



Minutes of the Meeting

June 22, 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
Kate Ten Eyck
Julia Faraci
Joyce Kirkpatrick
Ed McKeon (Common Council)

Also in attendance

Kisha Michael
(Arts Coordinator)

Absent

Cheryl Hale (Poet Laureate)
Ed Ford (Common Council)

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:05 PM

2. Public Session: Anthony Pandolfe member of the public visiting. No remarks

3. Approval of Minutes: May 25, 2022 Meeting

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

4. Approval of Agenda:

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

5. Remarks from the Chair

The Chair announces the Summer Sounds had great attendance and our 50th Anniversary plans for celebration are moving along. We had a great PRIDE event and the 4th of July.

Reflections on leadership: when we take on leadership roles, they are rewarding but they are not always the most popular. Being a leader does not mean go along to get along. Sometimes being a leader means standing alone. We find we have to make sure we are moving in the right direction and that does mean sometimes addressing things that are not popular. Leadership is an honor but it is not something we should take on lightly. With that honor comes great responsibility and it also comes with rewards but it does not always received well. You know that you have to do and say what is right. Reflecting on leadership, we have to stand up hoping that people see that or they would not ask the person to be in a leadership role. The Chair would like to impart for those taking on leadership roles after her that it is an honor but you do have to work and not to take it on if you cannot make the



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commitment and do what is asked of you. The Chair also advised that in each example of instances when she has been asked to step up, she has learned something from the experience and she would like to impart what she has learned to others who may come after her. She hopes those who step up will remember these words and understand to do what is expected.

6. Old Business –

A. Staff Report

Michael purchased some collared T shirts of bright yellow for the MCA commissioners to wear at MCA events inspired by Arafeh's remarks to thank everyone for their support.

Michael announced that there are so many things are going on in the city. Please follow Face Book, open her emails, look at the paper and listen to 88.1 and you will know everything that is going on.

Michael announced that the Poet Laureate Cheryl Hale will be moving away from Middletown in a month and she will not be able to continue as Poet Laureate any longer. She will send her a letter and a T-shirt. We could write a letter on behalf of the MCA for the Mayor to sign.

Michael received an email that ARTOLUTION has been sent an email to do art for the new Rec Center.

The Anti-Racism Task Force has been in touch with Michael. Sheila Jones, the staff to the task force has been working on a Black Lives Matter (BLM) cross walk. She brought 3 quotes and then one for the Mayor to consider the one that they approved and selected to do a BLM crosswalk on the corner of Main Street and Court Street.

No meeting in August but there may be activity.

B. Committee reports

Nominating Committee

Ten Eyck said the nominating committee should not be the only giving input for the MCA commissioners. We have eleven on the commission and we can have no more than seven of the same party. Looking at the slate of people who will be expiring, we have two current openings and two expiring. Next year we will have three more vacancies. Before the end of next year, we will need 7 new commissioners, however it was explained that commissioners may serve until replaced. So until we get more commissioners, Kirkpatrick and Arafeh will continue in their positions.

Ten Eyck also reported that there may be something about to happen involving a tunnel under Newfield Street that connects to the road where the veterinary office and the Water Department are located. (Berlin Street) She reported this would be a good opportunity for a competition or a call for artists. Thornton noted that the bike trail plans already anticipated connecting the Westlake trail through Tuttle



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Road to Newfield Street could include an artistic enhancement in the bond when it may be passed sometime in the future.

Planning and Projects

Godburn reported that he spoke to Cheryl, the Poet Laureate before she left to ask her about connecting us to other groups of poets and poet laureates from around the state. In September we will get the committee back together to select another poet laureate.

PRIDE event was wonderful. One thing we need to do going forward is to get a MCA sub-committee to work on the PRIDE event in the future. A member of the MCA will be appointed by the Mayor to be a part of the PRIDE committee.

The Main Street Window of Adult Ed is large and we have about half of it done. What we have done is to stick with the idea to keep it technical with messages and a constant roll of words and information happening in town constantly changing. The other four monitors will be pictures of things already happening in town. Unfortunately it is dark and sun glares. They hung a dark backdrop in there and that now show the monitors well. Additionally in speaking with the person who runs Adult Ed he looked to ask us to stay there for a few years. For the time and expense we spent, it will not have to be taken down right away. When Godburn returns from his trip, he would like to have commissioners come down and look at the window to see what we can do with it in the future. He noted that the window looks much better with the backdrop. It takes up the whole window but they can only be seen when they are lit. It looks much better than what it was there and they would like it to stay for a few years.

Godburn also announced we never got our senior art person for the MCAAA award.

