

DRAFT

MIDDLETOWN COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

Minutes of December 16, 2009

Present

Barbara Arafeh

Fran Ganguli

Lee Godburn

Richard Kamins

Joyce Kirkpatrick

Frank Kuan

Rob Resnikoff

Absent

David Bauer

Patricia Evans

Michelle Lau [Youth-in-Government]

Jennifer Lecce

Charlotte McCoid

Kisha Michael

Robert Santangelo

Also Attending

Stephan Allison, Coordinator

Guests:

Marielle Hilbersum, MHS student

David Laub, Wesleyan MFA student

Michelle Lundigan, MHS student

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Joyce Kirkpatrick called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. at the Municipal Building, Room 208, in Middletown, CT.

Chair Kirkpatrick shared that Kisha Michael is not in attendance and she would like to have a volunteer to take notes for the meeting. Frank Kuan kindly agreed to do so.

PUBLIC SESSION

David Laub, a graduate student in the MFA program through the Center for Film Studies at Wesleyan shared that he has been attending the meetings to learn more about the work of MCA. He noted that the film series sponsored by Wesleyan's Center for Film Studies have been successful, and he and his colleagues (under the leadership of Jeanine Basinger) are eager to continue this community building and outreach initiative. He further added that he would be interested to learn more about the new grants procedures to see if the film series could possibly be supported by this funding.

It was noted that Marielle Hilbersum and Michelle Lundigan are students enrolled in the American Politics class at Middletown High School, and they are at the meeting to observe "one aspect of government in action."

MINUTES OF November 18, 2009

Richard Kamins made a motion to accept the minutes of November 18, 2009, and this was seconded by Lee Godburn. Motioned carried, with abstention from Barbara Arafeh and Fran Ganguli.

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

Chairwoman Kirkpatrick wished everyone a happy holiday season and shared homemade cookies with commissioners. She acknowledged the good work of MCA and its subcommittee on presenting a working draft of the new grant-making policies. She mentioned that she is proud of the collective work and is eager to get the process started.

OLD BUSINESS

Budget Report

Reviewed and accepted as presented.

Staff Report/Program Update

i) Arts Stakeholders Group – No report.

ii) Arts & Creative Industries Council (Chamber of Commerce – Creative Juice) – Stephan Allison noted that a holiday gathering was held at the Center for the Arts on Thursday, December 10, although he was not able to

attend. Arafah said that she was in attendance (so MCA was represented at the event), and she (as well as the other 30 or so attendees) enjoyed the gathering, in particular, the student performances.

Development of Formalized Grant-Making Policies

Draft Policy for Discussion and Approval

Chair Kirkpatrick asked the chair of the subcommittee, Rob Resnikoff, to review the draft of the new grant-making policies. He first noted that on page 2 of the draft he would like to add “Criteria for Awarding Grants” – this should be underlined and bolded. He then asked for comments and input.

Arafah said that she was uncomfortable with the introductory paragraph because it did not “aim at Middletown residents specifically.” Discussion ensued. In the end, Arafah said that she would still be uncomfortable with the language; nonetheless, it was agreed the focus of the grants would be “Middletown-centric”, and the commissioners serving on panels would be able to discern the focus and priorities of MCA and how best to distribute the funds. Godburn noted that in the paragraph “Commission funded programs ... underserved populations” he would like to add “but not limited to” after “include”. Everyone agreed that this would be acceptable.

Resnikoff asked for a motion to accept the draft grant-making policies with the noted addition. Kamins made such a motion and Ganguli seconded it. Motion carried unanimously.

Resnikoff said that it would be great if the Publicity Committee could publicize the new grants policy in the local media outlets. Allison said that this would have to be reviewed and approved by the legal department as well as the Mayor before it could be shared publicly.

It was noted by Godburn as well as Resnikoff that the formatting of the grant-making policies would need to be tweaked and the deadlines would have to be updated each year.

