

**CITY OF NORWALK  
ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 3, 2020**

ATTENDANCE: Marc Alan (Chair), Peter Smyth, Nori Grudin, Kadeem Roberts, Janet Evelyn, Robert Abriola

STAFF/OTHERS: Jim Clark, Musician and Friend of the Arts Commission

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Marc Alan called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM. A quorum was present.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr. Clark said that the Arts Commission acts as an umbrella for all the arts in Norwalk, which is how this City becomes known. He said that collaborations (between dancers, filmmakers, fine artists, musicians, etc.) are what keeps the arts going, and that artists come up with great ideas.

Mr. Clark discussed Make Music Day. He said that he will reach out to high schools and arrange saxophone tunes to rehearse. He said that this event encourages working with someone new. Mr. Alan said that he organized Make Music Day as a private citizen. He said he collaborated with Norwalk Now last year and plans to bring it more into the City's umbrella this year. He hoped that Make Music Day could be endorsed by the Arts Commission. He is also looking for support from Parks & Recreation and from the Mayor.

Mr. Alan and Mr. Clark discussed a creative collaboration event open to the arts in general and mindful of dance schools. Mr. Clark suggested making the most impact with the use of grants for dance. He is looking for events that could fit those grants and planned on asking Ms. Church for recommendation. Mr. Alan said that he liked the idea of reverse engineering an event from a grant and suggested the option of doing the same for special needs or special education program.

Mr. Abriola asked if the City gave out grants. Mr. Clark said that, in his experience, there is a certain amount of City money that goes to certain nonprofits agencies. He said that process involves the same number of organizations over many years. For a new organization to be considered by the Mayor, they have to get a certain amount of buy-in from those around the Mayor, and then it can be proposed, but it is not a common occurrence.

Ms. Evelyn said that the Redevelopment Agency does apply grants for projects and discussed the NICE Festival. Mr. Alan said that the Head of Redevelopment is a guitarist and used to own several music stores.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

Ms. Grudin requested that the Agenda and Minutes be sent by email in two attachments.

**\*\*MS. GRUDIN MOVED TO TABLE THE APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 4, 2020 MEETING MINUTES**

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

**\*\*MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. NICE Festival**
- b. SoNo Arts Festival**

Mr. Alan spoke to Mr. Roberts regarding the NICE Festival. He said there was an option to post a banner on light posts in SoNo throughout the summer. Mr. Roberts said this is the 5th year that they are doing this event and a banner gives exposure.

Ms. Evelyn said that she was getting the artwork done and producing the banners, which were shipped from California in the past and estimated at \$250. She said the banners need to be delivered to the electric company around Memorial Day and they will stay up for most of June. She said that the Arts Commission has no control over the banner schedule and suggested that they deliver them to the electric company sooner rather than later.

Ms. Evelyn said that approval is necessary from the Third Taxing District and the SoNo Electric Works for banner posting. Mr. Alan said that on Wall Street, some of the light posts are owned by the City and some are owned by Eversource.

Ms. Evelyn said that she designed an event logo for the 5th year of this event already for the banners, and that the designs for them must be created. She said that approximately 65 will be hung around town. Wal-Mart and Heineken have given them sponsorships in the past to defray the cost of the banners. Mr. Abriola suggested the fence in front of the Lockwood Mansion as a good place for banners.

Ms. Evelyn said that the Arts Commission and the Poet Laureate each support 2 banners with poems. In addition to that, the Arts Commission has coordinated an interactive arts program with donations from Jerry's Artarama that allows kids to freestyle paint and express their ideas. Mr. Abriola suggested that Muse Paintbar as a sponsor for this program as well. Ms. Evelyn said the NICE Festival is free admission.

Ms. Evelyn plans to create a commemorative poster for the NICE Festival that highlights a multicultural theme. Ms. Grudin suggested creating a t-shirt with the logo.

Mr. Smyth suggested that they do a series of 4 banners representing the different branches of the arts. He requested that they set a budget for promotional items, including bumper magnets, which could be distributed in exchange for event-goers' emails. Mr. Alan said that the initial budget would be for 4 banner designs & production, stickers, t-shirts, and booths for the SoNo Arts Festival and the NICE Festival.

**\*\*MR. SMYTH MOVED TO APPROPRIATE \$3,500 FOR INITIAL BUDGET FOR EVENT PROMOTIONS AND SET A COMMITTEE**

**\*\*MR. ABRIOLA SECONDED**

**\*\*MOTION PASSES with one abstention (Evelyn).**

Discussion took place regarding budget issues with SoNo Arts Festival. Ms. Evelyn said that it takes place in the next fiscal year. Mr. Alan said they could spend on an Arts Commission tent. Ms. Grudin said that Jerry's Artarama shared their tent.

Ms. Grudin said that the Poet Laureate's stipend is already in use for poem banners, and Mr. Hayden would make that call. Ms. Evelyn said that he did a performance last year.

Mr. Alan and Mr. Roberts will be on the committee and they will be tabling at each festival.

**c. Make Music Day**

**\*\*MR. SMYTH MOVED TO ENDORSE MAKE MUSIC DAY**

**\*\*MR. ROBERTS SECONDED**

**\*\* MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

**d. Photographing the Public Art Collection**

Mr. Smyth said that good photographs can be used multiple times in ways to promote the City. Ms. Evelyn suggested using the Russian photographer, Alex, who photographed for them before. Ms. Grudin suggested that the Historical Society helps with pre-1940s photographs.

