



Draft Minutes of the Meeting

September 28, 2022
Employee Lounge
Municipal Bldg.
Middletown, CT

In attendance

Lee Godburn, Chair
David Wolfram
Barbara Arafah
Charlotte McCoid
Kate Ten Eyck
Mike Marino

Also in attendance

Kisha Michael
(Arts Coordinator)

Absent

Pam Steele, Vice Chair
Domenique Thornton, Secy.
Joyce Kirkpatrick
Ed McKeon, Common Council

1. Call to Order: The meeting was relocated to the basement employees' lounge because of an extended City meeting in Room 208. Because of the last-minute change in venue, the Arts Coordinator was not able to record the meeting or make it accessible by Zoom.

Meeting called to order by the Chair at 7:16 PM.

2. Public Session: None

3. Approval of Minutes: July 27, 2022 Meeting

- Discussion of corrections suggested by Faraci. Motion made by McCoid and seconded by TenEyck to approve minutes with said corrections. Minutes pass with corrections unanimously.

4. Approval of Agenda:

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

5. Remarks from the Chair

The Chair expressed appreciation to outgoing Chair Pamela Steele for her important role in working on changes bringing the Arts Commission into its next 50 years.

6. Old Business –

A. Staff Report

Michael noted that the Arts Office received a thank you card with a check from Judy Kalinowski, who was a dear friend of Maggie McQuillan, in honor of Maggie, and Lee McQuillan, Arts Advocacy honoree.

Dear Members of the Commission on the Arts,

I want to thank you for the recognition you bestowed upon me on the 25th of August. To be recognized by your hometown and the State General Assembly is very special indeed. I especially want to thank Lee Godburn, vice chair; Neely Bruce, Arts Ambassador; and Kisha Michael; Staff, Arts & Culture Coordinator for their very detailed communications leading up to the event.

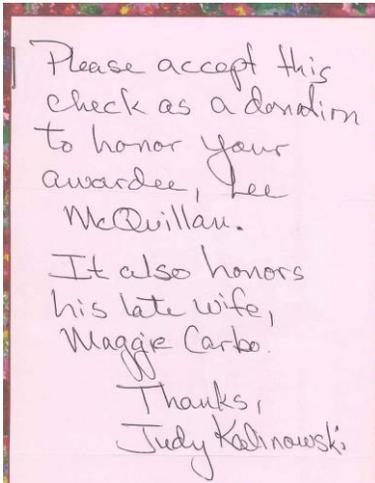
Some of you may have known that I learned about the award early in April a few days before my wife, Maggie Carbo, passed away. She was not only my life partner but my creative partner as well. Maggie was a poet and author of fantasy and mystery stories. I had set many of her poems and those compositions for chorus and/or soloists were responsible for much of my early success as a composer. One of our collaborations even made it into the 2017 Grammy competition for best new classical composition. I was able to let her know about this advocacy award and remind her of how much of her hand was a part of it before she passed. She was very pleased.

This came at a very good time for me and has lifted me up quite a bit. I thank you again.

Yours,



Lee T. McQuillan



A statement from Lee McQuillan was read to the Commissioners, stating what “a great honor” the award was to him and to his “life and creative partner”.

Michael asked that the Commissioners direct any commission correspondence directly to Chair Lee Godburn, who will be responsible for forwarding the messages.

Introductions were made to Mike Marino, new Council member and representative to Commission.

A grants portal has been set up for the new slate of grantees to get information and apply.

Michael invited Commissioners to a dinner on Friday honoring the crew of the Amistad, which is docked in Middletown this weekend.

The Arts Coordinator distributed MCA postcards for Commissioners to send to Middletown arts supporters to acknowledge and thank them.

Budget Housekeeping

Michael outlined the new procedure for getting checks to MCAAAA awardees. Unnecessary paperwork was created in the old method, when the checks went through a line item in the budget. The Commission would have to track the students down to fill out vendor forms and to transfer the artworks to the City. The new method would allow for the MCA award check to be included in the MCAAAA award packet, streamlining the signoff for the artwork.



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Funding and payment for the musicians for the Wadsworth Mansion Open Air Market will also be streamlined through an Arts Support Services Grant line. Applying for a grant like any other organization will have the additional benefit of allowing the Mansion access to more grant funding. The Mansion will apply in the spring for this funding for the fall.

B. Committee reports

Planning and Projects

MCAAAA Godburn completed the bestowal of the MCAAAA awards. He brought the prize-winning works, a digital artwork by Emily Matteson and a sculpture by Sadie Meltzer, to the meeting to show the Commissioners.