Godburn brought up for consideration whether the MCA would like to be in the next Car Show. Our table was very well received at the PRIDE event. We had two hour line for the drag queen but discussion ensued over whether we should consider participating in the next car show to attract families to the arts during the event.

In further discussion, Arafah brought up the need to advertise the window because we are putting so much work into it. Michael offered that she would take a photo and post it and share it when it is finished to promote it.

She also reported that she is still working on a sing along with Middletown composers for the anniversary. Neely Bruce, Allie Wrubel, Henry Clay Work, Reginald DeKoven and Kitty Kathryn are all Middletown composers who can be recognized. Steele noted that we need a data base of all the artists in town.

Arafah reported that her questionnaire is coming along well. Godburn offered we not tell people what their art is but ask "What is Your Art?" on the questionnaire. Ten Eyck suggested we use it as a way to



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recruit members and people interested in the arts. McCoid suggested that it be wherever there is a large group of people. Kirkpatrick offered that it should be in electronic form. Ten Eyck offered that the organizations we support have cards to be filled out to indicate who is interested in the arts in Middletown. The Chair noted we should consider Middletown residents first.

Michael said she has a binder in hard copy which could be transferred into a digital form and asked what it will be used for; who will have access to such a data base. Michael notes that one would be a public data base and the other is an internal data base and possibly a third to allow people to input their emails so they can be on the list serve that announces public arts events. Chair indicates these are all great ideas and we must move on

7. 50th Anniversary

Michael reports that the MCA checking account has \$21,079. There was nothing put in the budget as a separate line item for the 50th Anniversary.

Godburn discusses that our last meeting we voted to pay Astra the drag queen for her performance at PRIDE event. He built something in the back of his truck but he needed to have someone on the back of the truck to monitor her and make sure she did not fall. He did not think it was fair that she got paid and the other person did not. He was the one who helped build it; took a day off from work and stayed the whole day. Godburn felt it would be fair if Andrew be paid also. Astra was paid \$250. Discussion followed.

- Motion made by Thornton to pay Andrew \$150 and Kirkpatrick seconded. Passes unanimously.

Chair said the MCA celebration date we talked about one event versus two events and we need to pin it down. Should we do one event at the Summer Sounds in August and call it a day? Chair assures the commissioners that the Council will approve additional money if it was needed for the celebration. Discussion of the celebration followed but it was agreed by all not to call the last Summer Sounds a concert but to advertise it as our 50th Anniversary Celebration.

- Godburn made a motion to have one event on Thursday, August 25 and Ten Eyck seconded.

Discussion followed. There are two bands booked. Arafah was under the impression that the reason we were having two events was to have one more formal and the other with all the children and families. Ten Eyck suggested we have a VIP reception at the August 25 event. Chair assured all that we will have both but one would be on the August 25 date but right now we have a motion to do Aug. 25. Chair calls the question and it passes unanimously. Chair assures that we do need to have both with a VIP reception starting at 5 to 6 PM. Kirkpatrick advocates for using the money for the art and not just celebrating the commissioners. Wolfgram suggested we can celebrate the commissioners during the band breaks with announcements.



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8. New Business:

Nominating - Slate of Officers

Ten Eyck announces the selection of a slate of MCA officers: Chair Godburn, Vice Chair Steele and Thornton secretary to be voted in July meeting.

Ten Eyck spoke to Councilman McKeon regarding his request that the MCA change its meeting schedule because certain council member are prevented from attending the MCA due to conflicts in their schedules. Further discussion followed. The Chair noted that if we changed our day and time we may lose our meeting room. Ten Eyck noted we also lost Ed Ford so we have no council member because Ford resigned the council due to his school schedule and he is expecting a new baby. More discussion followed. The commission decided against changing its meeting day and time.

The Chair discusses outreach to encourage public outreach. Michael suggested a large social media outreach to invite the public to our commission.

8. Announcements

The Chair proudly announced her daughter had another poem published in a Chicago magazine, entitled "In Search of Butterflies." Jennifer Steele is a Howard University Alum with a MFA in poetry from Columbia College Chicago and is the author of a book entitled *A house in Its Hunger* and is the executive director of 826CHI, a writing/publishing center amplifying the voices of Chicago's youth and is the recipient of several awards.

Ten Eyck announced that she performed with her husband Noah Baerman and with lots of other performers.

McCoid said she heard jazz players at the Mansion who were great.

Kirkpatrick said she saw a lovely young child playing the guitar with great composer and another person comes down Main Street with a boom box in his ears and it was a collision of musical events on Make Music Day in Middletown

Arafeh shared that she attended the 25th Anniversary of the CT Virtuosi Orchestra where she was recognized for bringing twenty two operas to Middletown.

10. Adjournment

- Motion made by Godburn seconded by Wolfram to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Domenique Thornton



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Secretary