

**CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 6, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Marc Alan, Chairman; Brian Kaspr; Janet Evelyn; Melissa Matuska; Matthew O’Callaghan; Kadeem Roberts Common Council Member; Bob Abriola; Nori Grudin; Jolie Leung; Steven Rust

OTHER: Barbara Smyth, Council Member; Tom Keegan, Council Member; Alan Lo, Director of Building Management; Jerry Toni; Tom Livingston, Council Member; David H; Eric Gebrian; Gino Mattera; Jon; Gombotz; Lisa Yates; Mike Losasso; Nick Sacchinelli, Council Member; Greg Burnette, Council Member; Donna Smirniotopoulos; Sabrina Church; Jeff; Weverson Ponte

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Alan called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M. There was a quorum present.

II. ROLL CALL

A roll call was given. It was noted that Emerson Straniti was unable to attend this meeting.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

IV. ADMINISTRATION

A. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 2, 2021 REGULAR MEETING

Commissioner Evelyn asked about a mention of the printing of the artwork for the barriers on Washington Street. She wanted to confirm that the dollar amount there, \$20,000 for the printing, is correct.

Ms. Church confirmed that this was the number for when they are actually printed. However, this is reduced to \$6,000 when artists paint on them which is the amount spent the prior year. She offered money to help with the remainder but there would still be issues.

Commissioner Evelyn asked if they were going to print artwork as opposed to paint. Ms. Church confirmed that this was the case.

Commissioner Abriola agreed that it had cost only \$6,000 previously and wanted to know why the cost had gone up.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROBERTS MOTIONED TO TABLE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 2, 2021 PENDING REVISION.**

**** COMMISSIONER EVELYN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Church found the invoice and confirmed that the project had cost only \$6,000 with the \$20,000 being for all the winter decorations. She said she would edit in the proper dollar amount into the minutes.

**** COMMISSIONER KASPER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.**

**** COMMISSIONER O'CALLAGHAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROBERTS MOTIONED TO SUSPEND THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA.**

**** COMMISSIONER MATUSKA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVE THE CONTENT AND QUALITY OF THE PURPLE HEART MONUMENT FOR REVIEW BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL.

Jeff came forwards to discuss this item. He provided a picture of a mirrored monument, located in New York, that is similar to the monument in question. He then reviewed the details of the proposed monument for the Commission. He suggested that they change the language along the bottom to be the mottos of the six branches of service. He hopes to have the monument placed by August 7th of this year.

It was questioned if this item had come forwards for the Art Commission Endorsement. Ms. Church clarified that the Commission reviews content, color, and similar things.

The question of what the replaced text would look like was raised. Jeff provided a photo image containing the details and the logos of the six branches of the military on a different monument for the Commission.

Commissioner Abriola asked if some reference to Norwalk could be added on the monument.

Adjustments were made to the proposed text with suggestions made by the Commission.

Commissioner Matuska asked if a list of Purple Heart Recipients could be procured beforehand and checked to ensure no one had been left off the list. It was pointed out that no names would be placed on the monument.

**** COMMISSIONER ABRIOLA MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MONUMENT.**

**** COMMISSIONER MATUSKA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ART MANIFESTATION -WEVERSON PONTE

Mr. Ponte came forwards to discuss this item. He is the founder of The Mad Lab which provides galleys and studios for artists. He said that the main mission of his organization is to turn Norwalk into an art capitol. He plans to host an art festival at the Isaac Square in Norwalk called The Art Manifestation. They are currently scheduling the event for August 28th, but have noted that they had to change the date previously. It will last for one day. It will feature food trucks, art vendors, creative workshops, art installations, and a mural competition. Invites will be sent out to artists around Connecticut to participate. Four artists will compete to paint a mural at the art park. A cash prize will be given to the winner. He desires the endorsement of the Arts Commission to make this happen.

Chairman Alan said that he had a vision to bring something like this to life for the Wall Street area.

Commissioner Arbola asked if Mr. Ponte needed permission or approval or if he simply desired the endorsement.

