

MIDDLETOWN COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

Minutes of November 18, 2009

Present

Joyce Kirkpatrick
Rob Resnikoff
Richard Kamins
Frank Kuan
Jennifer Hawkins Lecce
Bob Santangelo, 7:21p depart
Lee Godburn
Charlotte McCoid, arrive 7:15p
Kisha Michael
Michele Lau
David Bauer

Absent

Patricia Evans
Barbara Arafteh
Fran Ganguli

Also Attending

Stephan Allison, Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Joyce Kirkpatrick called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. at the Municipal Building, Room 208, in Middletown, CT.

PUBLIC SESSION

None held.

MINUTES OF October 28, 2009

Godburn states a correction to be made to the spelling of Shirley Boan. Kirkpatrick states a correction to be made in the spelling of "Juno & the Paycock". Resnikoff made a motion to accept the minutes of October 28, 2009, and Kuan seconded this. Motion carried.

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

Kirkpatrick welcomes student representative Michele Lau and Common Council representatives Bob Santangelo and David Bauer to the commission meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Budget Report

Reviewed, accepted.

Staff Report/Program Update

Arts Stakeholders Group

No Report

Arts & Creative Industries Council

Allison reports of an informal gathering December 10, 2009, 5-7 p.m. at the CFA's Crowell Concert Hall on Wesleyan's campus and invites any commissioners to attend with presented invitation.

CCT/LAA Update

Allison reports of the office receiving \$7,000 from the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism Local Arts Agency (LAA) Partnership program and that paperwork is complete and being processed. This will take care of the p/t assistant until the end of the fiscal year. Kirkpatrick asks Allison to explain for the benefit of new council representative Bauer what the program is. Allison further explains the purpose of the LAA to Bauer.

Development of formalized grant-making policies

Resnikoff presents New Grants Policy Statement, an official set of guidelines to be posted on website and made available to the public. This statement is to reflect what the committee heard from the last commission meeting. He asks commissioners for any changes with discussion before being put up for a vote. Discussion was held that began with questions from Godburn. Does a person or group applying for a grant have to have a 501(c)(3) status? Discussion was held. Kirkpatrick believes that it's important for us to give citizens' money as grants to agencies that have some fiscal responsibility and if they are not a 501(c)(3) that they should be umbrellaed by one. Resnikoff questions if it should be limited to only category one? Godburn finds this limiting and would like to see it more open. He thinks we can make the decision at the time if they are not a 501(c)(3). Resnikoff wants to certify that money is being used for the benefit of the community and not an individual; and that they are authorized to spend the money that way. Santangelo states that the end result has to be that it benefits the community and their status is not what counts. Kirkpatrick makes note of government status designation missing in the draft. Kamins understands the purpose but believes that the screening process of the grants committee is where this information is found. Bauer asks questions to catch up with the points of the discussion; Kirkpatrick and Allison give clarifications.

Kamins questions if this limits us from listening to people who do not have nonprofit status and would we not listen to them if they applied? Resnikoff states that based on the way it is currently written they are not eligible to apply. Allison expounds on the process of applying for 501(c)(3) status and uses examples from the community to explain. Godburn and McCoid find the statement unwelcoming and having a negative connotation. Lecce adds that the language of number one makes sense because it helps people to self select themselves into the lower category and then not overshoot as first timers. She asks everyone's opinion on the subject. Further discussion was held.

**Resnikoff made a motion that the language in the last paragraph on page one of the New Grants Policy Statement begin as: Organizations in the top category, applying for operational support grants must submit proof of their 501(c)(3) status. Kamins seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Godburn wants to make sure that we have the flexibility within our own language to make intelligent decisions. Kirkpatrick believes that the guidelines are for the applicants and are also for the commissioners as well. Bauer adds that category one money will absorb most of the funds and does not think that we need to over think the finer points given the amount. Lecce believes that having some of the language included helps people to aim for level two and puts a little less competition in the top category. Allison addressed that educational institutions, co-ops and foundations may not have a 501(c)(3) status. Commission agrees that this should be added. Further discussion was held. Godburn questions why we are putting parameters on ourselves? Bauer suggests that maybe the proper parameter be that we set a percentage of the overall grant for each category. Resnikoff states that these parameters are set to make sure that the taxpayer's money is being spent wisely.

**Lecce made a motion that the language in the last paragraph on page one of the New Grants Policy Statement continue with: Applicants for project grants in the top category must have 501(c)(3) status or a 501(c)(3)-certified sponsoring organization. Resnikoff seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion amended for revision.

Resnikoff revisits the idea for categories one and two that we adopt the State Commission's application. And as an extension of that suggests in the guidelines we adopt one funding cycle identical to the State's funding cycle for categories one and two. In addition he suggests that category three grants do not work on a cycle and are accepted year round. Discussion was held. Resnikoff questions how do we state what is our funding cycle? Allison clarified if they apply on the January deadline, they will receive that fiscal year's dollars and it would be for projects happening after July 1. And further suggest the commission may want to make a one-year policy adjustment. Discussion was held and the consensus was that category two and three applicants can apply anytime and will be reviewed quarterly. Document will be revised and presented at next commission meeting.

Public Art Benches

No Report. Allison added that a new reporter, Ms. Hannah Vohl of the Middletown Press was looking for a story by reviewing the minutes. She inquired about the bench project. Allison informed her that the project has not developed yet.

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

No Report

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Arts Committee

McCoid reports that she spoke with S. Allison discussing money set aside for framing at Middletown Framing. This will be complete by next commission meeting. She mentions that a plaque is needed.

Planning and Projects Committee

Grants Awareness Project

No Report.

Workshop Collaboration

No Report

Arts Advocacy Awards Day

Godburn opens the discussion and asks for suggestions from each commissioner for the arts advocacy awards. Suggestions were made by commissioners. Arts Advocacy Day will be April 12 and 13, 2010.

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

Allison will be sending out press release for RFP's for Kids Arts program. He will be meeting with present Kids Arts administration and is working to get the program moved back to Macdonough School.

NEW BUSINESS

Kids Arts Fee Recommendation

**Godburn made a motion that we recommend to Common Council that we go with the same rates as last year for Kids Arts. Kuan seconded. Motion carried, Bauer abstained.

Mentor for Michele Lau

Resnikoff has volunteered to be mentor for student representative Michele Lau.

Other

Kirkpatrick reminds the group of submitting their conflict of interest statements to be put on file.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

McCoid mentions senior Jeff Long and commends his work in the recent Gilbert & Sullivan production. Godburn announces on December 13th the Alms House will be having an open house and invites all commissioners.

Kirkpatrick announces dates of the Greater Middletown Chorale singing the works of American composers. Kamins announces the success of "Around the World in 80 Days" and the Vintage Players raised over \$2200 split between Oddfellows Playhouse and the synagogue.

Adjournment

Resnikoff made a motion to adjourn; McCoid seconded it. Motion carried. Meeting concluded at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kisha Michael
Secretary