



Minutes of the Meeting

April 27, 2022

Room 208, Municipal Bldg. Middletown, CT

Hybrid Meeting

In attendance

Pam Steele, Chair
David Wolfram
Barbara Arafah
Domenique Thornton
Barbara Arafah
Lee Godburn
Charlotte McCoid
Kate Ten Eyck
Julia Faraci

Also in attendance

Kisha Michael
(Arts Coordinator)

Absent

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

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:02 PM

2. Public Session: None

3. Approval of Minutes: March 23, 2022, Meeting

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

4. Approval of Agenda:

- Motion made by Godburn and seconded by Ten Eyck to approve agenda. No discussion; passes unanimously.

5. Remarks from the Chair

The Chair announced that the press release looked really good and good weather has now allowed MCA to do some outdoor events even with Covid numbers climbing. We are starting on some of the 50th anniversary projects. The Chair invited members to stop by the window at the Wild Orchid storefront where the school children have made a display of recycled materials adding that Ginny and Dave did such a great job making it look like a fairy land. The project was put together for Earth Day.

6. Old Business –

A. Staff Report

Pierre Sylvain had a question about whether the store front was still in motion. McCoid reported that the window was still in progress. Godburn reported that he was inquiring about a totally different project that Jen was doing which MCA had no information on that project. Michael advised him to contact Jen Alexander. Ten Eyck remarked that there were not that many store front available. The few that are available, have a problematic landlord situation or the sale of the property was imminent, or it was not a good site.



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The Chair remarked that there is a lot going on with many of the buildings Woolworth building (Artful Artifacts) first then Shilien's building and then come back to the other because there was an issue regarding the parking. The Bob's building has been sold and that will be apartments. So, there is not going to be a lot of empty space and it will limit us in what we can do but you may want to reach out to Dominic to talk about putting art on the wall for the piano bar. Shilien's will be a tapas bar so there may be opportunities for art installations within his space. It may depend on who will lease that space as he talks to prospective tenants. Tony will be taking over Vinny Jump and Jive and the ice cream shop next door will be all one space.

Michael reported that she had a visit from Denise Smith from Futures Inc. on Broad Street across from the library. They are an institution for children and adults with special needs and she is their art director. They sell their art and do tons of art and had a display at the First Church and the Buttonwood Tree. She came in with one of her students and said she was looking for resources and places to sell their art. She gave a view of all the artwork they have on her phone. The MCA could purchase from them. She will send by email to commissioner.

Michael said she was asked to be the guest curator for the Ray Hardman Show on CT Public. He goes around the state and focuses on city art sector. He will go to see Michael Pestal, Pierre Sylvain and Oddfellows. Michael does not know when it will be aired but it is done and virtually.

Michael is working on summer programs and is thinking of asking MCA to be stewards to help monitor all the grants that came out. Michael asked if it would be a great idea to hear from MCA as a check in and try to get us to attend the grantee projects and be involved with them to better steward the grants.

Godburn commented that suggestion fits right in with his idea that perhaps 1 to 3 commissioners would want to show up not only our events but all arts events with buttons for the 50th and What's Your Art. We have one that says official MCA artist and introduce ourselves especially at those who we fund.

We have arts grants in the fall –Every Note Counts- and ask where are they in their process? Michael suggested Commissioners do a wellness check on each project, make connections with them and offer support. Michael can help them with publicity but she asks the commissioners to help with this as well. Ten Eyck suggested a list be made and commissioners. Commissioners requested a spreadsheet of projects. Arafah reminded the MCA had been hands off in the past and that the artists need to feel freedom to do their art as the grant said. McCoid agreed that not all grantees need that much oversight. The Chair requested Michael create a sheet of everything that was going on so the commissioners could review it and decide which ones they would like to reach out to and call. Then the commissioners can be updated with the performance dates and other details

Godburn mentioned that in addition to the events we are sponsoring such as grant requests, we should also be involved with other city arts projects. Michael said she was speaking specifically of the grant's



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projects from the Fall 2021 -22. Godburn suggested that since we also sponsored a booth at Gay Pride, we also need to think about how to make a showing there. All commissioners nodded their agreement at this suggestion that MCA make a good showing at the Gay Pride event with our display booth. Michael said she would do a small art gallery there and have buttons etc.

B. Committee reports

Public Arts

McCoid discussed the purchase of some art. Ten Eyck reported that they have met at the Middletown Rec Center and were visited by Joyce and Charlotte and reached out to the Mayor's chief of staff that our accumulated stuff looks terrible. They were moving things around and cleaned up and it did happen that they cleared up the lobby, so everything looks good.