Chairman Alan said he did not need approval for a permit and Mr. Ponte was not asking for money. However, he did desire the endorsement.

Mr. Ponte confirmed that he desired the endorsement and said he wanted to create an identity of fostering creativity as well as bring about some economy and energy to the area. He hopes this will become a yearly event.

Commissioner Arbola said he'd want to look at the festival first to see what was going on before he was willing to give it the branding. Chairman Alan said there was a precedent for the Commission to endorse events without being the ones presenting the event. Discussion followed on the details of the event. The event will be free to attend. They are looking for sponsors and Mr. Ponte said that his group would try to pay for the event.

The Commission members voiced their support. Commissioner Evelyn said that they should focus on what their mission was. They wished to see more information as well as review details first though.

**** COMMISSIONER ARBOLA MOTIONED TO TABLE UNTIL THE NEXT MONTH SO THEY COULD REVIEW THE INFORMATION PROVIDED.**

**** COMMISSIONER KASPR SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NICE FESTIVAL – JANET EVELYN

Commissioner Evelyn came forwards to present this item. She reported that the city had given the go-ahead to apply for the permit for the event. She noted that there were processes in place that still needed to be resolved citing the current COVID situation as one of them. The program still needs to be approved by the Parks & Rec Committee and the Common Council. She recounted how there were lamp post banners at the first festival and the Arts Commission had been involved by sponsoring the banners. She wished for the Arts Commission to have a presence at the festival especially if the turnout was high.

Chairman Alan informed the newer members of the Commission that, previously, they had had a booth where they would hand out printed materials such as stickers. He noted that they had voted to approve this item in the past but the money hadn't been spent and was rolled over. Each banner costs \$260 to produce.

Chairman Alan asked Ms. Church if they could review the budget for the 2020 version of the festival. Ms. Church said that they could but that she also had an advertising budget that could be spent to help out that she would get by July 1st. Commissioner Evelyn asked if they could get the funding right after the first. Discussion followed on the details.

MAKE MUSIC DAY -MARC ALAN

Chairman Alan came forwards to speak on this item. He confirmed that Make Music Day would be happening on June 21 at various locations throughout the city. However, he had no specific details at this moment. Discussion followed on the details of possible funding and banner creation.

OLD BUSINESS

ART SPEAKS- BOB ABRIOLA & MARC ALAN

Commissioner Abriola came forwards to speak on this item. The idea was to have a Norwalk Arts Commission sponsored event. The idea had been put on hold due to COVID but there were hopes for it being enacted this year. There would be a moderator and guests with expertise on various subjects.

Chairman Alan informed the new members that there were two subcommittees within the Arts Commission. One for communications and the other for infrastructure. Discussion followed on the feasibility of events before Summertime. Chairman Alan suggested that this item be developed at the sub-committee level. Commissioner Abriola offered to have the members of his sub commission help with the Art Speaks idea.

COMMITTEE/STAFF UPDATES

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE – MICHELLE RAKOWSKY & MARC ALAN

Chairman Alan informed the Commission that they have performed some advertising within their Facebook world primarily for getting the call out to artists. The responses have been good. Engagement has gone up almost 1,000% since the start of the month from where it had been previously.

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Commissioner Abriola said he had nothing to report.

MLK UPDATE – JANET EVELYN & JULIO PARDO

Commissioner Pardo said that they were all set for the art clean up event on April 18th. He is hoping for a good turn-out at the event. They will discuss the project and look at locations.

BUDGET COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ms. Church said there was a little over \$10,000 in the budget of which \$6,000 was for the banners. She encouraged the budget committee to meet before the next meeting to strategize. She wants them to get larger budgets in the future and desires for them to spend it down as a result. She reviewed the remaining expenses for the year for the Commission.

FINANCE UPDATE – NORI GRUDIN

Commissioner Grudin was unable to speak at this time.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

- ** COMMISSIONER KASPR MOTIONED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COMMISSIONER ABRIOLA SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted
Ian A. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services