

MIDDLETOWN COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

Minutes of October 28, 2009

Present

Fran Ganguli
Richard Kamins
Joyce Kirkpatrick
Jennifer Hawkins Lecce
Rob Resnikoff
Lee Godburn
Charlotte McCoid
Frank Kuan
Kisha Michael
Barbara Arafah
Michele Lau

Absent

Patricia Evans
Bob Santangelo
Earle Roberts

Stephan Allison (staff)

Guest

David Laub

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Joyce Kirkpatrick called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Municipal Building, Room 208, in Middletown, CT.

PUBLIC SESSION

None held.

MINUTES OF September 16, 2009

Kamins made a motion to accept the minutes of September 16, 2009, and Resnikoff seconded this. Motion carried, with abstention from Barbara Arafah.

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

Chairwoman Kirkpatrick read from the chair's response as presented to Mayor Giuliano and the Common Council for proclaiming October as Arts and Humanities Month in the city of Middletown.

Text of response (approx. wording):

Thank you, Mayor Giuliano, and the Common Council for proclaiming this exciting month in Middletown. Actually, in our vibrant community, every month is one of great activity in the arts and humanities for all our citizens. In our schools and colleges, in our many civic and community organizations and informally in our homes – people of all ages and stages take part in a wondrous array of Arts and Humanities activities every day. Of that, Middletown should be very proud.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you, Mayor Giuliano, for your recent major donation to the Commission on the Arts of funds raised at the Mayor's Ball. Please convey the appreciation of the Commission to the hardworking Committee for the Mayor's Ball.

The \$7,500 the event raised will be added to the Commission on the Arts grants pool of monies available for arts projects in Middletown. Right now, the Commission members are creating new Grants Policies and Procedures for the current situation. It is expected that applications for arts grants will become available in December. The City Arts Office will inform everyone about this exciting process through electronic and printed media – so all interested people should be alert to this opportunity.

Thank you and Happy Arts & Humanities Month!

Kirkpatrick welcomed new youth and government student Michele Lau to the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Budget Report

No report.

Staff Report/Program Update

No report.

Development of formalized grant-making policies

Resnikoff presented an outline on funding policies (*addendum*). Commissioners followed and held open discussion. Resnikoff asked questions and led the discussion by asking what kind of services do we fund? Godburn states to make sure the list is not exclusionary and that everything needs to be taken on an individual basis. Lecce believes that funding should be as inclusive as possible, being as big of a spectrum represented as possible and, to use discretion as grants come in. Kuan makes notice that children are not represented on the list. Resnikoff asks if we are taking consideration if the work has quality. Godburn believes that we should concentrate on if it's helping people. Godburn also stating that we need criteria for how the money is spent and less on the quality of the work or project. Godburn further suggest that we may need to have two sets of criteria for large and small groups. Resnikoff led discussion on funding criteria and questioned if a resume should be required with grant applications. Kirkpatrick says it may be a way to strengthen the grant application. Godburn believes that it's good to know but doesn't want to make it a more complicated application process. Resnikoff is convinced that we should have different tiers for the application process but questions how they should be divided. Discussion was held, all agreed tiers should be implemented. Lecce asks should there be a cushion that funding is for site-specific work. Resnikoff says we do not need to have that as a specific policy. Resnikoff asks if we should have one cycle or two cycles for grants panel. After some discussion, all agreed that this topic of conversation would be revisited when Stephan Allison is present to best answer Resnikoff's questions on the topic of funding cycles. Kirkpatrick closed the discussion by stating that all should feel free to communicate with each other further about the topic.

Public Art Benches

Michael reported that she had a coffee meeting with artist Susan Rosano. They met to discuss each other's interest in the creation of public art benches on Main St. Artist Rosano provided guidance, interest and support in the projects ideas. Rosano suggested that Michael do more research into finding out city ordinances of public art on this level.

Other (including Community Center Update, Reorganization and Coordinator Position, Peer Advisor use, Student Survey Update)

No Report.

