

**CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 2, 2020**

ATTENDANCE: Marc Alan (Chair), Helen Roman, Kadeem Roberts, Melissa Matuska,
Bob Abriola, Peter Smyth

STAFF/OTHERS: Sabrina Church, Director of Business Development & Tourism; Michelle
Rakowsky, Social Media

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Marc Alan called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

****MR. SMYTH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 5, 2020 MINUTES**

****MR. ABRIOLA SECONDED**

****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

COMMITTEE & STAFF UPDATES

Budget Committee

Mr. Alan said that there was no budget update because Ms. Grudin was not present. Ms. Church said the details were contained in the packet provided for this meeting and pointed out the last page. She said that next year's budget included \$22,000 approved operating funds, and \$50,000 approved capital funds, which passed Council recently. She said that this would be in the accounts by July 1, 2020 with approximately \$35,000 available at that time.

Mr. Alan asked if there was any other party on the MLK side of the grant. Ms. Church said that they didn't know if they should involve community members for representation, and that there was no official body to consult with. Mr. Alan suggested mapping out the area. Ms. Church said that she has a geographical study of potential sites for art installations. She said it is a sizable area, reaching from Raymond/Day Street to the water. Mr. Alan said that there were a lot of underpasses in this area, including one under the train tracks.

Communications Committee

Mr. Smyth said that Ms. Rakowsky is doing a great job and that she is on top of events and inspirational content posts. Mr. Smyth said that they were starting to push Make Music Day and quoted \$200 for boosting the event.

Mr. Smyth started designing a magnet for the “i heArt” initiative, so that they can start building a mailing list and push events to the list by blasting them on a weekly basis. Mr. Alan said that this was a really great idea. Mr. Smyth said this gets the ball rolling and that he was looking for other ideas for the messaging.

The logos were shown on the shared screen and they discussed potential social media handles that are available for use (@norwalkart, @nacct). Mr. Abriola preferred the red version of the logo. Ms. Matuska suggested the combination of the two. Mr. Alan said the logo would work on a black background.

The Make Music Day video was viewed on the shared screen. Mr. Alan suggested using the Norwalk-specific hashtag “#makemusicdaynorwalk” on the video. Mr. Abriola asked if they were boosting events. Mr. Smyth said they were planning to boost the physical events. Mr. Abriola requested that they boost Maritime Gallery posts and other streaming type events. Mr. Smyth said they would also boost “like our Page” ads and said that there is a way that Ms. Rakowsky can do the boosting herself.

Infrastructure Committee

Public Art Policy

Mr. Alan said that the Legal Department is currently reviewing the Public Art Policy and Mural Policy. They are establishing the City’s ability to form policy based on State law. The Legal Department is looking for precedent that empowers them. Mr. Alan said that they are looking at First Amendment rights to avoid the City’s liability going forward.

Mr. Alan said there was a new lawyer on the case and a memo had been sent out. He said there was nothing for them to consider for a vote yet, and they hope to get it completed as soon as they can. Mr. Alan said that San Francisco didn’t consult with multiple perspectives and it took them 8 years to approve their policy. He said they want this to make sense for Norwalk.

Ms. Church said that they are still working on it. Mr. Alan said that it might be best not to have a policy with regards to private property. He said there is no clear precedent and there is no right way to go about this. He said they will hear back from them in July.

Public Art Collection Photography Project

Mr. Alan said that he reached out to Judith Bacal and John Shelowski (sp?) for quotes. He said they are looking for quality and they could use more than one photographer. He said they also like Alex’s dance photography from an earlier project. Mr. Abriola suggested getting 3 competitive quotes. Ms. Church said that they are following City policy with regards to quotes and said the more the better. Mr. Alan said he would follow up with Ms. Bacal as soon as possible.

Isaac Square Art Park

Mr. Alan said they have acquired 2 new pieces of art from Mr. Abriola and Leslie Cober. He said the pieces are fantastic and that they have agreed to curate the park. He said the owner posted wood panels and people are enjoying the art. If artists are interested, they can talk to Mr. Ariola or Mr. Alan. Mr. Abriola said that they can ensure the integrity of the artwork and, when more panels are taken, there will be more demand. The panels are 3' x 6' or 6' by 6'. Mr. Alan said to look on the Arts Commission Instagram and '#norwalkctmurals'. He said the Art Park is like the center of the Norwalk Arts District and it gives people something safe to do.

