



Minutes of the Meeting

March 23, 2022

Room 208, Municipal Bldg. Middletown, CT

Hybrid Meeting

In attendance

Pam Steele, Chair
David Wolfram
Barbara Arafeh
Domenique Thornton
Barbara Arafeh
Lee Godburn
Charlotte McCoid
Julia Faraci (virtually)

Also in attendance

Kisha Michael
(Arts Coordinator)

Absent

Kate Ten Eyck
Joyce Kirkpatrick
Ed McKeon (Common Council)
Ed Ford (Common Council)
Cheryl Hale (Poet Laureate)

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:00 PM

2. Public Session: None

3. Approval of Minutes: February 23, 2021 Meeting

- Motion made by Godburn and seconded by Wolfram. No discussion; passes unanimously.

4. Approval of Agenda:

- Motion made by Wolfram and seconded by Arafeh to approve agenda. No discussion; passes unanimously.

5. Remarks from the Chair

The Chair announced that she had received an email (from the administration) regarding the recent City Charter revisions regarding term limits that are in effect. MCA currently has two members whose term expires in June. Under the City Charter revisions, Commission members will now have a limit of two (2) sequential terms commencing July 1 and ending June 30. The MCA has 2 republican openings currently and June 30, we will have one more republican and one democratic opening because two of our current members will be term limited. The Chair asked commission members to think about people they may know for appointment to the MCA who are interested in promoting the arts but are not part of a group which apply for MCA grants so there will be no conflict of interest. Young people who want to move the arts forward are especially encouraged to apply.

In regard to conflict of interest, the Chair had a conversation with the Chris, the city attorney who said he will not advise the commission as requested because it is the Ethics Commission which provides rulings on conflict situations. The Ethics Commission has forms on which they receive requests for an opinion or an individual can file a complaint. The Ethics Commission will issue a ruling in these instances. The city attorney advised that persons or groups who apply for grants will necessarily have a conflict per our ethics policy.



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Dave Wolfram's son is an art teacher at Wesley School and Wild Orchid has volunteered to arrange a display of children's art in recycled materials at the Wild Orchid window and the shop window next door if needed to promote kid's art and promote the MCA 50th Anniversary.

6. Old Business –

A. Staff Report

Joe Fonda declined the grant offered by the grants committee with a statement that the funding was not enough to support his performance. MCA will have to do a motion to the common council for resolution #23-22 to amend and reflect the decline in grant funding. So there will be \$1,000 left in the grant line. Michael will prepare the motion for council approval. Michael will make a request to reconvene the Fall Grant committee to review the application process and revisit grant guidelines.

The City IT department assisted in setting up a web application for grant applicants which will facilitate the application process. With no more fillable PDF's or paper documents, the process will be streamlined and efficient. As soon as they submit she will print the document and it is done.

The most recent Common Council meeting approved the MCA grants. Councilmen Ed McKeon and Grady Faulkner supported the removal grant match for arts grants - both individual and organizational match requirements across the board. A council member will be invited to the next grants review committee meeting to add council clarification.

Noah Baerman submitted an interim grant report for 2022 that was delayed due to the pandemic. He has dates for his events July through the end of the year in his interim report.

Attached to agenda electronically is the expenditure report. All can see where finances are to date.

MCA Events:

4th of July Fireworks Event is on! Joe Fonda has accepted to be a featured artist for the 4th of July with his "Blue's Band Jam" including Jaimoe, the drummer from the Allman Brothers Band, a CT resident and his friend and they play together often. Joe said he was thrilled and honored to be part of the 4th of July as a featured artist which will be celebrated on Saturday, July 2.

Summer Sounds: Confirmed: Rani Arbo 2014 Music Ambassador and Daisy Mayhem; Jay Hoggard 2015 Music Ambassador; and Mike Arafah 2022 Trio with House of Moses and Terry Willard (almost confirmed).

Michael met with the Amistad executive director, educational director and Jesse Nasta to set up planning meetings for Amistad being featured on Oct. 1 and anchored at Harbor Park Sept. 9 to Oct. 12.

Kids Arts registration going well. New parents coming and with "Teeny Tiny's" coming in 5 to 7 year olds. 24 out of 30 and core group is 41 out of 120 registered so far.



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Risley wooden sculpture now resides in the Mayor's office waiting room. Michael made up a small statement to describe the piece. Mayor was overjoyed with the decision to place it in his office for visitors to enjoy.

A sympathy card for Betsy Morgan and her family for the loss of David Morgan is being passed around for signatures.

