



CITY OF DANBURY CULTURAL COMMISSION

256 Main Street
Danbury, Connecticut 06810
203 797 4508

January 24, 2022

Minutes of the Meeting

Meeting called to order, in person and as a video conference call, by Chairman Harvey Center at 6:30 pm with Commissioners: John Cherry, Cheryl Hill, Ed Moore, Gregory Smith, and Coordinator Gregory Wencek. Absent: John Cooke, Mary Burke.

Presentation of Minutes

The Minutes of the November meeting were submitted. A motion by GSmith to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by JCherry. Passed by unanimous voice vote.

Correspondence

eMail threads: 1. GSmith re: Appointment for Commissioner membership letter, 2. Music Centre thank you, 3. confirm budget figures with the finance department, 4. literary contest setup, 5. office clean up, 6. Grant opportunities, 7. Reached out to Mr. Lazare, new Manager of CityCenter re: coordinating calendars and cooperating on some projects (Park(ing) day, Sidewalk Chalk day, Neighborhood Walk day, and a Photo contest or two, 8. Mr. Steimetz re: Literary Awards ceremony on the Main Street campus, 9. CHill re: Commission advisor for Intern project, 10. Danbury Library re: Derek Piotr performance of CT folk music, 11. Local performers (Brass Band, Mad Hatters, CoDA) re: Performance calendars, 12. A thank you for notice of available grants from Art Cilley Mad Hatters Chorus.

Reports on DCC sponsored events

- Danbury Music Centre
 - Nutcracker Ballet Dec 10, 11, 12

Attended by EMoore: It was a good production. The cast had members from all ages. There was a full house.

Danbury events not sponsored by the Commission

- Danbury Brass Band

EMoore: a good concert with giveaways for the audience

- Danbury Music Centre
 - Messiah Sing - Saturday, December 18, 2021
- Danbury Museum
 - Guided Tours of 4 Danbury Museum Historic Buildings on our Main Street campus
 - The outdoor exhibit panels are installed.
- Danbury Railway Museum
 - SANTA TRAINS
- 2021 "Light the Lights - City Center at the Library Plaza Dec 4
- Palace Theater Danbury
- Galleries
 - Gallery of the Visual and Performing Arts Center WCSU Westside campus, 43 Lake Ave. Extension
- Noteworthy, the Danbury-based a cappella singing ensemble Sunday, December 12, 2021



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- Danbury Library
- WCSU
 - Noises Off: play - WCSU Department of Theatre Arts, Dec 3, 4, 5
 - Holiday Pops - WCSU Saturday, December 4, 2021
 - Sip & Paint - WCSU Friday, December 10, 2021

Upcoming events

See addendum

Coordinator's Report

- A. Letter sent to Danbury cultural groups to solicit new Commissioners
 - a. Worked with GSmith to craft letter to local cultural groups appeal for members to the Commission
- B. BUDGET submitted for 2022/23
 - a. The Cultural Commission's city budget was submitted Monday December 20, 2021. This year's Accomplishments and next year's Objectives remain essentially unchanged from last year. The financial request will be for the same amount as last year, \$65,650.
 - b. Coordinator requested that the current budget balance remain for the balance of this fiscal year. I noted that there are still Literary contests, Scholarships, and additional grants to fulfill.
 - c. For next year's budget, I have begun to put into place the process for receiving grants from the State. During COVID the State has modified requirements for support grants to municipalities and this Commission now qualifies to apply (assuming the rules don't change back next year).
- C. Literary Contest
 - a. Submission deadline for short stories is January 25
 - b. Judge for **Flash Fiction** is Adele Annesi and for **Poetry** is Dr. Brian Clements
 - Dr. Clements is the Chair, Department of Writing, Linguistics, and Creative Process, Western Connecticut State University
 - c. Schools included this year are Danbury High, ACE, Henry Abbott, Immaculate, AND Wooster.
 - d. We have a venue for the awards ceremony in May. Mr. Steimetz, from WCSU, is working with me to select which Thursday in May will fit the schedule.
- D. Make Music Day
 - a. Dues paid, Contract signed and submitted
 - b. John Fazio, Jr. officially signed on as coordinator
 - c. Mr. Fazio has prepared a preliminary location map included the Library and City Hall
 - d. I have been in contact with Danbury Museum about using the Marian Anderson studio for an event
 - e. There is a State planning session scheduled for February 4. Both Mr. Fazio and I will attend
- E. Train the trainer seminars