Make Music Day

Mr. Alan said that there were lots of people interested in this event. Make Music Day is funded by the Connecticut Department of Arts and the Norwalk Arts Commission voted on it, so they want to make sure it follows Governor Lamont's Executive Orders for no live entertainment in CT. Mr. Alan said that people wanted to do this on the street anyway, but they are only streaming performances. There will be 30-minute streams on Sunday, June 21 from 4-9 PM, maybe starting earlier. They will be publishing a schedule with links to constitute Make Music Day 2020. Mr. Smyth created a promotional video for the event. Mr. Alan said the artists can contact him and his business email has been shared on social media posts. He said that they didn't seek approval last year from the Commission and they had 40 artists perform throughout the day.

Ms. Matuska asked if Josh could do a press release for the musicians. Mr. Alan said that he sat down with the Mayor last year. He said Josh will support it and they will reach out to him. He said that Norwalk Now also supports this event.

NEW BUSINESS

Washington Street Barriers Art Project

Mr. Abriola said that Kathy Hebert of the Parking Authority came up with an idea to decorate the concrete barriers on Washington Street. The City allows restaurants to use the sidewalk to accommodate social distancing for outdoor dining patrons. Mr. Abriola said that Ms. Church did the research and found out that painting the barriers wasn't an option, but vinyl tarps would work instead. There are 22 barriers for 22 artists. There will be no painting on site and the artists can paint in their home studios. There will be a theme and guidelines. Mr. Abriola said there is a unity concept with green vines interconnecting the tarps. He suggested florals and butterflies for positive vibes with themes of "emergence" and "resurgence". He said that they have to fund it and pay artists for the supplies.

Mr. Abriola said that the tarps (8' x 20') cost \$34 dollars each and suggested \$200 as a supply and labor budget for each artist. He estimated this project will cost about \$5,000. Ms. Roman said that she liked that it was evergreen. Mr. Abriola said that it will be growth-oriented and reflect how Norwalk was growing as a community. He said that they don't need to do an open call, but they can.

Ms. Church said they have formal approval from the Mayor to get the ball rolling and DPW will help fasten and install the art on the barriers. Mr. Abriola suggested 1” screws with grommets to fasten the art. He also will encourage the use of fluorescent paint by the artists. Ms. Church said that DPW will be looking into grommets or adhesives, which will be attached to something that is not directly on the barrier. She said that the tarps will remain up until the end of the season, or around September/October. Mr. Abriola said that it would be nice to use the tarps as a backdrop for events in the future, like galas.

Mr. Abriola said that merchants can sponsor the vinyl barriers and said this could generate revenue. Mr. Alan said that zoning rules would limit the height of the letters. Ms. Church said that the only businesses able to sponsor the tarps would have to be directly behind it and the letters couldn't be the majority of the artwork. The artists would have to go to the businesses to see if they were interested in order to get the money directly. Ms. Matuska asked if this would be challenging in comparison with the murals. Ms. Church said this wouldn't be a problem and this is why the letter size would be restricted and it can only be sponsored by the nearby restaurant. Mr. Alan suggested that the businesses use their social media handles.

****MR. SMYTH MOVED TO APPROVE THE REIMBURSEMENTS FOR MATERIALS FOR ART INSTALLATIONS ON THE WASHINGTON STREET BARRIERS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED A TOTAL OF \$5,000**

****MR. ABRIOLA SECONDED**

****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

Traffic Graphic Design Review

The proposed picture was shared on screen. Mr. Alan said that it depicted musical diversity. He said that Mr. Kaspr and Ms. Evelyn both voted for this item by email.

****MR. ABRIOLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE WALL STREET/RIVER STREET TRAFFIC GRAPHIC TO BE COMPLETED BY SPAG**

****MS. ROMAN SECONDED**

****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

****MR. SMYTH MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:01 PM**

****MS. MATUSKA SECONDED**

****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Anaya Sheils
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Norwalk
Arts Commission
Regular Meeting

May 5, 2020

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