Minutes – Subcommittee Meeting - December 11, 2009

Allison asked about the meeting minutes from the subcommittee meeting on grant-making policies that was held on Friday, December 11, 2009. He said that the minutes would not need to be elaborate; it should note that discussion on the grant-making policies was held, and note the start and end times.

Public Art Benches

No report.

Conflict of Interest Statements

It was noted that Kamins, Kirkpatrick, Kuan and Resnikoff had their forms updated. Godburn and Ganguli shared that they would not have any updates and the previous statements would still be valid. Allison said that that should be fine but just needed their confirmation. Arafah said that she would need to update her form. Allison (and Chair Kirkpatrick) asked commissioners who have not completed this to please do so before the end of the calendar year.

Other

No report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Arts Committee

Brochure-Digital Photos

No action has taken place.

MCAAAA Update

Chair Kirkpatrick said that Charlotte McCoid has framed the print from last year's winner and this would be displayed for the next year at City Hall.

Planning & Projects Committee

No report on Grants Awareness Project and Workshop Collaboration.

Godburn noted that he would like to finalize the nominations for the Arts Advocacy Award so that a vote could take place at this meeting. Individual and group nominations were made. As part of the discussion of nominees, commissioners discussed about the monetary award that could be accompanied with the recognition. It was noted that the MCA budget has had 10% held-back for this year which, if needed, may be requested by addressing the Finance Department, and with our delayed grants process this year, funding has continued to be very tight. In the past, up to \$1000 was awarded for each award. It was agreed that \$2000 would be a great deal to set aside from the Grants budget, given the current budget scenario. Ultimately, it was agreed that MCA would not need to make a determination until the January meeting; however, the awardees should be finalized by this meeting's end. Two nominations were given for individual award and five nominations were given for the group award. A written vote was cast by each commissioner present for each category. Marco Gaylord was announced as the winner of the individual category, and the Greater Middletown Chorale was named as the group winner.

A side discussion took place about where the venue would be for the awards ceremony. The Arts Advocacy Days have been scheduled for April 12 and 13. It was suggested that the Middletown High School Performance Arts Center could be a good space for this; however, that week is a school vacation week. Allison said that he would check this out and report back at the next meeting. He would also be letting the winners know about their award recognition and see about their availability to attend the ceremony. If we have to adjust the schedule, we should be able to do so.

Other Committees

No report.

Resolution for Kids Arts Funding

Allison shared that the resolution concerning fees was approved by the Common Council as recommended by the commissioners.

Kids Arts '10 Proposal Request

Allison mentioned that Requests For Proposal applications are now available for this program, and information has been shared in the community. Deadline has been slated for December 29, 2009. Although the budget has not been set for 2010-2011, the funding need for the program would be very apparent by the time MCA would need to prepare for next year's budget.

NEW BUSINESS

2010 Meeting Schedule

Resnikoff made a motion to accept the 2010 Meeting Schedule as presented, and Kamins seconded it. Motion carried unanimously.

2010-2011 MCA Budget

Allison reminded commissioners that they would need to formulate a budget at the January meeting. It was noted that given the current economic climate, MCA would be fortunate just to maintain level-funding.

Other

None.

Announcements

Grant Report: Brenda Wilson (Ryan Woods Autism) – Reviewed and accepted as presented.

Middletown Public School Cultural Council – Reviewed and no action needed.

Other

Allison shared that a Durham resident inquired with MCA about our operation and what advice we would give for starting a new arts council or commission. Allison suggested that John Cusano at the CT Commission on Culture & Tourism would be an ideal individual for her to consult with since he has experience working with both.

Arafeh announced that the Albano Nutcracker was well attended and it was a success. Arafeh noted that having a live orchestra has really added to the performance. The touring group has committed to return to the MHS Performing Arts Center for the next three years. Arafeh further noted that the December 5th opera performance was still a successful event despite the snowy weather.

Kamins mentioned that the Holiday Spectacular with the Hartford Symphony and the Hartford Chorale would be gracing the stage of the MHS Performing Arts Center on December 18 and 19.

Adjournment

Kamins made a motion to adjourn; Godburn seconded it. Motion carried. Meeting concluded at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Kuan