**e. Art Hanging System in the Mayor's Gallery and People's Gallery**

Mr. Alan suggested purchasing the STAS brand hanging system for installation in the Mayor's Gallery, which is available in colors. He said they allocated \$1,000 in the budget for the hanging systems, which is more than they need. He said there are two types - the mini rail and the pro rail, which reflects the amount of weight they can carry.

Mr. Alan suggested using the pro rail STAS system for the People's Gallery:

\$29.47 for 75" rail

\$26 for 2 clips (approx.)

\$55 Total (approx.)

Mr. Alan said the People's Gallery may change and may get bigger, as it is under construction. He said they have to make sure the system fits in the Mayor's Gallery. The smallest STAS rail is 59". He said that the cost of the hanging systems would be approximately \$500, and by next meeting the budget will be laid out for implementation. Ms. Grudin mentioned possibly using the SPAG system for hanging.

**f. Slow Art Day**

Ms. Grudin said that she tried to get in touch with the lady at slowart.com, but she didn't communicate. She said that she may reach out to Diana for the WPN banners. Mr. Alan said that she forwarded a .pdf to LiveLoveNorwalk about yoga and meditative events.

Ms. Grudin asked about other possible participants. Slow Art Day takes place on April 4. Mr. Alan said that Renee, who considers himself an "art radical", paints murals freely in his own space and is doing art classes for children with special needs. Mr. Alan suggested inviting entities to host their own events.

Mr. Alan suggested combining the Slow Art event with SoNo Open Studios. Ms. Evelyn suggested including Wilson Lofts and Firing Circuits. Ms. Grudin suggested the Contemporary Art Museum. Ms. Grudin suggested ArtWorks at St. Paul's Church and their Keystone artwork. Mr. Alan suggested a Friese Park event. Mr. Alan suggested using the Factory Underground as a venue.

Ms. Evelyn encouraged that Slow Art Day becomes a citywide event. She said that it would be difficult to pull in all participants and it may be an idea for next year. Ms. Grudin said that if the Arts Commission hosts one event for it, then the other galleries will join in.

### **COMMITTEE/STAFF UPDATES**

#### **a. Budget Committee Update**

Ms. Grudin reported the following approximate expenditures:

\$600 for printing for the Mayor's Gallery (includes installation work)  
\$500 for Michelle Rakowsky  
\$120 for Telesco

She said the printed budget number was \$21,340.32, which must have \$600 subtracted from it, as she received the updated info after forwarding the invoice for payment.

Ms. Grudin said that she was going to confirm the updated budget and send it to Mr. Alan. She detailed the requested money in December for July:

\$1,000 for hanging system  
\$6,500 for social media  
\$1,500 for Mayor's Gallery  
\$1,500 for Poet Laureate  
\$2,500 for ArtSpeak  
\$1,000 for printing  
\$1,000 (unallocated, maybe for photographs of public art)

Ms. Grudin said that any rollover money or extra funding was used for events, which was Mr. Abriola's idea. Mr. Alan said that this must be voted on. Mr. Abriola suggested using the funding for Maritime Gallery promotion.

Ms. Grudin said that the City has a budget for printing and duplication (1101). Ms. Evelyn said that is usually \$14,000-15,000. Ms. Grudin said that they have \$21,000 to spend. Mr. Smyth said that funding for festivals is \$17,000. Ms. Evelyn suggested funding a reception.

#### **b. Communications Committee Update**

## *ArtSpeak*

Mr. Smyth said that Mr. Abriola's girlfriend did the logo for ArtSpeak. He suggested using the Wall Street Theatre, which has an occupancy of 1,000+, for the event on the 14th. Mr. Alan said they would need to hire sound and production.

Mr. Smyth said that ArtSpeak will feature Jahmaine and 2 other urban artists, and they are looking for a female artist to complete the panel. Ms. Grudin suggested getting a gift for Leslie. Mr. Alan discussed FiveFingaz and his paintings at the Art Park about peace and love.

## *Social Media*

Mr. Smyth said that there have been 40 posts and 2,000 total followers on Instagram and Facebook combined with some duplicates. He reported 315 engagements on the FiveFingaz event. They also advertised for Sylvia with a \$75 investment, which yielded a reach of 4,300 Norwalk locals.

Mr. Smyth said that Ms. Rakowsky is doing a great job. He encouraged others to 'Like' and interact with posts to help the algorithms.

Mr. Alan requested sending newsletters from a non-Gmail email account in an effort to be professional. Mr. Smyth said that they could be sent from [norwalkartscommission.com](mailto:norwalkartscommission.com). Mr. Abriola said that the Maritime Gallery sends emails from their own URL.

### **c. Infrastructure/Public Art Committee**

Mr. Alan said that Ms. Church may have submitted the Public Art Policy to the Legal Department and they should finalize the policy this week.

Discussion took place regarding the name change of the Infrastructure Committee to the Public Art Committee. Mr. Alan said that, when the original committees were created, they had a think tank that discussed goals for the future, direction, and mission. The former chairperson of the Arts Commission led these nighttime sessions and used the committees to manage her workload. Mr. Alan said that this is one of the reasons that he was interested in working with supportive and involved team players.

Mr. Alan said that a lot of these committee's had a lot of overlap and reminded them that there is no Collaboration Committee anymore.

Mr. Abriola suggested starting a Curator's Committee.

Mr. Smyth suggested starting an Events Committee.

Ms. Grudin requested the budget for the Maritime Gallery.

Mr. Abriola said that he plans to promote the Call for Entries for the Maritime Gallery.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\*MR. SMYTH MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:11 PM**

**\*\*MR. ABRIOLA SECONDED**

**\*\*MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Anaya Sheils  
Telesco Secretarial Service