

**WARREN COUNTY BICENTENNIAL  
CULTURAL & HERITAGE ADVISORY BOARD**  
500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue  
Oxford, NJ 07863

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON  
MARCH 19, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Rapisardi called the meeting to order at 5:10PM.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:** Laurie Rapisardi, Charles Fineran, Mark Young, Richard Gardner

**Members Absent:** Karin White, Jane Primerano, Randy Piazza Sr

**Staff Present:** Corey Tierney, Kim Barnes, Gina Rosseland, Commissioner Lori Ciesla

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

Ms. Rapisardi read the opening statement.

**MINUTES**

The February 20, 2024 minutes were reviewed. Mr. Fineran made a motion to approve the minutes as is. Mr. Gardner seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

none

**CORRESPONDENCE**

none

**OLD BUSINESS**

**BICENTENNIAL BOOK:**

Ms. Rosseland has not heard back from any towns, so it is stalled right now. There was discussion about lack of interest from the towns. Mr. Gardner did speak with Brenda Higgins for Franklin Twp. and Mr. Young went to the Belvidere Historical Preservation Commission meeting again which only had two people in attendance. Ms. Rapisardi suggested Ms. Rosseland send a template email to the board members again, so they can take that and go to the towns. Any photos have to be good quality.

**WEBSITE:**

The website is being updated as needed. Concert programming is usually posted in April. There is a reception for the Senior Art Show on 5/17 at the Admin. Bldg. There has been a lot of interest in the Senior Art Show.

**HISTORIC MARKERS:**

The deadline for the 2023 markers was March 1, however, Ms. Rosseland asked the board for an extension until May/June. Mr. Fineran made a motion to extend the deadline, with Mr. Gardner seconding it. All in favor. Motion carried. Harmony's sign is almost done but the sign maker is sick, so it is delayed.

Mr. Young revisited the Belvidere Historic Preservation Committee and talked to Belvidere Mayor Kathy Miers. He said he would give them four ideas for the markers: the cemetery, Major Hoops' house, Masonic Lodge, and the twin mills. Belvidere Town Councilman Chris Allen was also at the meeting and shared that the county is considering offering a free marker to each town. Commissioner Ciesla confirmed that is being considered, all the same memorials for each town from the bicentennial. She will keep BCHAB posted if they decide to match the grant for the historic marker. The problem in many towns seems to be the shrinking of the historical societies from members aging out or losing interest. There aren't many members present to make the decisions.

#### **BICENTENNIAL GALA (11/20/24):**

Mr. Tierney said the Board of County Commissioners approved the David's Country Inn contract for the gala. It was decided to have a subcommittee for planning: Ms. Rapisardi, Commissioner Ciesla, and Mr. Fineran. Ticket price will be around \$50 and invites will need to be sent out in the summer. If awards were given out, attendance would probably be greater.

#### **BICENTENNIAL SUMMER CONCERT (7/13/24):**

The summer concert will be held at Bread Lock Park on 7/13/24 from 4pm-8pm. A food truck and an ice cream truck have been reserved. Ms. Barnes is working on a second food truck. A face painter for is scheduled and we have reached out to a bubbles entertainer. The musical acts would be: Kate & Paul from 4pm-5pm, Harmony Garage Band from 5:30pm-6:30pm, and the Brian Dean Moore Band from 7pm-8pm. A sound guy will be hired. We will invite local historical groups to bring and set up their own tables. Advertisement discussed included WRNJ radio ads, Facebook ads, Lehigh Valley Live website, Skylands magazine, and a banner on the wagon at Bread Lock Park. A rain date still needs to be discussed.

#### **COMMUNITY DAY (6/29/25):**

Community Day will be at Warren County Community College on Saturday, 6/28/25, with a rain date of Sunday, 6/29/25. A consultant will be hired for this event. Details still need to be worked out, but a drone show will be looked into in place of a fireworks show, balloons, and bands. A headliner band with Jersey roots would be preferred.

#### **PARADE (TBD – MAY 2025?):**

A parade will be scheduled, most likely in Belvidere in April or May 2025. Commissioner Ciesla said we'd need to speak with the Belvidere Police and the Town Council. She also said the county would like to commemorate the bicentennial with a memorial statue or plaque, unveiling it at the end of the parade. They want to hold the parade when school is still in session so the high school bands can participate.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **OUTREACH EVENTS:**

Mr. Young received an email from Tracey Williamson of the Belvidere Garden Club asking about the dates of the bicentennial events. They either are interested in holding a *county wide* garden tour.

