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**CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 2, 2021
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Marc Alan, Chair; Robert Abriola; Janet Evelyn; Nori Grudin;
Brian Kaspr; Melissa Matuska; Kadeem Roberts

ABSENT: Matthew O'Callaghan; Helen Roman; Emerson Straniti

STAFF: Sabrina Church, Director of Business Development and Tourism

OTHERS: Julio Pardo

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Alan called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Alan called the Roll as indicated above. He explained that due to other obligations, Ms. Roman, dropped off of the Arts Commission. He talked about changing the time of the meeting to help accommodate various schedules. Ms. Church said she will check with the Mayor's office for time availability for the meeting.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public wished to participate this evening.

IV. ADMINISTRATION

a. Approve the minutes of the January 5, 2021 regular meeting.

The following corrections were made:

Correct the spelling of Mr. Mulligan and Mr. Pardo's last names.

**** MR. ROBERTS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**

**** MOTION PASSED BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. ABRIOLA; MR. ALAN; MS. EVELYN; MS. GRUDIN; MS. MATUSKA; MR. ROBERTS AND WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. KASPR)**

V. COMMITTEE/STAFF UPDATES

a. Budget Committee Update

Ms. Grudin reviewed the financials and said the balance will be \$11,800 once two outstanding bills hit the account. Mr. Alan asked if there was a way to share the spreadsheet. Ms. Church will ask Marissa to prepare a spreadsheet and attach it to the agenda. She added that she will forward the financials to the Commissioners.

i. Finance Update – Nori Grudin

Mr. Alan asked Ms. Grudin to organize a budget committee.

b. Communications Committee Update

Mr. Alan said he spoke with Ms. Rakowsky today and there was nothing specific to report. He said he would like to start increasing their outreach, but that can't begin until they get the budget.

i. Social Media Update – Michelle Rakowsky & Marc Alan

Mr. Alan said that when they begin the MLK project and get to the community outreach part, he would like to involve social media. He discussed Arts Speak and noted it can be done virtually.

c. Infrastructure Committee Update

i. MLK Update – Janet Evelyn & Julio Pardo

Ms. Evelyn reported that Mayor Rilling would like a bird's eye view of the project. Ms. Church had planned on presenting to the Mayor yesterday. Mr. Pardo put together a proposal that he submitted to Ms. Church which included locations and an overview of the timeline and the budget.

Ms. Church said that Mayor Rilling was in agreement with the first three locations. Public Works said they can include the concrete under the railing. She noted that they would have to go to the Facilities Committee and through Mr. Lo for any of the school locations. She discussed the proposed locations.

Ms. Church suggested that she talk to Mr. Lo, the Parking Authority and Public Work preliminarily and then go to the appropriate committees with the mock up. She will shepherd the plans through the Committees. She said Mayor Rilling prioritized the locations because he wants the public to be able to see the art work.

Mr. Alan said that on a related note, here was a proposal for art work under the train trestle and he found out that a painting was hanging there for a while. This may be worth looking into. Ms. Church said that would add time to the project because they would have to go to the MTA for approval along with City of Norwalk committees.

Mr. Pardo said there are signs up and down Route 7 demarking it as an historic highway. He suggested having students paint signs and place them on poles. Ms. Church described the steps that would need to be taken to place signs on poles.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion on Decommissioned Traffic Boxes.

Mr. Alan suggested engaging Mr. Shockley because he has the master list of traffic boxes.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

b. Approve the proposed MLK Blvd. Public Art Plan to further its review by relative City Council Committees and the Common Council.

The Commissioners discussed the timeline and budget. Mr. Pardo said he broke the project down into phase one and phase two. He said he wants to put out a general call to artists, through social media. Ms. Church noted they will have to work with the Purchasing Department.

Ms. Evelyn said she wants to be sure the call targets certain artist groups who are in the community. Mr. Alan said he wants to be sure the selection criteria is clear; he wants to be able to defend why an artist was not selected. Mr. Pardo said he is looking for credentials and will solicit resumes, not ideas. Mr. Alan said he wants to be sure they can get artists from the area; they need to reach out into the community. Ms. Matuska suggested this is something the Communications Committee could take on and ask Mr. Morgan to create a press release. Mr. Alan asked Mr. Pardo for guidance on a non-discrimination statement.

Mr. Pardo said that the hope is that this project can inspire someone to create something they can see in their neighborhood. They want to focus on the impact to the community. He said that Bridgeport has a strong arts community along with Stamford, NYC and Brooklyn. He said that he does not want to limit this project to only Norwalk residents. Mr. Alan said he would like to focus on Norwalk artists. Mr. Kaspr said he did not see anything wrong with casting the net to see what they get back. Mr. Abriola said there would have to be a compelling reason to choose an artist from outside of Norwalk. The artwork has to be based on merit.

Ms. Evelyn said she agreed that they should consider artists from far and wide, but it is important to exhaust all efforts to give Norwalk artists an opportunity. She said that she believed that when the project was developed, it was to give artists in the community an opportunity to express themselves.

Mr. Alan said that part of the mission of the Commission is to be the interface between the arts community and the City. He said he feels they owe it to Norwalk artist to look at them, but is not against bringing in outside artists. He said it could be a joint effort between various artists. This idea will be discussed further at the committee level.

Mr. Pardo discussed the Earth Day Clean Up event scheduled for April 18th (Earth Day). He gave overview of Phase I and said he expects it to end in April 2021. He is looking at a partnership with the Cleaner Connecticut Coalition for the April 18th event.

Phase II will begin in April and go through June 2021 with the installation of the artwork to take place in June. The total budget is \$50,000, but this is a guestimate because they do not know the location yet.

The next step will be to start writing the call for the artists and the community outreach.

**** MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED MLK BLVD. PUBLIC ART PLAN TO FURTHER ITS REVIEW BY RELATIVE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND THE COMMON COUNCIL**

**** MR. ABRIOLA SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. ABRIOLA; MR. ALAN; MS. EVELYN; MS. GRUDIN; MR. KASPR; MS. MATUSKA; MR. ROBERTS)**

a. Approve the updated Norwalk Arts Commission Bylaws.

Mr. Alan said the By-laws were included in the meeting packet. He asked if there were any questions. There were none.

**** MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO APPROVE THE UPDATED NORWALK ARTS COMMISSION BYLAWS**

**** MR. ABRIOLA SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. ABRIOLA; MR. ALAN; MS. EVELYN; MS. GRUDIN; MR. KASPR; MS. MATUSKA; MR. ROBERTS)**

VII. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion on Decommissioned Traffic Boxes. (CONTINUED)

Mr. Alan said that both boxes are safe at Public Works and there is no time pressure on what to do with them. At this point, they do not have any viable locations. He said there are options that need to be explored. Ms. Church said it would be worth having a conversation with the Mayor's office because there may be others. She suggested Constitution Park as an option. Ms. Church said there needs to be a conversation in the event all the boxes are decommissioned. It was mentioned that it would be great to have an art park where they can be displayed.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. KASPR MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MS. GRUDIN SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. ABRIOLA; MR. ALAN; MS. EVELYN; MS. GRUDIN; MR. KASPR; MS. MATUSKA; MR. ROBERTS)**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

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Via Teleconference