Michael suggested that the City art display case be used to display rotating art pieces for public art; elementary school kids or teachers. As many people get to stand in that hallway to pay taxes to see their grandchild's or daughter's art, it would be nice to appreciate their work. MCA discusses that it could be a monthly rotating display.

Middletown Schools Public Art Show will open May 14 virtually.

The Senior Art Award ceremony is May 13 in the morning 9 to 11 AM. Commissioner invited to attend.

PRIDE Michael spoke to city attorney Chris and the sponsorship form was passed out to the commissioners. In regard to their event "City Hall Take Over," the New Haven PRIDE Center will be the curator for the city hall event. They are planning 7 vignettes of drag performance art with 7 artists and 3 dimensional art and mannequins - more content and details to follow. This cost of the event is estimated at \$3,500 for their proposal. Request is for MCA to help make this happen. MCA discusses sponsorship of PRIDE event at different levels. Yellow Sponsorship gives MCA a table and can participate in the parade. MCA discusses the level of support for the PRIDE event which will be an art walk in town hall to display art work from that community in a museum like setting with refreshments for an evening at City Hall.

- Motion made by Godburn to support Middletown PRIDE with Yellow sponsorship of \$2,500. Thornton seconded. Passes unanimously.

Juneteenth Festival is being spearheaded by the UJIMA Alliance Middletown. Last year, Juneteenth was very well attended. MCA discussed how MCA can support this event. City to provide the Show Mobile.

Michael was approached by staff of the Anti-Racism Task Force which seeks an incentive to support a mural such as seen in Hartford to promote anti-racism. Michael suggested bringing the chairs together or committees together to begin to discuss how to support this initiative. The chair of the Anti-Racism Task Force is Darnell Ford and Sacha Crockett is vice chair. Michael suggested we join with them to best determine how we can collaborate in this effort.

Michael co-collaborate the library and Park and Rec department to highlight MCA. MCA brochure is going out with the City tax bills and in various other places around town. Much praise and positive comments was made to Wolfram for his assistance with the new improved colorful and professional design of this brochure.



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B. Committee reports

Music Sub-committee Arafeh will meet with the music subcommittee next week

Planning and Projects Godburn announced that the two arts advocacy recipients Mike Arafeh of Coffee House Recording Studio and Lee McQuillan. Instead of having a March Arts Event, we will look to celebrate them on the birth day of the MCA Oct. 26, 1972 to bring everyone together on that day with past recipients and past commissioners invited. He is also in contact with Bobby Joe.

Public Arts McCoid reported wooden Risley piece was in the foyer and now it is the Mayor's Office.

The Adult Ed Main Street window will have the theme Happy Birthday MCA to create some magic. Godburn reported that he is looking to get a visual electronic screen for the window either a laptop or other electronic screen and displayed in the window. Art submissions could potentially be placed on the screen. The main limitation would be the small door to access the window. Discussion followed how many events and arts displayed have been put on virtually due to the pandemic which could be put on a loop on the screen including announcements of upcoming arts events.

The architect for Committee Rec Center architect MCA input for art. They have a \$20,000 budget for art.

Chair announced that many new projects downtown for housing with coffee shops the old skating rink building on the North End so there will be many opportunities to display public art.

50th Anniversary Godburn reported the 50th is starting to become more of things done by the people and MCA is looking to do the big things in combination with other groups. The police dog will be added to another event. We talked about the Summer Sounds events doing a children's event. We talked about Anitra to be added for a children's kid friendly event may be one. The Oct. 26 birthday party to gather all former commissioners may be added. Discussion followed regarding the place and the number of persons invited to the event potentially to be held outside.

Godburn reported for publicity Announcements will go out in the tax bills and Michael is working on a PSA for "What's YOUR Art" and asking public to look for what MCA will be doing using Middletown Face Book pages. He is also looking to use buttons and banners MCA commissioners at all events to pass out buttons. Another idea was to bring art to different areas in Middletown. Summer Sounds already discussed.

Michael is looking for quotes from commissioners to promote the arts for press release. Godburn is also looking for commissioner content for an article the Middletown Press promised to publish.



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Arafeh commented on the idea of publicizing a particular artist spotlighting a Middletown artist featuring a particular type of art.

7. New Business: None.

8. Announcements

Arafeh announced GMCA will have the internationally recognized 3 baroque era instrument ensemble called La Chaconne Trio to perform at the Wadsworth Mansion on Sunday, May 22, 2022 at 7:30 PM

Faraci announced that there is an arts exhibit at the Russell Library

10. Adjournment

- Motion made by Godburn seconded by Thornton to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Domenique Thornton
Secretary