

**CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
RENE SOTO GALLERY
DECEMBER 4, 2018**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Wallerstein, Janet Evelyn, Marc Alan, Emerson Straniti, Chris Yerinides, Nori Grudin, Sharon Baanante, Danielle Vinci (Voting members absent: Jennifer Bangser, Melissa Matuska, Helen Roman)

OTHERS: Judith Bacal, Jim Clark, Julio Pardo, Melissa Slattery, Rene Soto, Tami Strauss, Redevelopment Agency; Chris Bradley, Norwalk Library Director; Diane Jellerette, Norwalk Historical Society

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Wallerstein called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. A quorum was present. Rene Soto welcomed everyone to his gallery.

OFFICERS' REPORTS

a. Chair

Ms. Wallerstein said she was giving only a brief report because of the agenda. She reminded everyone – especially voting members – of the importance of ensuring enough “bandwidth” to execute all the exciting projects and plans under discussion. She reminded everyone that three members terms would end next July. It will be helpful and important to know who will seek reappointment and identify process for recruiting new members for any vacancies. There are nine Mayoral appointments subject to Common Council approval, except for the two commissioners who represent the Council.

c. Secretary - November Minutes

Ms. Vinci asked for approval of the November minutes. Motion made by Ms. Evelyn, no discussion, approved unanimously with Mr. Yerinides and Mr. Straniti abstaining (not present in November).

d. Treasurer - Financial Report

Mr. Straniti presented the financial statement reporting a balance of \$12, 493. He is developing a pro forma 2019-20 operating budget replicating the 2018-19 budget including carryover \$16,835. Mr. Yerinides moved approval of the financial report and proposed 2019-20 budget. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE & PROJECT REPORTS

Choice Neighborhoods Public Art

Ms. Strauss, representing the Redevelopment Agency, explained the background and history of the Choice Neighborhood program funded by the federal HUD (Housing and Urban Development) program. She said the Arts Commission would need to enter into a contract with RDA for the project if commission members decided to proceed. Arts Commission consultant, Julio Pardo, then discussed the Ryan Park public art project proposal (scope, timeline, financial) that he drafted on behalf of the commission, in consultation with Redevelopment Agency staff. Those present asked questions including whether there would be any cost to the Commission (answer = no), and made suggestions about various community based organizations and neighborhood leaders who should be involved in the planning. After confirming that Mr., Pardo was interested and willing to continue as project manager, Mr. Alan made a motion to enter into an agreement with RDA to manage the Ryan Park Public Art Project as outlined in Mr. Pardo's proposal. Ms. Grudin seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Mayor's Gallery – Ms. Slattery spoke about the recent gallery opening reception for the “Body of Work” exhibit. Commission members celebrated this installation, especially the dance – poetry – photography collaboration. There was discussion about the disposition of the mounted photos after the exhibit ends in March. Mr. Rosenfeld donated his professional services and the Arts Commission paid for the prints. Ms. Wallerstein will follow up with Ms. Peterson and Mr. Rosenfeld to clarify any expectations and understandings related to this issue.

Ms. Slattery proposed that the last 2018-19 exhibit would focus on the Traffic Graphic (TG) program. This was one of several ideas generated by Commission members last fall. There was discussion about the possibility of documenting the process of creating a TG as part of the exhibit however this will not be pursued given timing, cost and logistics required. Ms. Wallerstein provided additional background about the program and offered to forward detail to Ms. Slattery to assist with the exhibit.

Going forward (2019-20) the Commission has discussed other ideas including guest curators, coordinating themes between Mayor's and People's Galleries, adding multi-media elements, etc.

Otocast mobile app – NAC consultant Judith Bacal updated the commission about changes/improvements to the app and shared that both Greenwich and Westport are now using Otocast. She submitted a proposal to assess the effectiveness and benefits derived from Norwalk's use of the app toward the goal of making a decision about future use (revision, expansion, alternative sponsors, etc.) next fall. Ms. Grudin moved the commission approve the proposal as presented (not to exceed \$1750 with scope and funding spanning two fiscal years). Mr. Alan seconded the motion which was then approved unanimously.

Communication Committee – Ms. Baanante shared and discussed proposed new social media guidelines as well as other ideas the committee is considering e.g., newsletter, etc. The committee members plan to meet with Josh Morgan, the City of Norwalk communications staff member to discuss shared interests, needs and capacities. Ms. Wallerstein encouraged them to also involve Larry Manzi and/or other members of the city’s IT staff to assist with the commissions website presence. Ms. Baanante asked if members would be interested in having Nori Grudin offer a social media 101 tutorial in January, with a positive response from all.

Collaboration Committee – Ms. Vinci reminded members of the commission to provide suggestions and feedback about the draft partnership form the committee developed and emailed to all. She also distributed a draft calendar featuring at least one activity or event each month where NAC is sponsor/host or partner. They would appreciate additional detail about the Mayor’s and People’s Gallery installations. Ms. Baanante encouraged the committee to consider hosting at least one networking social each year, among other reasons because it is a good way to recruit prospective members.

Infrastructure Committee – Mr. Alan provided an update on the buskers ordinance and plans for the Arts Commission to assume responsibility for murals. A small group will meet with the Mayor and other City Hall staff in early January to discuss next steps. In anticipation of this work, Mr. Alan and others suggested a new People’s Gallery exhibit featuring Norwalk’s murals – past and present. The “past” would include WPA murals as well as those done by Brec Morgan and other artists during the 1970’s and 80’s in SoNo. Mr. Alan moved to appropriate \$500 for a curator to work with the infrastructure committee members to plan and produce this exhibit, tentatively scheduled for March – June 2019. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Yerinides made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 PM, seconded by Ms. Grudin. The motion passed unanimously.