



Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 23, 2020
7:00 pm
Middletown, CT
Via WebEx

Present:

Barbara Arafah (7:47 p.m.)

David Bauer

Cassandra Day, secretary

Lee Godburn

Joyce Kirkpatrick

Crystal Laffan

Charlotte McCoid

Pamela Steel, vice chairwoman

Julia Faraci

John Basinger (7:40 p.m.)

Also present:

Kisha Michael, staff

Absent:

Common Councilman Ed McKeon

Poet Laureate Cheryl Hale

Common Councilman Ed Ford Jr.

Agenda

- 1) Call to Order: 7:07 p.m.
- 2) Public session - none
- 3) Minutes of July 22, 2020- Motion to approve by Kirkpatrick, seconded by Day, approved unanimously.
- 4) Approval of Agenda- Motion to approve by Kirkpatrick, seconded by Day, approved unanimously.
- 5) Remarks from the Chair - Steele said she's pleased the MCA intends to reach out to more people about grants. She recommends letting Michael know in the future as soon as possible if something should be added/taken off the agenda.
- 6) Old Business
 - a) Staff Report / Program updates
 - Michael suggested a letter be written for commissioner Biales who has recently stepped down from the MCA. Day will do this.
 - There will be an abridged Holiday on Main on the day after Thanksgiving, Nov. 27, from 4 to 8 p.m. with no parade, no tree lighting on the green, and socially distanced train and horse and buggy rides on Main Street. Free cookies, popcorn and pretzels will be made available by the Chamber and photos with Santa, Michael said.
 - The chamber will conduct a private tree lighting at Eli Cannon's, Steele said.
 - There will be a Candy Car Cruise Oct. 24 at Crystal Lake for families.
 - Coffeehouse Recording on Main Street has marked 30 years.
 - Michael showed a piece of art that Recreation Director Cathy Lechowicz won at an auction by the artist "Acari." She wants to donate a painting of the Green Street Teaching and Learning Center to the City Art Collection. Public Art will take up the issue at its next meeting.
 - No action on the budget
 - Grants were affected by COVID - Michael will email details to commissioners
 - b) Committee Reports
 - i) Executive Committee – No report
 - ii) Public Art Committee - No report

- iii) Nominating Committee - Members Bauer, Faraci, Arafah and Laffan were asked by Godburn to name a chairperson.
- iv) Planning and Projects - Godburn reported the MCAA art has been updated in the display case in City Hall. The August Open Air Market was canceled due to the pandemic first in 15 years, Godburn said.
- v) Music - Arafah attended a recent online Shoreline Arts Alliance meeting. They are working with scientists at Yale to keep abreast of state guidelines related to the coronavirus. There are still many performances going on in Middletown, Arafah said, including one recent outdoor concert at the Canoe Club. She's eager to meet the new Middlesex County Historical Society Director Jesse Nasta to talk about an exhibition of Middletown musicians and local contributions to music history.
- vi) Poet Laureate - Laffan and Michael tried to contact Hale with no luck. Michael will reach out to her next week.
- vii) Grants Review - Godburn said there are a number of things to do, including funding restrictions, award amounts, and lag time. Michael presented two recommended options to help get the grant approvals on the council agenda in an appropriate time; 1. Move the regular MCA meeting to the first of the month or 2. Schedule a "special meeting" prior to the appropriate council agenda submission date. Often, a whole month is lost because there's not enough time, she said.

7) New Business

- a. Grant Applications Review
 - i. Scheduling/panel assignments - Commissioners Godburn, Steele, Kirkpatrick volunteered to be on the next grants panel, with McCoid as alternate
- b. Nomination of officers - Godburn made a motion to nominate Steele as chairwoman to replace Franca Biales, who stepped down last month. Kirkpatrick seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Steele made a motion to nominate Godburn as vice chair. Faraci seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. Vacancy recommendations - Godburn suggested commissioners look to former recommendations to fill seats to possibly replace Biales. McCoid nominated Gil Scullion. Will be discussed at the next meeting.
- d. Committee assignments - Michael will send out an email to commissioners, asking them to pick committees they want to be on.

8) Announcements

- Arafah said Ganguli was dedicated to the group and community, and raised significant funds for the arts in Middletown. Kirkpatrick said Ganguli, a nurse, was very active in the health care field, will be very much missed.
- Godburn said he'd like to suggest commissioners attend more arts events to show the MCA support and to report back to members so they all have representation from the MCA.
- Faraci attended a short dedication of a tree and bench on Long Lane Sept. 21 in honor of the late poet laureate Susan Allison. Her widow, Stephan Allison, read one of his wife's poems.

9) Adjournment - Godburn made a motion to adjourn, McCoid seconded it. Meeting closed at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Day, secretary

Cc: Town Clerk
Mayor Benjamin Florsheim