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- a. The Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) has partnered with the Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston to develop and implement a Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (VLA) service program for the arts sector across Connecticut. The Coordinator will attend the courses so the Commission can offer this advice to local organizations.
 - b. Legal Entities 101: for Creative Businesses January 21, 2022
 - c. Legal Entities 102: for Charitable Nonprofits February 14, 2022
- F. Maintaining Alexa Flash briefings
 - a. If you have an "Amazon Echo" (in any iteration) you can activate "Flash Briefing" and then ask "Alexa, What is Happening in Danbury?". Hopefully the audience will increase from the past foray into this realm. In 2018 we had only 7 unique listeners to the calendar.
- G. Scholarship for ACE
 - a. I contacted Danbury High and they report the ACE students are not part of their scholarship process. No reply after 2 attempts of inquiry at the Alternative Center for Excellence to see if they have an arts program with graduating seniors who could be eligible for a scholarship.
- H. Intern The work of the intern is on-going.
 - a. Scanning of the Poetry contest winners since 1972 has begun. A database is underway to allow for searching of poems. The scanning process still needs to be adjusted to allow for test searching of the poems.
 - b. Define ways to reach a younger audience e.g.: more social media
- I. There is a new WCSU request from a Digital Media student at WCSU about an internship
 - a. Commissioner CHill will be the Commission advisor
- J. Designs for Danbury
 - a. Conversations have been conducted with the Chamber of Commerce and they are willing to assist with publicity
 - b. Exact rules details must be approved prior to proceeding with this project.
- K. Discussions with GSmith to research the National Trust for Historic Preservation which is now accepting nominations for the 2022 National Preservation Awards through February 17, 2022
- L. Discussion with GSmith re: commissioning a Marian Anderson sculpture
 - a. I reached out to sculptor Brian Walters II for process information. More info below.

Appeals from Community groups:

None

Old Business

1. ACE Scholarship - Covered in Coordinator's report, no new discussion
2. New Commissioners - Covered in Coordinator's report, no new discussion
3. Literary Contests - Covered in Coordinator's report, no new discussion

Action on Grant Requests:

None



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New Business

1. Honoring the memory of Marian Anderson on the 125th anniversary of her birth.
Marian Anderson was a world famous contralto who lived in Danbury at Marianna Farm from 1943 to 1992. She was appointed at the inception of the Danbury Cultural Commission and served as the only Commissioner appointed for life. Her music studio, designed by her husband Orpheus H. Fisher, was moved to the Danbury Museum campus in 1996.
 - a. GSmith wondered about commissioning a Marian Anderson sculpture
 - i. Coordinator reached out to Brian Walters II for process information. He replied:
 1. Usually the commissioning agent comes up with a budget that they can spend and a timeline of the project. From there it's usually an "open call" where artists can submit for the job. A stipend is given to the finalists to come up with a final proof.
 2. That all said, if the commission wanted to go in an alternate route and go abstract, Brian Walters would be very interested.
 - ii. Many Commissioners expressed that an abstract piece would not be favorable
 - iii. GSmith - Ms. Anderson should be honored. He noted: we don't have any memorials in Elmwood Park. The preferred location is away from the fountain.
 - iv. Commissioners asked the Coordinator to continue to research the cost and feasibility of commissioning a statue for the City. The Commission would entertain funding the sculpture and have the City finance the installation.
 - v. The preference is for a full statue, not a bust.
 - b. EMoore asked the Coordinator to put together some videos with Marian Anderson on the Commission's website and invite schools and the public to view them.
 - c. Commissioners noted that the City of Danbury has announced a mural honoring the classical singer and Civil Rights pioneer, Marian Anderson, on 300 Main Street in Kennedy Park, downtown Danbury. Ryan Christenson, a North Haven artist who goes by the street name, ARCY, is painting the Kennedy, King and Bader mural under the title, "Legends Live Forever."
2. GSmith asked the Coordinator to research grants for Murals.

Other Business

The Chairman and the Commissioners expressed thanks to the Coordinator for the work being done in the Commission's name.

Motion to adjourn at 7:15

Made by EMoore. Passed by Unanimous vote.



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NOTE:

Corporation Counsel has provided the Clerk's office with the following... Current as of 3/16/20:

Effective with Gov. Lamont's Executive Order No. 7B issued on 3/14/20, the requirement of public attendance at all meetings of public agencies is suspended. Meetings are to be held remotely by conference call, videoconference, or other technology, provided that (in summary):

1) the public has the ability to view or listen to each meeting or proceeding in real time by phone, video or other technology.

Therefore the Commission office had set up a video conference call which started at 6:00 on Monday evening. Commissioners and the public connected to Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89271534201?pwd=bHF0aEFWVzIIT0ZRU2cwaEpJTzIzUT09>

Meeting ID: 892 7153 4201 Passcode: 076584

<p>One tap mobile: +1929 436 2866,,89271534201# US (New York) Meeting ID: 892 7153 4201 Passcode: 076584</p>	<p>Dial by your location +1 929 436 2866 US (New York) Meeting ID:892 7153 4201 Passcode: 076584</p>
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The meeting started at 6:30 and was not recorded by the Commission.

Upcoming events Addendum

**Scratching the Surface: David Haislip - Gallery at Still River Editions
Beginning mid-January
Still River Editions
128 E Liberty St Suite 3, Danbury, CT 06810**

Western Connecticut State University

**Mohamad Hafez: Unsettled Nostalgia - Gallery
Opening/Reception - WCSU
February 10 6-8 PM
The Gallery at the Visual & Performing Arts Center
43 Lake Ave Ext, Danbury, CT 06811, USA**

*Events sponsored by the Commission

**Unsettled Nostalgia - Western Connecticut State University February 11 – March 6, 2022
The Gallery at the Visual & Performing Arts Center
43 Lake Ave Ext, Danbury, CT 06811, USA**