

## **METUCHEN ARTS COUNCIL – MEETING MINUTES**

**June 16, 2025**

**7:30 P.M. - Metuchen Senior Center**

**Voting Members Present:** Chair Mark Harris, Vice Chair Meg Loftus Suchan, Nunzio Moudatsos, Alexis Sarmiento, Carmen Balentine, Gitika Toteja, Jamie Aderski, Joanne Stern, Lenore Boyarin, Terry Kohl

### **Auxiliary/Guests/Liaisons Present:**

Danny Adlerman, Grace Shackney, Alessandra Valea, Lynne Mueller, Brianne Ludlow-Molnar, Dylan Thurston, Wendi Richards, Elina Toteja, Anna Keenan, Alyssa Barber, Gina Coffey

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Mark Harris called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm and acknowledged the Sunshine Law.

**Minutes:** Jamie Aderski filled in for Secretary Deborah Kmetz, and Chair Mark Harris asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. All voting members present at the previous meeting voted to approve.

### **2025 PROGRAM/BUDGET**

- 2026-2027 Program Planning (Mark Harris): Start thinking about next year planning, will start entertaining ideas. A 2-year vision will help us get ahead.
  - To think about: ‘Art on the Porch’: In Ocean Grove, an interesting idea—walk the town and see art (similar to Porch Fest)
- Multi-Cultural Day with HRC (Mark Harris)

- Multi-Cultural dance-based, Mignolo Center is hosting, List of ideas was sent, esp. looking for Native American-based groups. Also looking for cultural vendors. Email ideas to Mark and Meg.
  
- Plein Air Painting for Fall (Carol Gaffney)
  - Carol wants to do another one of these events in the fall at Tommy's Pond during Peak Fall Foliage
  
- 125 Anniversary Photography Project (Mark Harris)
  - Has begun—Go to the Arts Council section online to sign up, simple form, attend one orientation session run by Brandon (15 min). You'll get your id/badge to wear in the wild, list of rules, and releases. Will start now and run through October.
  
- Porch Fest 2025 (Meg Loftus Suchan)
  - All homes that applied have been confirmed. 'Block Party' style this year, safer. Beacon Hill area and by Middle School. All but one group has confirmed, lots of new artists, and less than half returning (good sign w/number of returning).
  - Need volunteers! Sept 20th (21st rain date). All set for committee, but day-of really needed for volunteers: Metuchenporchfest@gmail.com
  
- Blues Concert (Carmen Balentine)
  - People are interested in this idea, and a proposal was presented: Junior Mack and the Jr. Mack Band (whole band preferred). Info re: budget and timing has been confirmed with talent for the band. Need to look at dates with the borough, and look at venues, planning committee.

#### **CURRENT PROGRAMS/REPORTS:**

- Friends of Metuchen Arts

**A. Metuchen Jazz:** 4-town jazz festival, Sat Sept 27 at Metuchen High—6 groups. Working with MMDO to help cater the event. 75th anniversary of Peanuts comic tie-in.

- Forming Metuchen Jazz for Youth (with Dylan Thurston at the helm). Met with head of Jazz at high school, and Mo, who runs performance spaces at Hailey's. Step one: Book a Sat performance—Kids come in and perform. Other potential spaces: FOMA space, park downtown, Fundraiser at Mignola Arts (?). Target: July start.

**B. Metuchen Classical:** Recent programs: St Lukes, highlighting comps by women. Next up:

September: Peter and the Wolf group (Phoenix Woodwind Quintet; theater-based) locked down (through Young Audiences), just waiting on dates for September: St Lukes or First Presb.

Oct 5: First Presb - Screening of HUnchback of Notre Dame with pipe organ music playing.

Nov 30: First Preb - Candlelight concert in church, featuring their choirs, hire strings, trumpeters, and organ player.

**C. Other Topics:**

- Gala, March 7 2026
- June 22: FREE NJ Gay Men's Chorus at St Luke's (in the Church), 3 pm (Sunday, 3pm))
- June 25: Library - Trivia Night hosted by Carmen Balentine(Metuchen Public Library) Art-themed trivia. Prizes, fun! Need to register at the MPL (Wed, 7pm)
- 60+ Senior Art contest and Show open for submissions, closes July 1. In the Arts Building, everyone gets to hang one piece. Luncheon and prizes at the end, winners go on to State competition.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS OF OTHER ARTS EVENTS**

- Two River Theater (Carmen Balentine): “PLAYDATE” - MAC member Carmen Balentine is involved with Two River Theater. If you go to [TwoRiverTheater.org](http://TwoRiverTheater.org) and click on either tickets or events, you will see what's happening there. Notably, they provide free child care (2 mo and up—see PD symbol for "play date") and discounted tickets (\$25) on certain performances, including the Sat. June 21 at 3pm performance of "The Price" by Arthur Miller.

- Middlesex County Senior Art Contest and Show (Mark Harris)

**ADJOURNMENT** 8:21 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Aderski