

CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 4, 2020

ATTENDANCE: Marc Alan, Chair; Peter Smyth; Melissa Matuska; Robert Abriola;
Emerson Straniti; Nori Grudin; Helen Roman; Kadeem Roberts

STAFF: Sabrina Church

OTHERS: Brian Kaspr, Payton Turner

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Marc Alan called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. A quorum was present.

Mr. Alan said that Jennifer Bangser and Sharon Baanante have both resigned from the Commission, and that Mr. Kaspr is seeking an appointment from the Mayor.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public comment at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

****MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 7, 2020 MINUTES**

****MS. GRUDIN SECONDED**

****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

COMMITTEE/STAFF UPDATES

Mayor's Gallery

Ms. Roman said that they were ready to put up the exhibit by Friday and the supporting materials were out to print. She said that she was looking to confirm that Mayor's schedule on Thursday, February 13. Mr. Alan recommended that Ms. Roman contact the Mayor's Assistant, Sally Johnson about scheduling. Mr. Smyth said that he would prepare a Facebook post about the event.

Mr. Alan brought up the budget for the event. Ms. Church said that there was no need to vote on it because it was already planned to support that expense in the original budget. She said that, if the proposed cost of any event or expenses were to be over \$1,000, then they would need to provide two estimates or quotes for that with their submission for reimbursement or payment.

Ms. Roman said that SPAG will host the next gallery event.

Mr. Abriola said they haven't yet presented it to SPAG, but they expect they'll be fine with it.

Mr. Alan said that Ms. Roman is the primary point person for the Mayor's Gallery.

Ms. Roman said that the Children's Show follows the SPAG show. Ms. Grudin said that the teachers take care of the kids show. Ms. Matuska said that the winners of the kids show go from the Mayor's Gallery exhibit to the 4th Floor of City Hall permanent exhibit, unless they request otherwise.

Budget Committee Update

Ms. Grudin said that they had paid HootSuite \$370.10 and Telesco \$170.00. She said their balance is now \$20,800.22.

Ms. Church said that the Arts Commission has five months left to spend the budget.

Ms. Matuska suggested investing in marketing and in the Mayor's Gallery. Ms. Roman said that the Mayor's Gallery could use a hanging system. Mr. Alan said Laiose King said that the Mayor's Gallery might be moving with the reorganization of City Hall. Ms. Roman said that they could install the hanging system in the People's Gallery and then move it to another gallery.

Mr. Smyth mentioned discussing future budgeting within the infrastructure committee and suggested that they hire a consultant to complete Public Art Inventory Project.

Communications Committee Update

Mr. Smyth said that he provided a list of venues last week for the commission to review, but nobody has commented since then. He said that, after they finish revising the list, that they can design the Art Trail.

ArtSpeak

Mr. Smyth said that they had a logo in progress and that Mr. Abriola's girlfriend is working on that. Mr. Abriola said that ArtSpeak is an event for arts awareness and networking for urban artists in the area. He said they want a female on the panel discussion. Mr. Smyth said that they anticipate

75-100 people in attendance. Mr. Abriola will be the master of ceremonies and Leslie will moderate the discussion. There will be networking from 6:00-7:30 PM with light food followed by a 2-hour presentation/panel.

Mr. Smyth said that they were considering charging \$5-10 for tickets. Ms. Matuska suggested a free ticket promotion. Mr. Alan suggested a V.I.P. guest list. Mr. Alan said that, by using Brown Paper Tickets, they can collect emails from attendees.

Ms. Church said that they cannot use public money to buy alcohol for the event. Mr. Alan suggested a cash bar. Ms. Matuska suggested that they offer attendees a glass of wine or beer with the purchase of a ticket. Mr. Straniti recommended that they ask for a suggested donation instead. Ms. Matuska said that the MC should announce the suggested donation at the end of the show, as everyone is leaving.

Mr. Roberts suggested that they open the networking event up to other urban artists, and recommended they allow other artists to bring in their pieces. Mr. Smyth said that the pieces should fit a theme. Ms. Church suggested that they create a Norwalk Now business page to promote the event and future events. Mr. Smyth said that they will finalize these details by next week.

Mr. Smyth said they did a boosted Facebook post for Fivefingaz that reached 1,500 Norwalkers, but they are not coordinating with businesses. He said that Facebook rewards posts with more reach based on the level of interest in the original boost. Mr. Alan said that they could promote using Facebook Groups, which do not require any payment. Ms. Turner suggested that members of the commission comment on these posts with emojis and other text, which hacks the algorithm and makes the post more visible.

Infrastructure Committee

Mr. Abriola said that they should regulate public art with maintenance to prevent vandalism. He suggested that they use anti-graffiti coating and mandating protection of paint. Ms. Church reminded him that they cannot mandate anything on private property.

Mr. Alan asked if they should evaluate all the existing murals in Norwalk, or if they should grandfather them. Ms. Church said they should grandfather them in. Mr. Alan said that the Department of Buildings should help to maintain poorly preserved murals. Mr. Smyth said that they have not gotten a second legal opinion on regulating public art on quality yet.

Mr. Alan spoke about his experience in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He said that muralists come from around the world to paint in one area in the ghetto. He wondered if by creating more regulations, that would deter a higher quality of art.

Mr. Smyth asked where the line is when the arts commission could police content. Mr. Alan said that they could regulate profanity and hate speech/imagery.

Mr. Straniti request that they take the section on private property out of the policy. Mr. Alan said that there is a danger to taking the section on private property out of the document.

Mr. Kaspr said that the goal for art on private property is to not irritate the neighbors.

Mr. Alan suggested they investigate the nuances between public art and signage with regards to paint deterioration.

Mr. Smyth suggested they schedule a mural meeting.

Ms. Church suggested creating a final draft for review that includes a process for accepting public art, excludes the library (because of their policy on media donations), and adds language on insurance. Mr. Alan said that there should be a checklist.

****MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE TO THE PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE**

****MR. ROBERTS SECONDED**

****MOTION PASSES with 1 opposed (Smyth).**

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Alan said that Diane Lauricella asked to distribute information regarding the Norwalk-to-Bridgeport high school lyrics contest about the U.S. Census.

Ms. Church gave a budget update and said that \$50,000 passed through the finance committee.

Make Music Day

Mr. Alan said that Make Music Day would take place on June 21. He said that he worked with Norwalk Now to plan this, and he would like to see the arts commission voiced in this project. He said that he spoke to Lindsay at the SoNo Arts Festival about this. He said last year they didn't have the resources and there might be a small cost associated with it, or it might for free. He said they are looking for people power to help.

Mr. Abriola said that he has a music and art event at Fairfield Theatre Company on February 13.

****MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:58**

****MR. SMYTH SECONDED**

****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

E.A.Sheils

Telesco Secretarial Services