

Middletown Commission on the Arts

Minutes of Meeting Wednesday, June 22, 2016 7:00 P.M. Room 208 Municipal Building 245 deKoven Dr.

Present

Jenny Lecce (chair)
Franca Biales (vice chair) (arr 7:09pm)
Julia Faraci (secretary)
Barbara Arafteh (arr. 7:08pm)
Cassandra Day (left 8:45pm)
Sebastian Giuliano
Lee Godburn
Jay Hoggard
Robert Santangelo (left 8:38pm)
Susan Allison, Poet Laureate

Also Present

Daniel Drew, Mayor (left 8:36pm)
Stephan Allison, Coordinator

Absent

Fran Ganguli
Joyce Kirkpatrick
Charlotte McCoid
Alexandra Porczak (student rep)
Arthur Moore (student rep)

Call to Order

Jenny Hawkins Lecce, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:09pm in Room 208 Municipal Building 245 deKoven Dr.

Public Session – no members of the public present.

Mayor's visit with Commission

The current and future cutbacks in state funding are placing financial burdens on all aspects of City government. It is unlikely that the current level of funding to the Commission on the Arts (\$63,000) will increase in the near future.

Mayor Daniel Drew visited this meeting of the Commission on the Arts to review the City's new ordinance affecting grants awarded by the City, which was passed in May by the Common Council. Mayor Drew explained that the new ordinance requires that organizations that receive grants will be required to match the funding awarded by the city.

The purpose of this requirement is to increase accountability on the part of the organizations, to encourage them to follow better business practices, and to give groups incentive to perform more efficient fundraising through ticket sales, development, and use of non-city funds. In short, Mayor Drew noted that there should be "less dependence on sources of revenue we don't control." He conceded that groups that do not demonstrate their direct benefit to the public or do not meet public demand may not succeed.

The purpose of city grants is to encourage programming, not to support day-to-day operations of arts or other organizations. In special circumstances, Common Council can waive requirements of the ordinance. The ordinance does not apply to commissioned art, or purchasing an artwork or performance.

Ensuing discussion proposed the nomination of candidates with business acumen for current Arts Commissioner vacancies. Corporate and other sponsorship of city events was also suggested.

Mayor Drew noted that from May 15, when Common Council deliberates, to January 1, organizations should reassess policy and programming decisions, and research alternate funding sources. Local and in-state resources should be investigated for information and mentorship for grant writing.

The Mayor offered his office's assistance with guidelines and drafts of documents. Mayor Drew can be contacted at his city email mayor@MiddletownCT.gov, with copies to Joseph Samolis, Chief of Staff joseph.samolis@middletownct.gov and Stephan Allison, Arts Coordinator at arts@middletownct.gov.

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Minutes

May 25, 2016 - Motion to approve Minutes by Godburn, seconded by Biales; Ayes; Santangelo, Hoggard, Day, Lecce, Godburn, Faraci, Arafah, Biales; Nays: none; Abstentions: Giuliano.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Biales to approve agenda, seconded by Day, carried unanimously.

Remarks from the Chair – none.

Old Business

Budget Report – none. All funds have been spent.

Program Update

i) Arts Stakeholders Group – nothing to report

ii) Kids Arts – counselor training has started; the program will start next week and is fully enrolled.

iii) Fireworks Festival/Summer Sounds update – publicity cards are being distributed for the Fireworks event on Friday evening, July 1. Featured entertainers are City Music Ambassadors The Rust'd Keys, Rani Arbo and daisy mayhem, and The Jay Hoggard Quartet with the Middletown Symphonic Band closing out with patriotic songs accompanying the fireworks.

Summer Sounds will continue on Tuesday nights at 7pm at Harbor Park.

iv) Poet Laureate – Susan Allison has been actively scheduling poetry events. Her collaborators and friends followed through with readings of her work when she was unable to attend because of health issues. The commissioners requested advance notice of her readings, expressing great interest in attending these events.

v) Municipal Bldg. update – nothing to report

vi) Facebook – Former Commissioner MacSorley will continue to assist as community volunteer; Commissioner Day will continue MCA's work on the Facebook page.

Other – nothing to report

Committee Reports

a) **Executive Committee** – nothing to report

b) **Public Art Committee** – City Artwork has been shifted on the walls of the Municipal Building, and the recently acquired Pierre Sylvain work now hangs in a more visible position on the second floor facing the stairway and elevator.

Faraci will contact the organizers of the North End Art Walk, asking for the curated exhibit in the Municipal Building to be included in the Walk on July 7. She will also email Commissioners requesting volunteers to staff the City Art Exhibit for the Walk.

c) **Nominating Committee** – Biales nominated Lee Godburn for Chair of the Arts Commission, to replace Jenny Lecce, who is leaving the position. Giuliano seconded, carried unanimously. Franca Biales will continue as Vice-Chair and Julia Faraci as Secretary. The slate will be voted on in the annual meeting.

d) **Planning and Projects Committee** – Continuing discussion of Arts Commission's participation in the Open Air Market at the Wadsworth Mansion.

a) **Music Committee** – nothing to report.

New Business

a) **Review changing focus for awarding grants** – Continued discussion of points covered by Mayor Drew.

b) **Other** – nothing to report

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Miscellaneous

a) Announcements

Middletown artist and veteran David Schulz is putting his heart and soul into the Military Memorial. The Memorial will be unveiled in Council Chambers on September 27.

Middletuners' recent performance in the Senior Center was paired with the Center's Strawberry Festival.

b) Other – nothing to report.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Giuliano; seconded by Godburn at 9:15p.m.

The next MCA regular monthly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 27, 2016, at 7:00pm, in the Arts and Crafts Room at the Middletown Senior/Community Center, 61 Durant Street, Middletown.

Respectfully submitted,
Julia Faraci, Secretary