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**CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 1, 2020**

ATTENDANCE: Marc Alan, Chair; Robert Abriola; Janet Evelyn; Nori Grudin; Brian Kaspr; Matthew O'Callaghan; Kadeem Roberts; Helen Roman; Peter Smyth; Emerson Straniti

STAFF: Sabrina Church, Director of Business Development & Tourism; Christine Bradley, Director, Norwalk Public Library

OTHERS: Bill Hayden, Poet Laureate

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Alan called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Alan called the Roll as indicated above.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public wished to participate this evening.

IV. ADMINISTRATION

- a. Approve the minutes of the August 11, 2020 special meeting.

**** MR. ROBERTS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED
** MR. STRANITI SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR.
ABRIOLA; MR. ALAN; MS. EVELYN; MS. GRUDIN; MR. KASPR; MR.
O'CALLAGHAN; MR. ROBERTS; MS. ROMAN; MR. SMYTH; MR.
STRANITI)**

V. COMMITTEE/STAFF UPDATES

- a. Budget Committee Update

- i. Finance update – Nori Grudin

Ms. Grudin reported the only invoice that came in was the Telesco bill. Ms. Church said she submitted a request to roll over funds and anticipates an answer in October. A bulk of the money was used for social media.

Ms. Grudin said they did not receive anything from Michelle Rakowski from August. They now have Facebook and Instagram pages.

- b. Communications Committee Update

- i. Social Media update – Peter Smyth & Michelle Rakowsky

Ms. Smyth said that Ms. Rakowski is doing a great job and there are a lot of story feeds on Instagram. He said he is starting to see some live events and they can start thinking about promoting them.

Mr. Smyth announced that he will have to step back as Vice Chair and chair of the Communications Committee. Mr. Alan thanked Mr. Smyth for all of the time he put in. He added that he will support Ms. Rakowsky as much as he can. He asked if anyone was interested in leading the Communications Committee.

Mr. Alan noted that Mr. Straniti expressed an interest in becoming Vice Chair. The position will be open to everyone and he described the nomination process. He added that whoever becomes Vice Chair will also be a member of the Finance Committee.

c. Infrastructure Committee Update

i. Public Art Policy Update – Marc Alan & Sabrina Church

Mr. Alan said he has been speaking with Ms. Church about a public arts policy. He said what they have now is a draft and it needs to be adopted and ratified. They will be taking out art on private property as a City of Norwalk concern. The Legal Department will review the draft and then the Commission can vote on it and then move it to the full Common Council for their vote.

ii. Walk Bridge materials for art projects – Marc Alan

Mr. Alan reported that he had a meeting with Mr. Westmoreland, Norwalk Historical Society and they discussed salvaging materials from the Walk Bridge and providing these materials to local artists. He said they are going to be asking sculpturing artists and other artists to submit proposals. When the Walk Bridge project came about, there were discussions about an art installation. Mr. Alan said he believed the Department of Transportation allocated a budget that would be appropriated for this and that the Arts Commission would steward the installations. Some of the ideas, were to use some of the materials from the Walk Bridge.

iii. MLK Corridor Update – Janet Evelyn

Ms. Evelyn reported that the Committee started working on a plan to implement the program. They want to do a tour of the MLK corridor. She said the Committee members are, Mr. Alan, Mr. Abriola, Mr. Roberts and Mr. O'Callaghan. She said they spent one day and toured most of the area near the Nathaniel Ely School. On the tour, they were able to identify potential areas that would work for different types of art. Other areas for art installation include around Ryan Park, under the train trestle and Oyster Shell Park.

Ms. Evelyn said their next step will be to identify a curator to manage the art program. She said they all agreed that they want people from the MLK corridor and the local area to be involved in the art program. She said they are very much driven that the people driving this project are from the MLK Community. Ms. Evelyn said they want to do a community outreach and then take that to the larger community and develop a plan for the execution of this project. Mr. Alan said he looked forward to this. Ms. Church noted the funds are in the account.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Update from Poet Laureate – Bill Hayden

Mr. Hayden said that when he took over this position in the spring of 2019, there were opportunities to participate in festivals. He said that he has continued workshops with other poets and writers by Zoom. He said there is the possibility that the online workshop for poets can grow. He noted that a lot of poems are being shared and they focus on Covid.

Mr. Hayden said that prior to Covid, he had plans to invite poets to special events at the Library. He said that he and Mr. Alan discussed offering a poetry and jazz event.

Mr. Hayden said he has personal concerns about going out into the public and said it is great to be able to meet using Zoom.

Mr. Alan asked Mr. Hayden if he could share any news about poetry work he is doing by e-mail. He said that so much of art is siloed and he wants to be able to communicate that information to the City as a whole.

Ms. Bradley said they could also do live feeds and share snippets on Instagram. Ms. Rakowsky said she would be happy to collaborate with Mr. Hayden on social media.

Mr. Alan asked Ms. Bradley about revisiting the Lit Crawl event. Ms. Bradley said the Veteran's event was very enjoyable and she would like to do something like that again. She noted that the Library closed on March 13th and the Lit Crawl had been scheduled to take place shortly after that.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Smyth suggested starting with a “need by” date for the MLK corridor project. Ms. Church said that the Legal Department has to create an Agreement with each artist and that can take time.

Mr. Alan reported that since they voted on the Ryan Park art installation, he was made aware that Charles Perry's sculpture was not approved by the Park and Recreation Committee. They were worried about the safety aspects of the sculpture. Of the original installation that Julio curated, the doors were not approved due to safety concerns; however, the basketball court was approved. Ms. Church said that doors are happening; there are five agreements. The only thing not approved is the Charles Perry sculpture and that is due to them not wanting to pay for insurance. Ms. Church said she was not sure of the timeline of the installation of the doors, but said they have until November 15th.

Mr. O’Callaghan said he hopes to chose the four artists for the “Get Out the Vote” project. She said he would also love to consider other people and asked everyone to send artists his way. He said he is taking suggestions on places to install the art work.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. STRANITI MOVED TO ADJOURN**
- ** MR. ROBERTS SECONDED**
- ** MOTION PASSED BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. ABRIOLA; MR. ALAN; MS. EVELYN; MS. GRUDIN; MR. KASPR; MR. O’CALLAGHAN; MR. ROBERTS; MS. ROMAN; MR. SMYTH; MR. STRANITI)**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services