, as City Art must be accessible to City residents.

c. Nominating Committee – No Report

d. Planning and Projects

i. Arts Advocacy Award

The Arts Advocacy Awards for 2019 will be presented to Stephan Allison, former Arts Coordinator, and Klekolo World Coffee for their services to the Middletown arts community. The ceremony will be at Klekolo on March 5 at 5:30pm. Arts Commissioners have been asked to be in attendance to greet awardees. Yvette Elliott recently bought Klekolo from longtime owner Hollie Rose, and Elliott will be asked to invite Rose to the ceremony.

Invitations have been sent, and the Proclamations are ready. Klekolo will be offering samples of their coffee. Faraci made a motion to allocate \$150 to Klekolo for refreshment expenses, seconded by Kirkpatrick; approved unanimously.

Discussion of future efforts to highlight newly purchased City Art Collection acquisitions, and to direct the public to view the City Art Collection.

e. Music Committee

At their recent meeting, the Music Committee discussed city venues and concert places. A list will be on the minutes. School music curricula was tabled at this meeting.

The Committee will also work on musical contacts; there is a list in the Arts Office, but it is incomplete. The Committee hopes to create a resource that can be used by artists who are new to the community or who need a venue, as well as by people who are looking for musicians.

The Music Committee will be working with the new Executive Director of the Middlesex County Historical Society, Maria Weinberger, on the Middletown Music History exhibit.

f. Public Relations Committee – No Report

g. Poet Laureate Committee –

Cheryl Hale and Stephan Allison attended a memorial reading of Susan Allison’s poetry at Prosser Library in Bloomfield in January. Hale read “The Empty Chair”, her poem in honor of Susan Allison, to the Commission. It has been published in the current Arts Calendar.

Hale is also working on “Perspectives XII”, a publication of the Faxon Poets. She is also planning a poetry program at Russell Library in April.

Our newest commissioner John Basinger reported that Middletown writer Roy Lisker is now in hospice. Lisker was the founder of Ferment Press, and throughout his career his interests spanned a wide range of fields. His papers are part of the Wesleyan Library collection, and many of his writings are available online. The Commission extends their best wishes to him.

8. New Business

a. Category I Grants Review and Recommendations

Commission members had met at 5:30pm to interview the applicants for the Category I Grants.

No discussion. Godburn moved to award The Buttonwood Tree \$10,000, Oddfellows Playhouse \$10,000, Greater Middletown Chorale \$8,000, and Greater Middletown Concert Association \$8,000. Biales seconded. Day, Faraci, Bauer, Biales, and Godburn voted aye; Basinger, Arafah and Kirkpatrick abstained.

9. Announcements

Middletown High School will be presenting “Urinetown” this Friday and Saturday, March 1-2.

Alchemy, the vocal chamber ensemble of the Greater Middletown Chorale, will be performing at Bethany Lutheran Church in Cromwell on Sunday, March 3rd.

The AAUW celebration of the United Nations International Women’s Day will be on Sunday, March 3rd at Russell Library.

The Connecticut finals of Poetry Out Loud, a national competition for high school poets, will be on Saturday, March 9th at Middlesex Community College from 8:30am to 2pm.

The opening reception for the Middletown Public Schools Art Exhibition is Saturday, March 9th at 5:30pm. The exhibition is at the Zilkha Gallery on the Wesleyan campus.

Make Music Day will be Friday, June 21.

The Board of Ed Health and Wellness Art show will be staged at Russell Library in June.

10. Adjournment –

Godburn moved to adjourn, seconded by Biales, approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:14pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Faraci, Secretary

Middletown Commission on the Arts