



## Minutes of the Meeting

Middletown Commission on the Arts

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

7:00 p.m., Middletown, CT

Via WebEx

### Present:

Barbara Arafah

Julia Faraci

Lee Godburn

Joyce Kirkpatrick,

Charlotte McCoid,

Pamela Steele

Also present, Kisha Michael, Staff

Common Council Member Ed Ford (approx. 7:44 pm)

### Absent:

David Bauer

Common Council Member Edward McKeon

1. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order by Chair Pamela Steele at 7:07pm.
2. Public Session - Elise Schroth presented a short overview of the professional dance group and school, Ekklesia Ballet, now at Middletown's Holy Trinity Church, Main Street after 15 years in another county town. The group hopes to place in front of the church an outdoor stage that would be available to other arts groups, and looks forward to working with the MCA. Rachel DeCavage presented news of her store, Cinder + Salt, at a new location, 195 Main Street. With experience in organizing art shows, she hopes to collaborate with downtown art walks and looks forward to working with the MCA.
3. Approval of Minutes: February 24, 2021 Meeting - Following a motion by Julia Faraci, seconded by Lee Godburn, the minutes of February 24, 2021 were approved unanimously.
4. Approval of Agenda - Following a motion by Lee Godburn, seconded by Charlotte McCoid, the agenda was approved unanimously.
5. Remarks from the Chair -
  - a. Secretary assignment - Pamela Steele asked for volunteers for Secretary and for someone to record today's Minutes. Joyce Kirkpatrick volunteered for the current meeting. Pamela Steele reported that she met with the Mayor to discuss the upcoming MCA 50th Anniversary. She had also recommended the following for membership on the MCA – Kate Ten Eyck, Dominique Thornton, David Wolfram. Charlotte McCoid requested that Gil Scullion be added to the list.
6. Old Business
  - a. Staff Report – Kisha Michael reported on the following:
    - Kids Arts is progressing.
    - Project Support Grants (PSG) from last year were affected by Covid19 and made reports. J. Cherry's Middletown Music Festival will happen this year; all the music acts are booked. The Storytelling Center in the Pre-Schools has been happening and is continuing, according to organizer Ann Shapiro. Joe Fonda's Composers' Festival at the Buttonwood will happen in June.
    - Make Music Day, a national celebration, will happen June 21st. Matt of Middletown Music Academy will be on a committee for Make Music Day and the Middletown Music Academy will participate and has volunteered to be the website administrator.

-Meeting with Mayor – Summer Events are in discussion with the Mayor’s office. Staff will keep all abreast of upcoming events.

-Commissioners gave the following feedback in response to staff’s request: Suggestions varied from separating inventory gathering from specific questions, need to set context, clarity, making surveys shorter, being specific about information needed, etc. Setting up some small focus groups to help develop surveys was also suggested.

-Nekita Waller is ending her successful – in spite of the pandemic – 3 year tenure as Connecticut’s State Troubadour in August, and Councilman Grady Faulkner suggested that appropriate recognition be made.

b. Recommendations GOS Applicants – Because two Commissioners present at this meeting have Conflicts of Interest with two pending applications, thereby reducing the meeting’s quorum, it was deemed necessary to have a special meeting for purposes of decision.

c. Committee Reports

i. Public Art Committee - Charlotte McCoid reported that the PAC met March 23 and discussed %for Art. David Bauer reported on a meeting with City Legal Department and the Council’s plans for City Ordinance 14-23. Council member Ed Ford tuned in (approx. 7:44p.m.) to present the most recent update on the Council’s pending changes to Ordinance 14 – 23: there will not be a Building Committee as a standing committee, but each project will have its own building committee appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the Common Council. (He departed at approx. 8:00 p.m.) Kisha will check with the Legal Department for suitable language.

\*\* The MCA, following a motion by Charlotte McCoid and seconded by Lee Godburn, unanimously voted that the following statement be presented to the Common Council: “The Middletown Commission on the Arts strongly supports changes to City Ordinance 14 -23 that will include the requirement that a visual artist will have a seat on any City Building Committee planning City Buildings and/or City parks or other landscapes.”

-City Art Collection – The Public Art Committee presented the need for curation of the City’s art collection which now numbers over 100 works of art. Following a motion by Lee Godburn, seconded by Charlotte McCoid, the MCA unanimously voted that: \*\*“The PAC and Kisha may find art experts to achieve their goal of the curation of the City Art Collection.”

-Risley Sculpture – Joyce Kirkpatrick and Charlotte McCoid will look for a suitable master woodworker to repair the damaged sculpture.

ii. Planning & Projects Committee - Lee Godburn reported: MCAAAA – April 28, with the help of Julie Shvetz, MPS Fine Art Department Head, Pam Steele and Lee will judge this year’s candidates.

iii. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Discussion - Send additional ideas to Pam and Lee by March 29.

Arts Advocacy Awards 2020 & 2021 – Since the Covid Pandemic made presentations difficult, much discussion ensued.

\*\* Godburn made a motion to go with original vote for 2021 and to wait until next year to award two nominations. Motion was seconded by McCoid. Discussion ensued, the MCA voted 5 to 1 on the motion presented. Ursel’s Web was added to the list of candidates.

7. New Business - none
8. Announcements - Julia Faraci said she plans to attend the Shuttered Venues information session by Shoreline Arts Alliance and the Connecticut Office of the Arts and report at the next meeting.
9. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM as moved by Lee Godburn.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Kirkpatrick, Secretary pro tem

cc: Town Clerk,  
Mayor Benjamin D. Florsheim