

## HAMDEN ARTS COMMISSION MINUTES

Meeting of Wednesday, Sept 2nd, 2020

7 pm: Digital Zoom Call

2750 Dixwell Avenue

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/91676488122>

Commissioners in Attendance: Ms. Johnson, Mr. Kortsep, Ms. LBrown, Ms. Torello, Ms. Gargiulo, Ms. Schiff, Ms. McGarry, Ms. Elkin, Mr. Moore

Commissioners Absent: Ms. DBrown, Ms. Carter David,

Commissioners Excused: Ms. Hunter, Ms. Jason

Others in Attendance: Director of Arts, Culture and Special Projects Ms. Smith, Arts Manager Ms. Martindale, Hamden Symphony representative Ms. Buggie, Interested Citizen Ms. Lira, Commission Clerk Ms. Tobin

### **Call to Order**

Ms. Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes** of July 1, 2020

**Ms. Gargiulo made a motion to approve the minutes of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

**The minutes of June 3<sup>rd</sup> were tabled to the October meeting of the Commission.**

### **Treasurer's Report**

The bank statements were not available today, but the only difference from what was reported lastmonth would be the amount spent on the art kits, approximately \$1,500. Ms. Martindale thanked those who helped put the art kits together and helped hand them out at the Farmer's Market.

### **Old Business**

#### **Chair's Report**

Summer Arts Kits Recap

Marita: Mayoral Poetry Program : Next steps

Ms. Gargiulo reported that she contacted about eleven poets and 5-6 reported that they were interested. She had a meeting with herself and two other poets and sent ideas to Ms. Martindale. Some of the thoughts were putting poetry along the trail; Brooksvale Park; outside the library; at the Town Hall; and possibly at The Dickerman House. Ms. Moore suggested Town Center Park. Also poems could be placed on the Arts & Culture web site. She is hoping they can be Hamden related poems and we hope to get others engaged. There was discussion on how to choose the poems to post. A Zoom meeting with poets was another idea. Ms. Elkin liked the idea of the Hamden theme. The possibility of a student poet laureate was also mentioned. Ms. Elkin will liaison with the High School and she and Ms. Gargiulo will work with Ms. Martindale. Ms. Schiff was concerned about having a junior poet laureate. Ms. Martindale said this is a great initiative.

Virtual Art Class

### **Director's Report**

Strategic Plan / Arts and Culture Update

Ms. Smith said the Department's 2020-2021 budget got decimated, like other Departments did. Our major line item was summer concerts. This year we have \$40,000 for programming for the entire year, so we need to get creative. The budget goes from 7/1/20 through 6/30/21.

Ms. Gargiulo asked if we could do a video salute to Young Artists. There were suggestions on how that might be done. Ms. Smith said while she was working from home, she thought about stepping back and reevaluating the Department, which has been in existence for three years. We need to figure out what has worked and what has not. We need to determine what the citizens want to see, and create a strategic plan and a 3-5 year plan of goals and objectives and how to do it. She is taking classes for her leadership in arts management certificate and has taken a strategic planning class. She was excited to use the Department as a case study. The strategic plan has to be a community wide effort. There are many ideas that we can work on. The Department is linked to the Commission and asked if the mission statement still what the Commission sees as their roll. She would like to do the Department and Commission in tandem.

Ms. Smith said Council President McGarry suggested the Arts Trail, which touches what Ms. Gargiulo and Ms. Brown were talking about along the Farmington Canal Trail. Ms. Smith will be speaking to that Commission next week. She has ideas about poetry, sculpture, and Hamden artists working with the Commission. Ms. Smith has applied for a grant which is a planning grant, to hire a consultant to help plan and reach out to the community, and also work with businesses along the trail. Cultural asset mapping was also mentioned, which Ms. Martindale explained is an expansion of the Commission's resource directory for residents and tourists. We would work with the Chamber and both new and old businesses to make this sustainable.

Ms. Johnson mentioned Water-fire, an annual event in Providence with street festivals along the river. It is a unique event. What can we create unique to our area. How can we make small events into part of a big event. Mr. Moore mentioned the waterfalls in Hamden, one on the north side of Sleeping Giant, and another off of Timber wood Trail. He also mentioned the pumpkins at Hindinger Farm.

Ms. Johnson said we need to have a brain storing session. The Commission wants to be part of the planing and we want incentive to bring people to Hamden. Ms. Schiff said with the huge cut in the budget, she is happy Mr. McGarry made a suggestion. She wondered if some council members will participate. Ms. Smith said she will put together a small committee with representatives from different areas, including the council to do a strategic plan. We will get the work done so we can present it next March when budget planning starts for the next fiscal year. Someone mentioned that we are now known for our concert series. Mr. Brown mentioned we have to show grantors why we need the funding.

Ms. Schiff said the art kits were very well received, but she other towns' events publicized in the New Haven Register, but Hammed is not represented. Ms. Martindale said she didn't want t overwhelm the restaurants when they first reopened with only outside dining.

Ms. Martindale said she invited the Arts Commission to have a table at the Farmer's Markets, but no one came except for Ms. Dozier and Ms. Buggie. There was discussion on the bands that performed at the restaurants and how they were well received.

### **New Business/Ideas:**

#### Restaurant Week

- Send musicians to play outdoors during Hamden Chamber Restaurant Week
- Sponsorship by All American Waste (2020 summer concert sponsor)

Ms. Smith mentioned that at the end of September this year we really need to promote our restaurants. They really need the business. Arts and Culture would like to help and would like the Commission to sponsor restaurant week. American Waste has donated \$2,500 for a smaller event that will help out the restaurants, help the Chamber, and help the entertainers. With the Commission's permission by vote, we will use the funds to sponsor entertainers for restaurant week. Ms. Schiff mentioned that we should have publicity to get the recognition we deserve. The chamber runs restaurant week.

Ms. Martindale said we had good feedback from the restaurants that used the bands we recommended. The Department has a list of entertainers from the Farmer's Markets, the Sunday Series, and others that we have hired previously. They would only perform at restaurants with outdoor seating.

Ms. Lbrown mentioned the movie nights the Commission and Arts for Learning used to sponsor at the Keefe Center. A suggestion was made that we hold a winter themed project or a holiday concert via Zoom. Can we provide programs in a different way? She mentioned the Hamden Middle School Concert on U tube. We need a plan B. Ms. Buggie works with the Symphony and said they would support our programs.

Ms. Martindale mentioned that Ms. Carter David is organizing a black movie film series. Mr. Moore mentioned that years ago, several black film makers including himself used to get together.

Mr. Johnson said we will need 2-3 representatives from the Commission to attend the planning meetings. Ms. Smith said she will put together the committee and will reach out to Commissioners for a couple of people that want to be on it for brainstorming.

**Regarding restaurant week, Ms. Schiff made a motion to spend the \$2,500 from American Waste, who will be the title sponsor of the programs. Ms Gargiulo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

Ms. Schiff mentioned a booklet for residents and visitors, which was one of the things we wanted to do. Julie goes along with what we were saying earlier.

Mr. Fernandez has stepped down as chair and resigned from the Commission, and Ms. Johnson has to step back as vice chair due to family health issues. Anyone wanting to step up and volunteer for one of those positions, and the position of Secretary/Treasurer, should reach out by our October meeting, and we will have elections at our November meeting.

Mr. Moore volunteered to sit in for Ms. Johnson.

### **Adjournment**

**Ms. Lbrown made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Moore seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.**

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_