

Newtown Cultural Arts Commission

Minutes of June 3, 2021 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 3, 2021.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Commission Chairman Laura E. Lerman.

Members present: Laura Lerman, Andrea Spencer, Roger Connor, Jen Cebry, Sue Kassirer, Robert Kaiser, Grant Ossendryver, Daniel Ferreira

Members absent: Tracy Van Buskirk

Auxiliary members: none

Members of the Public: none

Minutes: It was moved by Andrea that the minutes of the May 6, 2021 meeting be approved, seconded by Grant and passed unanimously.

Officer Reports: No report.

Treasurer's Report: Jim Cebry reported that the Gift Fund current balance is approximately \$3800. Fiscal year end is June 30th and detailed annual report will be done in July. Andrea asked if the scholarship information for the three arts scholarships to the high school students could please be "in the hopper" so that they receive their money this month. Jim said that scholarship award checks will be submitted to the town next week and will be issued in June depending on check cycles.

Art Festival: There will be a regular meeting next Thursday.

Community Center: Jen announced that she will be leaving her position of Program Coordinator for the Center at the end of June. She will still be doing classes and working at the camp this summer, and will be on call for the Center. She said that they are advertising the position and that she believes they will begin interviewing candidates next week. Everyone congratulated her on the fine job she has done and mentioned how lucky the Community Center was to have her.

Public Participation: none.

Facebook Page: Laura continues to post events of interest. Rob says all is fine with the page.

Scholarships / Grants: Andrea and Laura attended the Awards Ceremony at the High School Wednesday evening and presented the three scholarship winners with their awards (notable in being the first public ceremony for the high school since before the pandemic). The three winners were Cooper Agresta (a drummer majoring in sound engineering and percussion), who will attend Belmont University in Nashville; Matthew Calorossi (a woodwind musician majoring in jazz performance and teaching), who will attend the University of Connecticut; and Taegan Smith (a dancer majoring in dance and history), who will attend the Alvin Ailey School/Fordham University. Andrea reported that all three recipients were very surprised and pleased. (Students who receive awards are invited to the ceremony but don't know what award they are receiving ahead of time.) She also reminded Commission Members that Sue Kassirer is also on the Scholarship Subcommittee and that she, Laura, and Sue all reviewed the candidates together and came to the awards decisions.

Andrea received two new proposals for the murals to be created by local artist Lindsay Fuori, one on a fence across from the Senior Center at Fairfield Hills and the other at the dog park. Andrea explained some of the history of this project to the two new Commission members: that Lindsay is a 26-year-old Newtown artist who originally proposed artwork on electrical boxes around town, as many towns have done. It turned out that this was not allowed in Newtown, so she began looking into other possible venues. All members of the Commission received her latest ideas from Andrea via email this week, as did Park & Rec, who is also involved in this project. It was discussed that Fred Hurley needs a head-up about these latest proposals and that Park & Rec liked the second idea for the dog park (different breeds of dogs looking over a fence). Arts Commission members seemed to generally prefer this image over the one of paw prints.

The proposal for the fence across from the Senior Center was to paint an abstract portrait of an original Fairfield Hills building using a bright palette that Lindsey demonstrated to us by sending samples of some of her works done in this fashion. She stated in her proposal that her goal was to “stand document to the quiet beauty of the buildings, be a witness to our town’s complex history, and remember the lives lived on the campus in the years before us.” The Commission discussed how this would stand up to weather (similarly to Virginia Zimmerman’s railroad painting on Church Hill Road, which has done fine). It was mentioned that this needs to be discussed with Matt Ariniello of the Community Center and Natalie Jackson of the Senior Center.

Municipal Gallery/Showcase/Library Showcase: No new discussion.

Website: Laura asked if the website was down, as Roger Connor had trouble getting into it. Rob said he will look into this.

Other Business: Laura brought up the possibility of beginning to have Cultural Art Commission meetings in person once again at the Municipal Center, as she said other Commissions and Committees are now doing so. Sue Kassirer asked if the meeting could please be in a larger room, as she did not feel comfortable attending in the small room the Commission usually meets in and also asked that members wear masks. Laura said she would discuss this with Sue Marcinek and thought we should probably be able to get one of the larger rooms, preferably the Council Chamber Room.

Laura attended a meeting at the library concerning the proposed sculpture garden. She mentioned that one problem discussed is that there is no known organization of sculptors.

It was moved by Rob to adjourn, seconded by Roger, no discussion, passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Kassirer