

**CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 12, 2018**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Wallerstein, Chair; T. C. Burt, Janet Evelyn, Nori Grudin, Lynn Massey, Melissa Matuska, Helen Roman, Emerson Straniti, Christopher Yerinides

OTHERS: Judith Bacal, Chris Bradley, Norwalk Library Director; James Cooper, Katherine Hebert, Dorothy Mobilia, Josh Morgan, Laurel Peterson, Poet Laureate; Alex Rosenfeld, Karen Spencer

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & PUBLIC COMMENT.

Ms. Wallerstein called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. A quorum was present.

Ms. Wallerstein greeted everyone and explained that the Commission was composed of 11 voting members, 3 ex officio members along with friends of the Commission.

Ms. Wallerstein said that Mr. Morgan was the newly appointed Communications Director for the City of Norwalk. Mr. Morgan then gave a brief overview of his job responsibilities and how he will work to enhance communications. At the conclusion of his comments, Mr. Morgan said that he had to leave for another meeting.

OFFICERS' REPORT

a. Chair

Ms. Wallerstein said that most of her report would be covered by other agenda items. She said that reflecting back on her goals for the Commission, she was pleased that the Commission had just completed their first full year as a formal Commission. Secondly, with the help of everyone, there are now key components of a strategic plan in place. Thirdly, ever since the WPA murals have been relocated including one moved to the Norwalk Historical Society Museum, the corridor wall needs some artwork. She said that she would like to have some items hung there by June 30th. Ms. Wallerstein also gave a brief overview of her recent contact via email with Carol Eisner, a sculpture artist.

b. Secretary -- April Minutes

**** MR. BURT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 10, 2018**

**** MS. GRUDIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 10, 2018 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

c. Treasurer

Mr. Burt said that the Commission finished up the year in the black with a balance of slightly over \$5,000. Ms. Wallerstein said that they had not planned to pay for secretaries services and would ask to have this balanced carried over. She reminded everyone that \$1,500 was for the Poet Laureate.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Nominating Committee Report

Ms. Hebert introduced herself and the other members of the Nominating Committee. She said that the committee had reviewed the membership and would be presenting a slate of candidates. The vacant positions will be filled in August since the Council will meet the day before various members' terms expire in July.

Ms. Hebert reviewed the roles and responsibilities that were included in the information packet. She reminded everyone that the group was now a formal Commission and attending the meetings is critical. Meeting attendance helps with the sustainability and creditability of the Commission. Norwalk Arts Commission has come a long way, which is wonderful.

Ms. Hebert then announced the following proposed slate of officers:

Chair - Susan Wallerstein
Vice Chair - Jennifer Bangser
Treasurer -- Emerson Straniti
Secretary -- Danielle Vinci

Mr. Marc Allen and Ms. Sharon Baanante will be brought forward as potential appointments for the two vacant seats.

A discussion followed about members whose terms were about to expire. Ms. Hebert said that if someone wished to continue serving, they would have a conversation with the Board and then the chair would present the suggestion to the Mayor for re-appointment. Ms. Roman asked if there was a process in place for suggesting new members. Ms. Wallerstein said that typically some people who attend meetings as friends Commission decide to become voting members.

Ms. Roman asked how they would be sure the entire community was represented when vacant seats occur, and Ms. Massey asked how the public would know. Ms. Hebert said that if someone has a good candidate in mind, they should bring it to the Commission.

There is also information about membership on the City website's Arts Commission page.

Ms. Hebert announced that the Maritime garage would be having an Exhibit opening between 5 and 7 p.m. on June 13th. The title of the show is A Reverence for Nature.

OLD BUSINESS

• Committee Reports & Project Updates

a. Poet Laureate

Ms. Peterson gave a brief overview of the "Dance and Poetry Body of Work" event held at the Lockwood Mathews Mansion on May 27th. She announced that there will also be an upcoming event at the Norwalk Arts Festival that will be held at the Mansion.

Ms. Peterson also spoke about a poetry album that is in the works.

There has been a negotiated settlement with Parks and Recreation about bringing Poetry in the Park at Oyster Shell Park, involving poetry and public parks.

