

Newtown Cultural Arts Commission

Minutes January 4, 2024

The minutes are subject to approval by the NCAC members at the next Arts Commission Meeting

The Newtown Cultural Arts Commission held a meeting on Thursday, January 4, 2024, in the Community Center. The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Commission Chairperson Laura E. Lerman.

Members Present: Laura Lerman, Andrea Spencer, Jennifer Cebry, Michael Jehle, Grant Ossendryver, Robyn Lynch

Members Absent: Jim Cebry, Terry Sagedy, Linda Parsloe, Dina Sabia, Dan Ferreira, Rob Kaiser, Roger Connor

Auxiliary Members: None

Members of the Public: None

1. **Acceptance of Minutes:** Motion to approve minutes from December 7, 2023, by Andrea Spencer, 2nd approved by Mike Jehle. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **Election of Officers:**

Motion to continue Laura Lerman as Chairman and Andrea Spencer as Vice Chairman by Jennifer Cebry, 2nd approved by Robyn Lynch. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

3. **Officer's Reports:**

Plan of Conservation & Development:

Ms. Lerman was interviewed by BFJ Planning along with Kinga Walsh, Chairman of the Community Center Commission regarding the plan of conservation and development.

[Section 8-23](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) requires each municipality to prepare or amend and adopt a plan of conservation and development (POCD) at least once every ten years in order to be eligible for grants from the state. Concerns expressed included number of regulations, influence of stakeholders and amount of parking if apartments are added at Fairfield Hills, not enough coordination, and how the addition of pickle ball courts behind the Community Center will impact the Center if they want to expand. Ms. Lerman noted they have been in operation for 10 years without issue and how it took a year to get permission to create the mural by the dog park.

Treasurer's Report:

The savings account has a balance of \$31,582.95.

The Gift Fund has a balance of \$4,113.51.

There are no funds in the NCAC PayPal account.

The Arts Festival PayPal account has a balance of \$605.88.

There is a balance of \$130,547.96 in the CDs/MBS.

The 2023 Arts Fest presently has a negative balance of \$15,862.46. Appreciation for the sponsors was expressed as they helped to prevent the loss from being even greater.

4. Possible Projects for 2024

- a. Risk Averse: Various town residents are invited to recite their favorite poem. In the past this included the Chief of Police and First Selectman. It will be in April to celebrate National Poetry Day. In the past it filled the Meeting House.
- b. Baseball kiosk: There is a kiosk at the ballpark on Mile Hill with room for posters for art. The ball park is used by Newtown teams & teams from out of town. Ms. Lerman's idea is to see if it can be used on one side to locate all the baseball fields and on the other side to place art/QR code to a map of Newtown's outdoor art or possibly area restaurants, but permission needs to be granted by Parks and Rec.
- c. Poet Laureate: Ms. Lerman e-mailed the First Selectman to see if he wants a referral from NCAC or if he has already chosen someone since there was a poem at the inauguration.
- d. Meeting of Published authors: Sharon Cohen made a comment on a Facebook page about getting Newtown authors together and received an enthusiastic response, but she does not want to chair it. The library is interested. Ms. Lerman is going to meet the acting library director, Jennifer Nash, and see what can be coordinated.
- e. Ms. Lerman would like to meet with the library about a variety of ideas. The library has gotten a grant for a Poetry Walk at Fairfield Hills and has asked people to send in their favorite poems.
- f. NCAC will be at the health fair with kazoos; there will be an Ipad and instructions to show how to play the kazoo.

5. Arts Festival:

Concerns were expressed about the weather impact on the 2023 Arts Festival and how to avoid this problem in the future. There was discussion on a possible indoor option at the Community Center or Reed School. Concerns included the reduction in vendors and space for entertainment that would be limited at both of these venues. There is a need to update the verbiage about rain or shine or more significant weather events. Several members are working to come up with signature art. Since increasing the contest winnings to \$1,000, more submissions have been received. There was discussion about how last year's artist did not get significant exposure due to the cancelation of the festival. The Commission also discussed the need to review some of last year's submissions and how some people collect the t-shirts and posters each year.

6. Scholarships/Grants:

The final report has been submitted to obtain the remainder of the Operating Support grant. Scholarships will follow the same idea as the last 2 years; the due date will be March 11th which give the Commission plenty of time to review them. April 24-30 will be scheduled for interviews. The Career Center needs a decision by early May. The Award Ceremony will be May 29th. The Commission is working on updating the scholarship so applicants can apply and submit their work electronically. The number of awards was also discussed; the award amount would remain the same.

7. Public Participation: None

8. Community Center:

The Winter Farmer's Market has been very successful. There are 2 dates left. The last date currently is February 26th, but there may be additional dates added up to the time

the Summer's Farmer's Market starts in June. More artists have been contacting the Commission to become vendors. This year has been limited to food vendors, but an Artisan Market is being considered.

Spring programs include a sushi rolling class, glass etching, and more.

9. Municipal Gallery; Artisan's Showcase:

Scan is in the Municipal Gallery between January and February. Good Friday is the last Friday in March and set up will be for K-12 two days before; there was discussion on what to display during March.

10. Commission Website:

The most popular musical is about the spelling bee. The community theater and the art shows are revving up. Ballet pictures will be added to the slideshow.

11. Other Business: None

12. A motion to adjourn was brought by Jennifer Cebry and 2nd approved by Andrea Spencer. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:01pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wendy Holden, Clerk