



MINUTES OF MEETING

Wednesday, March 27, 2019, 7:00 P.M.

Room 208, 245 deKoven Drive

Middletown, CT

Present

Cassandra Day, Chair
Lee Godburn
Pam Steele
Franca Biales (arr 7:03pm)
Joyce Kirkpatrick (arr 7:08pm)
John Basinger (arr 7:10pm)
Julia Faraci, Secretary (arr 7:13pm)
Barbara Arafteh (arr 7:14pm)
Charlotte McCoid,
Vice Chair (arr 7:19pm)

Also Present

Kisha Michael, Arts Commissioner
Cheryl Hale (Poet Laureate)
Sebastian Guiliano
Council Member (left 9:20pm)

Absent

David Bauer
Crystal Laffan
Robert Santangelo
Council Member

1. Call to Order – Meeting called to order at 7:08pm
2. Public Session – No members of the public present, no public session
3. Minutes
 - a. February 27, 2019
Kirkpatrick moved to approve minutes of meeting of February 27 as written, seconded by Biales, approved unanimously
4. Approval of Agenda –
Biales moved to approve agenda as written, seconded by Godburn, approved unanimously.
5. Remarks from the Chair
Day expressed concern at surplus of grant funds after Monday’s Council Meeting.
6. Old Business
 - a. Budget Report-no report
 - b. Program Update
 - i. Arts Calendar – 500 copies of the arts calendar have been printed and placed in Mayor’s office, Russell Library, the Parks and Recreation office, and other key locations, and sent to previous Arts Coordinator’s mailing list.

Discussion of extent of publication of opportunities outside town on the Arts Calendar. Publication of Middletown organizations and events should take priority; however, out of town appearances of Middletown artists and open work positions should be publicized. The “Opportunities” page is for announcements of potential jobs, including those out of town, that are open to Middletown residents.

The Arts Office website and calendar remain static. Space on the “Opportunities” back page is limited. However, since the Arts and Culture Office Facebook page is continually updating, out of town events of interest to the Middletown community can be posted.

For example, Gil Scullion is exhibiting at Real Art Ways; since he is a Middletown artist, the exhibit should be announced.

Submission deadline for the May/June calendar is April 13.

The front page of the calendar will be dedicated to art purchased by the City; next month will feature “Carmela” by Abby Carter. Michael commented that all Public Art purchases should have artist bios; Kirkpatrick will write one of Carter.

The front page will also feature a poem by the Poet Laureate.

Mayor Drew has proposed an art contest. Exhibition of the work is to take place on a designated area on the patio outside Council Chambers during the Fireworks Festival. Applications for the contest, which is open to City residents of all ages, are due May 31; the contest is noted on the "Opportunities" page of the Calendar. The link for the contest will be available Friday, March 29. There will be monetary prizes and all participants will receive a certificate.

Day noted that she has not seen a press release for the contest; the Commission expressed concern that the announcement of the contest came to the Commission after the fact. Commissioners commented that they felt "blindsided" that the information had not been relayed, and would find it embarrassing if they were asked about the contest and did not know about it. They expressed concern about whether the artwork will be protected from inclement weather.

- ii. Grants
On April 1, Common Council will review the Operating Grant awards approved by the Arts Commission.
- iii. Fireworks Festival/Summer Sounds
Jeff McQuillan will perform and organize the musicians for the Fireworks Festival and Nekita Waller will emcee.
- iv. Kids Arts 2019
Children's Circus is almost fully enrolled.

7. Committee Reports

- a. Executive Committee – no report
- b. Public Art Committee
 - i. MCAAAA Award – no meeting
MCAAAA has been assigned to the Planning & Projects Committee to better accommodate the work load of the selection process.
More outreach will be made to City private schools and homeschoolers.
 - ii. Palmer Field Sculpture – McCoid discussed cost of the sculptures with the first artist on the final list. Funding is in place to create "relatable" full-sized sculptures of the subjects as young athletes in action in their respective sports, as originally planned. This plan will be confirmed with William Russo of Public Works, and further discussed with family members of the honorees.
- c. Nominating Committee
Nominations for July slate are due by June. All Commission slots have been filled.
- d. Planning and Projects Committee
 - i. Arts Advocacy Award –
Godburn commented that the Awards ceremony for Klekolo and Stephan Allison at Klekolo had a great turnout and was a successful event. \$150 was paid for refreshments.
 - ii. Commission was reminded to note and share upcoming activities in the City.
 - iii. Open Air Market at Wadsworth Mansion –
Deborah Moore sent out the vendor applications for the Open Air Market before she retired from her position at the Mansion. The Arts Coordinator has been introduced to the new Director. Faraci will draft a letter to Moore, who served as Executive Director of the Mansion for almost 20 years, congratulating her on her retirement and thanking her for her service to the Commission.

e. Music Committee

- i. Music History Exhibition at Middlesex County Historical Society
Arafeh met with the new Executive Director of the Historical Society, Maria Weinberger, and reviewed the layout of the building for the upcoming music history exhibition. The Historical Society will discuss funding at the meeting on March 28; after approval by their board, an announcement will be released to the public. The exhibition will have grant funding from MCA.
- ii. Make Music Day, Friday, June 21
The Arts Coordinator detailed Make Music Day, a national program run out of New York, and administered in Connecticut by the Connecticut Office of the Arts. The Middletown Arts Office paid \$350 for yearly membership dues. The program is designed to be self-administered, with everyone invited to create music in public, in homes, and elsewhere. A website is in place to manage performances at restaurants and other establishments so the venues can time events. The Police Department should be informed of events on public property.

f. Public Relations Committee – no report

g. Poet Laureate Committee – no report

i. Poet Laureate report

Future projects – Poet Laureate Cheryl Hale reported on her upcoming activities and appearances.