Ms. Bradley said that Ms. Peterson had written a beautiful poem about the library and there would be a traffic graphic done near the library. Ms. Wallerstein explained that the Art Commission reviews the design and gives the artists feedback. Those members on the Public Arts Committee receive jpegs to review.

b. Public Arts Committee -- Inventory, signage/label

Ms. Matuska said that the Public Art Committee had reviewed and done an inventory of the various public art pieces. Damage and any graffiti were noted for the inventory report.

Ms. Wallerstein said that every piece of public art in Norwalk should have a public signage identifying the artist and the name of the piece. She then gave some examples of issues that had arisen when this was not done.

c. Public Art Tours

Bike/Walk Norwalk Business cards listing two key websites such as the Bike/Walk Commission, and the Customer Service links were distributed.

d. Strategic Planning

The discussion then moved to the principles of the Strategic Plan:

Mission: To infuse the arts into Norwalk civic and cultural experiences.

Vision: To foster a vibrant arts culture that reflects Norwalk's community identity.

Values: To encourage organizations, institutions and individuals to connect with the creative community

Ms. Massey asked about the third item. Ms. Wallerstein said that they would be discussing the action portion as the meeting progressed. Discussion followed.

**** MR. YERINIDES MOVED TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSED MISSION, VISION AND VALUES AS PART OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN.**

**** MR. BURTT SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

e. Mayor's Gallery

Ms. Wallerstein said that Ms. Slattery had submitted her resignation as tour coordinator but Ms. Slattery would be continuing to work with the Mayor's Gallery.

Ms. Wallerstein also announced the Arts Commission would be returning stewardship of the WPA murals to the Historical Commission and Society.

Ms. Wallerstein distributed information about the Mayor's Gallery including the original Request for Services, an overview of exhibits since 2015, and an email from Ms. Slattery outlining her idea for an exhibit to follow the NPS student art show winners (July – September).

Discussion followed about Ms. Slattery's proposal. The Commission worked with Keystone House on the Slow Art Day and there was a suggestion that the Mental Health week exhibit might be more appropriate in partnership with and located at the Health Department.

There was also discussion about possibly expanding the Mayor's Gallery to include video and audio files, to support exhibits featuring other arts besides visual. One suggestion was to display some of the photographs from the recent "Dance and Poetry Body of Work" event held at the Lockwood Mathews Mansion.

Ms. Wallerstein said that she several other members would pass along the ideas to Ms. Slattery and discuss the general direction for the Mayor's Gallery that emerged from the discussion.

NEW BUSINESS CONT'D.

b. Meeting day/time 2018-19 and summer vote

Ms. Wallerstein said that she was proposing that they not have meetings in July and have task forces use the summer to work on the areas identified through the strategic planning process: Communications Plan, Collaboration Work Group and Infrastructure Work Group. Ms. Wallerstein passed around a sign up sheet for interested members and friends to sign up to serve on one of the three summer work groups. There was consensus to accept the recommendation not to meet as a full Commission unless necessary in July and August.

Ms. Wallerstein said that there had been a suggestion that the Commission switch the meetings to the first Tuesday, and start the meeting at 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. (consensus for 6:30 – 8:00 PM) She said that there were at least two voting members that have not been able to attend recent meetings because of the time. Ms. Massey said that having more evening meetings at non-City Hall locations would attract more people. Ms. Bradley said that she liked the idea of having the meetings at different locations.

Ms. Bradley suggested having some morning meetings and others in the evening. Ms. Wallerstein reminded the group of prior discussions where people felt consistency – day and time – was helpful. She suggested that the Commission do a one year trial for the evening meetings, starting in September. The Commission can revisit this issue in April or May of 2019.

c. Proposal for People's Gallery – Live, Love, Work Norwalk

Ms. Wallerstein said that on the first floor, the corridor on the way to the Community Room has blank walls. The Public Art Committee has come up with the title of the People's Gallery. The Public Art Committee proposed that first exhibit would feature members of the Arts Commission. Going forward, the Commission could solicit proposals from guest curators. The discussion moved to the cost of the exhibits production costs. Ms. Bacal suggested having photos of the Commissioners included in the exhibit and offered to curate the exhibit. Mr. Rosenfeld had several suggestions for photographing the creation process for the Exhibit. There was consensus to move forward with the proposal with members and friends signing up to serve as curators for upcoming exhibits.

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MR. STRANITI MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MR. YERINIDES SECONDED.
** THE MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services