

Hightstown Cultural Arts Commission
Meeting Minutes – July 19, 2017 – Caspersen History House, Peddie School

Present: Susan Bluth, Mike Fabian, Gen Fabian, Barb Harrington, Andrew Harrison, Heather Lisk, Michelle Jordan, Ann Marie Miller, Dan Trent

Before the meeting was formally called to order, Carlos Fernandez, one of the coordinators of the Hightstown East Windsor Latino Cultural Festival, updated the Commission on the festival planned for August 19 at Rocky Brook Park (rain location at Hightstown HS). Carlos provided some history—the festival is 5 years old and begun under the auspices of Rise (Carlos is on their board of trustees). Their goal is to create bridges of understanding and highlight Latino arts and culture. The festival began at the high school with an audience of 350-400 people and features local and regional performing arts groups (music and dance). The festival costs about \$10,000 to produce and is sponsored by grants from Mercer County Cultural & Heritage Commission and Wells Fargo (\$1,000), other small business sponsors, 24 advertisers in a bilingual program, and about 15-20 exhibitors. There are 10 people on the committee and about 30 volunteers who help the day of the festival. This year the festival will run from 1-6 pm, and feature 7-8 performers. The Parks & Recreation commission sponsors by covering costs of porta potties.

Carlos asked if the Cultural Arts Commission would help with sponsorship or taking an ad or an exhibit table. He did not have the sponsorship fees with him but offered them later via email and they are attached to the minutes.

The meeting was then officially called to order. Mike Fabian motioned for approval of the June meeting minutes, with Barb Harrington seconding the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Downtown Hightstown business meeting – Ann Marie shared the calendar that was produced to help focus on events happening monthly in the Borough. Susan noted 2 corrections—the Sept. Fun Friday is 9/8 and the Triathlon is Sunday 9/10. Ann Marie mentioned that Joan McMahon at Tavern on the Lake expressed interest in displaying art outdoors on the patio.

Ann Marie said the businesses want to see more retail in town and Rennie DiLorenzo at 12 Farms is interested in spearheading an artists co-op at the Mercer Street location where the Arts Commission held the pop up gallery in January. Rennie sent an email out to prospective artists and is looking to host a meeting on Monday, July 24 at 6:30 pm at 12 Farms. Ann Marie will share Rennie's email with the Commissioners. Ann Marie noted how difficult it is to make a co-op work but will attend the 6/24 meeting, offer assistance, and gauge interest. It was suggested that it might be helpful to attempt a trial co-op that runs for 3 months from the Harvest Fair through the holidays and to be sure that there was a variety of price points to encourage sales. Rennie is trying to keep the co-op cost down to about \$75-80 per person for about 20 artists to cover costs of rent, utilities and credit card fees. Heather reminded everyone of the Gallery 33 model that has the greenhouse as the primary way to attract folks to the gallery feature.

Fun Fridays – The first Fun Friday's rock painting was a big success and had young and old joining in on the fun. Ann Marie thanked Susan and Michelle for helping during the activity and with clean up, and

thanked Barb for helping gather all the supplies needed to carry off the activity. The upcoming Fun Friday will feature a clothesline art exhibit with folks joining in on painting already strung flags and on paper. Michelle and Ann Marie will help Barb this Friday. **VOUNTEERS are needed for the remaining Fun Fridays on August 25 and September 8.**

Harvest Fair – Barb has reserved 2 spaces, 2 canopies and electricity. Adam needs to sign up—he plans to do a pottery demo. Barb researched special effects makeup artists and found 2 who were possibilities. Mel (last name?) is a HHS grad who participated in the Face Off Competition, lives in Jersey City and is willing to do a 4 hour demo with prosthetics at a discounted rate of \$300. Doug Sackman (sp?) from Philadelphia can do a 4 hour session for \$300 plus travel without prosthetics and prefers access to electricity for hair dryer needed. He also prefers extra booths and can sell a variety of fx contact lenses (\$65 cost). The Commission gave Barb the approval to go ahead and approach Mel for the event at the \$300 cost.

Pianos in the Park – After researching temporary homes for the first piano donated from the Historical Society, Gwen and John Rebbeck offered their garage on Orchard Street. When John returns home from a trip this weekend, Ann Marie will connect with him to coordinate pick up and transport of the piano. Location is still undecided—Association Park or Memorial Park. Since there is music on Fun Fridays, that option does not work. Susan suggested contacting Parks & Rec to share costs of paint and tuning. Reid Rebbeck recently graduated from a special school for piano repair and tuning in Boston, and we would like to offer him remuneration for tuning that will be needed. Andrew said he may have some spray paint available through Peddie. Dan Trent noted that pianos left out in open air suffer from moisture damage and render themselves pretty useless for music in the long term, leaving the decorative function as what's left of the piano for a possible donation to a school lobby.

Gen had trouble reaching out to Ms. Russo at school to recruit students who are graffiti artists. Heather said she would help connect with Ms. Russo.

Interwoven Stories – Community Stitching Project – Andrew reported that he was in touch with Diana Weymar who will hold 3 stitching workshops related to the project (discussed at earlier CAC meeting) beginning in October. He said he wanted to make sure that the community beyond Peddie was involved and asked the CAC to help promote the project and get Hightstown residents involved.

Barb noted that there is currently nothing to indicated that Hightstown has an interest in the arts when you are in town. Some visual element—like a mural would be helpful. She knows some mural artists who may be interested in helping with a project. Ann Marie noted that there could be some help through Our Town grant funding through the NEA if art is used in a way to articulate a change the community would like to see.

Mike suggested the CAC begin to plan on how to be more visible and participate in next year's Latino festival. He mentioned a Frida Kahlo lookalike contest. See this news clip from recent contest in Dallas. <http://www.npr.org/2017/07/07/535854373/frida-kahlo-celebrated-with-an-attempt-at-a-world-record> There being no other old or new business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 with Michelle motioning for adjournment and Gen seconding the motion.