Summer Sounds, Arts Advocacy, and 50-Year Commissioners honored The last Summer Sound concert of the season on August 25 honored Michael Arafeh of Coffeehouse Recording Studio and Lee McQuillan, the recipients of the Arts Advocacy Award, as well as Barbara Arafeh and Joyce Kirkpatrick, the two Arts Commissioners who served 50 years on the Commission.

Godburn expressed appreciation to Neely Bruce and Rani Arbo, who, invited to perform, took it on themselves to gather other local musicians to honor the awardees. Cathy Kreger, Dave Downs, Michael Cleary, and Brian Wolfe, all performed sets at the concert.

Mayor Ben Florsheim and State Senator Matt Lesser gave proclamations to honor the awardees.

Open Air Market, Wadsworth Mansion Godburn thanked Commissioners and past Commissioners who assisted. MCA representatives staffing the booth used the talking point "What's Your Art?" While craft bags for kids were distributed, Godburn commented that the MCA gave out more information and spoke with more attendees than they ever had. He commented that most attendees were from out of town, many expressing interest in free events in Middletown and in local diners and restaurants. The Chamber of Commerce also noted interest in Connecticut-based activities like shopping and beer tours.

Board of Ed Window - Main Street Downtown Business District grant funding has been received to place storefront messaging for the 50th MCA Anniversary. Artist Janine Janaki, who is known for her painting of locales around Middletown, has been hired to paint the panels. A monitor has been placed, but not yet activated. Messages will read "You Can Do Anything" and images of past Middletown arts events will be displayed. The Arts Coordinator / MCA is selecting content.

Middletown Art Guild A local artist approached the Commission about re-initiating the Middletown Art Guild. No one has stepped forward to spearhead the restart. Further discussion of programming and leadership is needed.

Music Subcommittee



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Arafeh is in contact with music educators in the school system. The Subcommittee is continuing work on the music of local composers, including Allie Wrubel. Arafeh suggested musical groups could work with local restaurants for publicity.

Public Arts no report

Nominating Committee

Michael clarified some confusion about the requirements of the Commission by-laws for a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is required to nominate a slate of MCA officers. It is not charged with recruiting Commissioners, though recommendations to the Chair can be made.

Both the Democratic and Republican parties do have the option to nominate Commissioners from their party membership. The Commission will confirm that both political Parties have been contacted to advise them of the multiple Commission openings that need to be filled.

7. New Business

New Committee Assignments

Godburn announced the reconfiguration of the MCA Committees. The change is being made to facilitate accomplishment and completion of tasks, and a more equitable division of labor.

Nominating Committee

1. Present a slate of officers yearly in June
2. Vet new Commissioner suggestions to present to the Chair and Office
3. Mentor our student and Wesleyan Commission members
4. Mentor our newly appointed Commissioners
5. Yearly review of FOI, bylaws, and grant program
6. Sunshine

Planning and Projects

1. Assign music ambassador
2. Open Air Market
3. Pride
4. Arts Advocacy Award
5. Poet Laureate
6. New Projects
7. Youth involvement
8. Music



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Public Art

1. Acquire art
2. Maintain and promote existing art holdings
3. Steward MCA history
4. Respond to requests for public art in cooperation with Arts Office
5. MCAAAA

TenEyck commented that it was important to properly onboard new Commissioners. Former and outgoing Commissioners could be called upon to assist.

A videographer has been engaged to start documenting Commission history.

Michael noted the need for systems and procedures to be updated.

Grants

Discussion about whether Commissioners with a possible conflict of interest could serve on grants interview panel. All Commissioners can sit on panel but not vote if they have a conflict.

Projects grant awardees can also apply for GOS grants.

Michael will contact Commissioners with a proposed grant interview date soon. The proposed grants must be on the agenda for the Council's Oct 20th meeting by October 14.

9. Announcements

Arafeh announced that Prestige Brass, a quintet that has performed swing, ragtime and contemporary music all over New England, will perform on Wednesday, October 19, at Wadsworth Mansion.

Faraci announced that the Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society will perform HMS Pinafore at Valley Regional HS on October 15 and 16.

The Greater Middletown Concert Association will present Tosca on November 13 at the Santo Fragilio Performing Arts Center at Middletown High School.

10. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn by Faraci seconded by McCoid. Meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Julia Faraci, Commissioner
for
Domenique Thornton, Secretary