

Newtown Cultural Arts Commission

Minutes of June 4, 2020 Meeting

These minutes are subject to approval by the NCAC, at the next meeting

The Newtown Cultural Arts Commission, held a meeting via video conferencing on Thursday, June 4, 2020.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 by Commission Chairman Laura E. Lerman

Members present: Laura Lerman, Andrea Spencer, Sue Kassirer, Suzanne Lang, Jen Cebry, Deborra Zukowski, Tracy Van Buskirk, Rob Kaiser

Members absent: Grant Ossendryver

Auxiliary members: Jim Cebry, Barbara Snyder

Members of the Public: Nicole Powers, Nancy Cole, Lynn Hungaski,

Minutes: It was moved that the minutes of the May 7, 2020 regular meeting and the May 12 Special Meeting be approved; moved by Andrea Spencer, seconded by Susan Kassirer, no discussion, passed unanimously.

Officer Reports: Andrea Spencer reported that the scholarships were awarded in a virtual ceremony last week. It can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyPb54GJDbc>. The recipients of the four scholarships were Shilin Ray, Alix Lewis, Lindsay Dievert, and Bobby Gaffney. All the students were very motivated and driven with a creative mindset. Treasurer Jim Cebry reported that the funds for the scholarships were transferred to the checking account and the checks will be sent out very soon.

Public Participation: Nicole Powers introduced herself. She moved to Newtown from California last year and is a jewelry artist. She wanted to know if the festival is going to occur this year (discussed later).

Facebook Page: Tracy Van Buskirk reported that everyone is posting regularly and the posts are all very interesting. She noted that without paying for boosts, viewership is light. She encouraged everyone to keep sharing the page and inviting people to like it. It was agreed to continue with the program.

Newtown Arts Festival: There was a lot of discussion about whether to hold the festival this year, and if so, in what form. Subjects discussed included the big unknown of what the pandemic will be like in September and what level of social distancing will be needed, the difficulty in asking sponsors for donations without knowing what form the festival would take, the fact that most art shows and festivals scheduled for this summer have been cancelled and vendors may not be interested in doing only one show in our geographic area, and the size of our festival may not be approved. It was noted that the First

Selectman will ultimately be the one to decide if the festival would be allowed to happen. There were no members that were comfortable with going forward with the festival in its traditional format. Discussion then turned to a modified festival that could possibly take place even if there were still social restrictions. One idea would be to sponsor individual events during Arts Month in October, as we have done traditionally but with modifications to allow for distancing and safety. Another idea was a sort of Arts Walk with stations highlighting music, dance, etc. This could possibly take place on the Fruit Trail at Fairfield Hills. In summary, it was agreed not to have the festival but to actively explore different scaled down options that would not be in conflict with safety guidelines at the time.

Community Center: Jen reported that the CC will be opening on July 22nd with phased in attendance and programs. They are working on guidelines to re-open the pool. The Senior Center will not be opening in conjunction with the CC.

Poet Laureate: No one has applied for the position. We will now network to reach out to possible candidates. The subcommittee to choose the new Poet Laureate is Laura Lerman, outgoing Laureate Lisa Schwartz and Tracy Van Buskirk.

Grants: Andrea Spencer reported that no applications were received for arts grants. We will re-open the application period until mid-September. Rob will post it on the website.

Showcases and Gallery: Closed until the Muni Center and library reopen.

Website: Rob is keeping up with new info.

It was moved by Jen Cebry to adjourn, seconded by Rob Kaiser, no discussion, passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.