Hale will read at a reception honoring her on at Russell Library on April 4 at 7pm. Her reading will be followed by an open mic.

Hale will be a featured reader at the Faxon Poets National Poetry Month Celebration and Book Release Party on April 7 at 1:30pm at the Noah Webster Library, 20 South Main Street, West Hartford, near Blue Back Square. Three of Hale's poems will be published in the upcoming Faxon Poets anthology, and its cover features one of her photographs.

Hale will also be reading on September 27, at "Voices of Poetry: Laureates of Connecticut" at the Ridgefield Public Library, 527 Morse Avenue, Ridgefield.

Hale attended the Connecticut state finals of "Poetry Out Loud", the high school level poetry recitation competition, at Middlesex Community College on March 9. She expressed concern that no Middletown public schools were represented in the finals: she could not confirm whether Middletown schools participated in preliminary events. One Mercy student participated but it was unclear whether she was a Middletown resident. Hale questioned whether there was support for a poetry program in Middletown schools. Michaels offered Hale and the Commissioners a list of contacts in the Middletown Public Schools and the Board of Education for follow up.

Steele suggested that Hale reach out to English teachers at Middletown High, as her daughter, Jennifer Steele, now a successful poet, was guided by her MHS English teacher to an internship at Hill-Stead. Hale said that often poetry teachers do not have the resources they need, and Biales noted that teachers are overloaded. "Silent Sounds", a poetry program formerly presented by the Commission in conjunction with Middletown Public Schools and Wesleyan Center for Creative Youth (CCY), is no longer funded by Wesleyan.

Discussion of responsibility of the Commission to find out about and publicize statewide arts events and advocate for involvement of Middletown students.

8. New Business

a. Category 2 & 3 Grants Review & Recommendations

Godburn moved the Commission accept the committee recommendation to fund WESU Radio grant request for \$2500. McCoid seconded; passed unanimously.

Godburn moved the Commission accept the committee recommendation to fund the grant request for Joni Weisfeld's project for \$1000. Biales seconded; Day, McCoid, Arafeh, Basinger, Biales, Godburn, Kirkpatrick, Steele voted in favor; Faraci voted against. Motion carried.

Godburn moved the Commission accept the committee recommendation not to fund the grant request for Janine Janaki's billboard project. Biales seconded; Day, McCoid, Faraci, Arafeh, Biales, Godburn, Kirkpatrick, Steele voted in favor; Basinger voted against. Motion carried.

Biales moved the Commission accept the committee recommendation to fund Connecticut Ballet grant request for \$2500. Steele seconded; passed unanimously.

McCoid moved the Commission accept the committee recommendation to fund Resonant Motion grant request for \$2800. Kirkpatrick seconded; passed unanimously.

Godburn moved the Commission accept the committee recommendation not to fund the grant request for Trinbago American's Annual Caribbean Cultural Carnival; McCoid seconded; passed unanimously.

Discussion of possible disposition of remaining funds. One suggestion was to award scholarships to student projects. Funds would have to be encumbered by May 31.

For applications after June 1, Godburn proposed offering presentations on grants application procedures to the public, as has been done in the past, to encourage the community to apply for grants. Faraci commented that the Commission can do better for City artists.

- b. Grants Process and Revisions – Agenda of April meeting to address immediacy of measures to using excess grant funding.

9. Announcements

Faraci attended a workshop on Financial Fundamentals for Artists presented by the Community Economic Development Fund that she recommended.

MAC650 is donating easels from Green Street to the Arts Office.

The Shoreline Arts Alliance's ArtsNet90 event will be at the Guilford Art Center on April 2, from 8:30 to 10:00am.

The Pride event, sponsored by the City, Chamber of Commerce, and Wesleyan, is June 15th at 2pm.

On April 18, Jennifer Steele, poet and graduate of Middletown Public Schools, will be reading at Wesleyan/RJ Julia Bookstore.

Friday, April 26 is Arbor Day. Trees will be planted in honor of the late Poet Laureate Susan Allison and Tom Serra. James Sipperly is the contact.

Saturday, April 27, 2019 at 7:30 PM, the Greater Middletown Concert Association will present the Hal McIntyre Orchestra, a 13-piece jazz band, playing music popularized by Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee.

- 10. Adjournment - Motion made by Godburn to adjourn, seconded by Steele. Meeting adjourned at 9:44pm

Respectfully submitted,
Julia Faraci
Secretary
Middletown Commission on the Arts

cc: Town Clerk, Mayor Daniel T. Drew