Commissioner Ciesla wants to have a meeting (virtual and in-person) with the BCHAB members, Economic Development, and all county business groups to have an open session and discuss what kinds of things can be done for the bicentennial. A couple ideas are for the breweries to come up with a bicentennial brew, as well as the wineries with a wine. They can be worked into the Grains and Grapes Trail.

Ms. Rapisardi asked about a winter festival. The county has already been offering up \$200 to the towns for trees or decorations. There was discussion to give the towns money to decorate their trees and post pictures online. The pictures could be turned into cards, coasters, calendars, etc. and sold next year. Suggestions were to have one big county tree representing all towns and to decorate it in the period (1825), and to create a special bicentennial tree topper to be gifted to each town.

### **COUNTY MUSEUMS & CHPP GRANTS:**

The 2024 CHPP grants [and Local Arts Programming (LAP) grants] that were approved by BCHAB to be recommended to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) at last month's meeting will be on the next BCC meeting agenda. We should get the 2024 funds from the state soon.

Shippen Manor's 270<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be celebrated on the 2024 opening day - Sunday, 5/5/24, from 11am-4pm. Ms. Rosseland has scheduled reenactors, including groups in different time periods, and tabling. Space is limited. Both Hunterdon and Sussex County Historical Societies will be coming. Ms. Rosseland invited BCHAB to set up a table. She will also be sending an invite to the County Commissioners. There will be no rain date. In the event it does rain, it will get modified to move as much as possible indoors. It will be promoted on WRNJ and Facebook. Ms. Rosseland will notify the Oxford Police Dept. so they are aware of the added traffic/parking. Mr. Tierney suggested possibly asking the NJ Youth Corps to put up snow fencing across the street so there is no parking on the church's grass.

Rev War Day will be held at Shippen Manor on October 6 from 11am-4pm.

The Explore Warren History Trail Weekend will be held again the first weekend in November from 10am-4pm with the 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment of NJ Civil War group from Hackettstown. The Oxford Methodist Church will participate from 12pm-4pm selling soup again.

Ms. Rosseland is in the process of sorting through items that have not been used to rehome to historical sites and museums in the state. The Portland Washer that was in storage is being gifted to the Kenilworth Historical Society's Oswald J. Nitschke House for display and interpretation. The contract states if/when they do not want it anymore, Warren County has first right of refusal.

### **COUNTY ARTS PROGRAMS:**

Instead of holding the summer concert series from Father's Day to Labor Day, this year's schedule will be for Sundays in July & August from 6pm-8pm. Bob Shelton has been working on scheduling the bands. There are six shows scheduled right now.

There are two solo performers and a duo currently performing at the assisted care facilities right now. Another soloist will be starting soon. Reviews have been very positive.

The Warren County Balloon Fest (in June & Sept) will be given money for some arts programming. The Warren County Farmers Fair will be awarded funds for the children's tent and for the traditional crafts pending available funds. Currently, two teachers and five organizations have applied for mini-grants (\$2,000 max).

Ms. Rosseland has been speaking with Hunterdon and Sussex Counties regarding Teen Arts for 2025. Both want to pair up with Warren County for Teen Arts. Ms. Rosseland would like to see it held at Warren County Community College. Plans are not yet set.

Commissioner Ciesla would like to see a Rev War group come to our Community Day next year and we need to figure out what we will be doing in 2026 for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1776. Commissioner

Ciesla agreed with Ms. Rosseland on the need to create a Revolutionary War Anniversary Committee. A lot of our county farms date back to the Revolutionary War. Ms. Rosseland said there are at least 5 Rev War soldiers buried in the Hazen Cemetery at the First Presbyterian Church of Oxford and another 24-29 in Hackettstown and two dozen in Greenwich Twp. Belvidere Cemetery has a lot of Civil War soldiers.

One of the LAP grantees was inadvertently omitted from the list last month when the BCHAB members voted. Although it was communicated through email, an in-person vote was held. Ms. Rapisardi made a motion to recommend to the BCC the award of a LAP grant in the amount of \$6,000 to the Water Gap Singers. Mr. Young seconded the motion. All in favor; motion carried.

A representative of the BCHAB is needed for the Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee. Mr. Young was the 2023 representative and would be happy to do it again. Mr. Gardner made a motion for Mr. Young to continue on as the BCHAB representative on the MCCTFC for 2024. Mr. Fineran seconded the motion. All in favor, except Mr. Young who abstained since the vote was for him. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** (open)  
none

**NEXT MEETING**  
The next meeting will be held April 16, 2024.

**ADJOURNMENT**  
Mr. Gardner made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Young. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Barnes  
Clerk, Land Preservation Dept.