Kamins added that he read about the community center in an article stating that a new community center will not be built but they received funding for upgrading the facility at Sbona Towers.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Arts Committee

McCoid reports that she has all of the pictures in her possession and needs to get them framed.

Planning and Projects Committee

Godburn wants to have a discussion about nominees for Arts Advocacy. He asks that commissioners come to the next meeting with reasons why we think an organization or individual should be given the award. To be further discussed at next meeting.

Other (Publicity Committee, Kids Arts Committee, Nominating Committee, Archive Committee)

Ordinance No. 16-09 on Kids Arts fees was distributed to the group.

NEW BUSINESS

Kids Arts Fee Recommendation

Kirkpatrick mentions that she did not see any request for recommending a fee. It was stated that common council set the fee required for this. No action taken.

Mentor for Michele Lau

Kirkpatrick states that a mentor is needed for new student of youth and government from Middletown High. Michele Lau introduced herself as a junior at MHS and is a member of the band, participates in crew and indoor track & field. She likes art but cannot find the time to fit into her schedule. Kirkpatrick welcomes her with group introductions from each commissioner.

Other

Arafeh recognizes the passing life of Shirley Boan, stating that Ms. Boam was with Middletuners since the beginning. Arafeh mentioned that Ms. Boan gave so much pleasure to her audience with her singing.

Kirkpatrick shared a two-hour visit with fellow arts commissioner Patricia Evans. She stated that Ms. Evans health is better and presented a card for commissioners to sign.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Grant Reports

No report. Accepted as presented in our packets for review.

Other

Kamins announces the staging of “Juno & the Petcock” performed by the Vintage Players to be performed at the Synagogue in Middletown. Kirkpatrick announces the performances of the Chorale on Nov. 21 and 22 in Newington and Portland. Lecce announces the Middletown Teen Theater production of “The Crucible” has been cancelled due to the swine flu.

Adjournment

Kamins made a motion to adjourn; Lecce seconded it. Motion carried. Meeting concluded at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kisha Michael
Secretary

Addendum:

Middletown Commission on the Arts DISCUSSION OUTLINE on FUNDING POLICIES

- I. What are the community’s needs?
 - A. Kinds of Services
 1. Performances and exhibitions
 2. Education
 3. Adult hands-on participation
 4. Public Art
 5. Non-art disciplines
 - a. Heritage
 - b. Humanities
 - c. Science
 - B. Diversity
 - C. Surveys, conversations, etc.
- II. Who is eligible?
 - A. Individuals?
 - B. Organizations
 1. Size
 2. History
 3. Non-profit? 501(c)3?

III. What Kinds of Grants?

- A. Operational Support
 - 1. Unrestricted
 - 2. Targeted
- B. Project Grants
 - 1. General
 - 2. Percentages for each aspect (i.e., artists, staff, technical, marketing, etc.)
- C. Non-financial Support
 - 1. Professional Development
 - 2. In-kind
 - 3. Making connections to other funders, collaborators

IV. Funding Criteria

- A. Excellence of the Work
 - 1. Who judges?
 - 2. Site visits
- B. Qualifications of staff (resumes)
- C. Organizational Health, Survivability
- D. Planning
- E. Impact on residents
 - 1. Outreach
 - 2. Diversity
 - 3. Accessibility
- F. Fundraising
- G. Marketing

V. Applications

- A. Different Tiers?
 - 1. By size (budget)
 - 2. By history
 - 3. By discipline

VI. Funding cycles

- A. When is money available to us from the city?
- B. Other considerations
 - 1. Applicant's season
 - 2. School Year
 - 3. Project
- C. Emergency funds
 - 1. Do we hold money back for emergencies during the cycle?
 - 2. How do we handle the transition to new policies?

VII. Reporting

- A. When must we see it?
- B. What must we see?
- C. Deadline for spending the money?
- D. What are the consequences of missed deadlines or poor outcome?