Music Sub-committee

Arafeh reported a successful meeting held on 4/13/2022. You have the minutes from the music subcommittee. The subcommittee focused on music in the schools which was not known due to personnel changes however Farah Scala is in charge of all the music at MPS. She is cooperative and wants to come and speak to the MCA on the 17th so they hope to have a report. Thornton wanted to know how MCA could assist and enhance children's music to compose and play their own music. Make Music Day 6/21/2021 she added, and this may be part of it. Arafeh noted that we should enhance and promote young people's music.

Planning and Projects Godburn announced the MCAAA (Middletown Commission on the Arts Annual Arts Awards) are going to be laid out and viewed by the chair, Michael and himself. Godburn mentioned he has spoken to the arts advocacy recipients Mike Arafeh for Coffee House Recording Studio and Lee McQuillan who were both excited to get their arts advocate awards. Lee's partner Maggy passed away recently but she was there to see Lee get the award. Regarding the Main Street window, he has a meeting with the tech who will be setting it up. However, what he will need tonight is approval to release funds to buy the electronic screens and pay for the tech and decorate the window. We have planned 3 to 7 screens and one larger screen in the middle that will have a program designed to show what is happening in town. Michael will view it and will be taught to update the program. The other screens will be smaller and show the same loop of activities: Circus; MHS at the Bushnell omitting having the tech go through hours of information and he will just put together what we select for \$30 an hour and it will be completed by the end of the month. The system will be cordless, and it will run on a hard drive. Discussion followed explaining the way the screens will work in the window and how many screens would be best suited for the window. The cost of the screens will be greatly reduced as well as the hard drives. We will have a window talking about the MCA downtown. Godburn added that one Jim



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Misenti who runs the Adult Ed learned how the screens will operate and he encouraged MCA to keep it up and gave us no deadline for the end date of the project. There will be no more than 6 screens and there may not be six. Discussion followed about what would be shown on the screens to not be just words but also pictures and videos that are available on public domain and take bites. Ten Eyck discussed the need for fabric; the need to decorate the window and how many hours it will take to do the job. Godburn mentioned most of the content is already in digital form to create a one-hour loop.

- Motion made by Thornton to buy the screens and hard drives spend no more than \$1,500 for all equipment and whatever material they deem appropriate to set up the window to get it started. Ten Eyck seconded the motion for material; equipment and tech for the Adult Ed. Window project. Passes unanimously.

50th Anniversary

The Chair reports that the 50th Anniversary celebration should take place outside. In her discussions, several suggested as the venue to block off DeKoven Drive and have the show-mobile and put up tents on the lawn of town hall. The Chair will have to research the cost of fire and police and instead of providing food, we may have food trucks come and have it be a family event. MCA would provide giant sheet cakes and refreshment and perhaps have a VIP reception first and then the general public later. Godburn and the Chair will be investigating what day we will be best to have it in early October. Invite all previous commissioners and award recipients Godburn suggested we do the arts advocacy awards and invite the past recipients and we will want entertainment. Rain date possible. Chair will investigate costs but there is nowhere in town that can house 300 – 400 people at this time. Godburn mentioned the accessibility of having it on town hall lawn. Chair mentioned that our options are to keep it smaller by invitation only and asked the commissioners to think about what we would like to see as a 50th anniversary celebration. Commissioners agreed that entertainment will be a must for the celebration. Godburn like the fact that having the celebration on town hall lawn makes the connection between the city and the arts which is the reason we are here. Thornton agreed that it is the city who is promoting the arts in Middletown.

Chair said Michael will have a list of the arts grantees for the commissioners and have kids at the celebration and asked for Summer Sounds concerts.

Thornton added that Trevor Davis mentioned at the Music Subcommittee that the Mayor gave him a blues band project down by the river not part of Summer Sounds but it is an extra music activity at the river on July 3 with a rain date July 4.

7. New Business:



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Michael asked what to do with Joe Fonda's grant that he declined of \$1,000. We have to amend the resolution to return it back to the commission for MCA use. Joe Fonda is doing the entertainment for the 4th of July, but this \$1,000 grant was a completely different project.

- Godburn makes a motion for 23-22 to amend the line item to return the \$1,000 to MCA line item. Thornton seconds. Approved unanimously.

8. Announcements

Faraci asked if anyone went to Supporting Women Artists. They had a concert every year and it was held at Trinity on Main in New Britain at 6 until 9 and they had many individual artists. There is also a FaceBook page to check out with photos.

Arafeh announces the Greater Middletown Concert Association will have a concert on May 22, 2022, on Sunday afternoon pioneering their performance at the new Beman Auditorium of 380 seats at the middle school. The cost is the same as the performing arts center. It will be a concert of classical music played on historical instruments of the times.

Arafeh also mentioned the GM Chorale will have a concert on Sunday May 1 presenting the Creation by Haydn at 4 PM.

10. Adjournment

- Motion made by Godburn seconded by Chair to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Domenique Thornton
Secretary