

**CITY OF NORWALK  
ARTS COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
OCTOBER 1, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: Marc Alan, Chair; Sharon Baanate; Jennifer Bangser; Evelyn Janet;  
Nori Grudin; Melissa Matuska; Peter Smyth; Emerson Straniti

STAFF: Sabrina Church, Director of Business and Tourism

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Alan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Mr. Alan called the Roll as indicated above.

**III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public who wished to speak this evening.

**IV. ADMINISTRATION**

a. Official welcome to new voting member Bob Abriola.

Mr. Alan Welcomed Mr. Abriola to the Commission.

b. Vice Chair Nominations and Selection.

Mr. Alan said the bylaws dictate that the Commission has a Vice Chair. He indicated that Mr. Abriola, Ms. Bangser and Mr. Smyth were interested in the position. The three candidates gave an overview of their experience and reason for wanting to serve. Mr. Alan said he admired all three and that this was a unique situation. Ms. Grudin asked if they could have two co-chairs. Ms. Matuska explained that the by-laws only permit one co-chair.

Following a discussion, Ms. Bangser declined the nomination.

\*\* MS. BAANATE NOMINATED PETER SMYTH AS CO-CHAIR

\*\* MR. STRANITI SECONDED

Mr. Alan reviewed what he was looking for in a Vice Chair. Ms. Church said the second step should be to look at the policies of the Arts Commission.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED**

c. Approve the Minutes of the September 17, 2019 Special Meeting.

**\*\* MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**

**\*\* MR. SMYTH SECONDED**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MS. GRUDIN)**

## **V. FINANCE**

a. Treasurer's Report.

Ms. Grudin reported that the budget balance was \$22,796.57 and the money was rolled over; however, no where on the sheets does it show what was paid to the Poet Laureate. She said she would check with Ms. Bradley at the Library. Mr. Abriola asked where the funding comes from. Mr. Alan explained that it comes from the City of Norwalk and is adjusted each year. Ms. Church added that it is adjusted by what the Commission requests each year.

Ms. Grudin reported that invoices for the vinyl banners, pole pockets and paint solutions were paid. Also, the social media service was paid. Ms. Church said she would pull the invoices and report to the Commission.

Ms. Smyth suggested creating a Communications committee to prioritize Commission events.

b. Approve The Social Media Proposal To Increase Administration Hours With Additional Budget For Social Media Advertisements.

It was proposed that Michelle expand her hours and do different types of social media posts such as events, artists, inspiration and to show art that belongs to the City of Norwalk.

Mr. Alan suggested that in general the e-mail system needs an overhaul. Mr. Smyth said the overall goal is to connect people to the arts.

In addition to the Communications Committee, the Commissioners discussed creating a Budget Committee.

## **VI. APPROVALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

a. Approve The Art Installations At Ryan Park (doors, basketball court, etc).

Ms. Susan Sweitzer, Norwalk Redevelopment Agency said this project was funded through the Choice Neighborhood initiative.

Mr. Pardo came to the Redevelopment Agency as someone who would help with the public art component of the project. He finished the first phase of the contract and phase two will be the installation of the art.

Mr. Julio Pardo presented his proposed art installations at Ryan Park. He said it is the result of eight months of work. He used local artists from Norwalk and Bridgeport. He gave an overview of the history of Ryan Park and said it has a lot of meaning to the people in the community. He met with the people in the community and they decided to salvage the doors from the demolition of Washington Village. The doors will be mounted on bases throughout the Park. The basketball court is an homage to Washington Village.

Ms. Matuska suggested changing the name of the artwork from Ryan Park to the Village. Mr. Pardo said that very early on, he asked why the park was named Ryan Park. He was told that it was named after a mailman who delivered mail to Washington Village for over 40 years. Ms. Matuska suggested adding signage explaining the origins of the park. Mr. Pardo said he discussed having interpretive signage in the park with the Historical Commission.

Mr. Abriola asked Mr. Pardo why he didn't use all Norwalk artists. Mr. Pardo said there was an open call for artists and he took 18 – 20 proposals.

- \*\* **MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO APPROVE THE ART INSTALLATIONS AT RYAN PARK**
- \*\* **MR. SMYTH SECONDED**
- \*\* **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

b. Approve The Loan Of The Perry Family Sculpture In Ryan Park.

Mr. Alan explained that Charles Perry is a sculptor and the family wants to loan a statute to the City for display at Ryan Park; however, according to the public art policy, the City will not insure art that is on loan. Negotiations are on-going.

- \*\* **MR. STRANITI MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM**
- \*\* **MR. ALAN SECONDED**
- \*\* **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

c. Approve The Pontos Society Sculpture Location In Freese Park.

Mr. Alan said Parks and Recreation asked this Commission to weigh in on the location of the monument. He said this Commission's disapproval of the location is not binding. Ms. Church explained this is an advisory Commission and the Common Council has the final vote.

A representative from the Pontos Society distributed a photograph showing the proposed location and described the stone pathway.

Mr. Alan said he received a letter from Ms. Diane Cece who suggested placing the monument at Heritage Park.

**\*\* MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO APPROVE THE PONTOS SOCIETY SCULPTURE LOCATION IN FREESE PARK**

The representative said they can alter the shape of the marble. He added that is very dangerous to cross West Avenue to reach Heritage Park. He also had concerns about parking. Mr. Straniti said it is very busy near Heritage Wall. The representative said they downgraded the size of the monument. In addition, they are aware of other monuments in the City that are more disproportionate than this one. Mr. Smyth said it did not look like it would fit in the area and a change in color would help. Ms. Church said the Parks and Recreation department would determine its location in Freese Park.

**\*\* MS. EVELYN SECONDED**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. ALAN) AND ONE (1) VOTE IN OPPOSITION (MR. SMYTH)**

**VII. OPEN DISCUSSION**

The following items were not discussed.

- a. Updates to the Arts Commission section of the website.
- b. Mayor's Gallery proposals.
- c. Logistics of the People's Gallery.
- d. NAC Banner and Printed Materials for Events – Design and printing.
- e. The addition of Graphic arts slides to the looping slide show at City Hall entrance.

Ms. Church suggested that the Commission create a list of committees.

- Communication Committee, Chair Mr. Smyth
- Infrastructure Committee, Chair, Mr. Alan
- Budget Committee, Chair, Ms. Grudin

#### VIII. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed this evening.

#### IX. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed this evening.

#### X. ADJOURNMENT

**\*\* MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO ADJOURN**  
**\*\* MR. ALAN SECONDED**  
**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi  
Telesco Secretarial Services

Future Meetings November 5, 2019 (Election Day) – 6:30 p.m. – P&Z Conference Room