

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK ADVISORY COMMISSION ON ARTS AND CULTURE
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 11, 2011**

ATTENDANCE: Jackie Lightfield, Chair; Becki Christopherson, Hyla Crane, Peter Bondi, Wendy Bodden, Carol Frank, Alan Louis, Susan Wallerstein, Joe Fucigna, Dennis Bradbury, Sophia Gervese, Susan Wallerstein, T.C. Burt, Lynn Massey

OTHERS: Tod Bryant, Matt Scully

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Lightfield called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Ms. Lightfield announced that Governor Malloy had recently made two appointments. Mr. Christopher Bergstrom has been appointed as Executive Director of the Commission on Culture and Tourism and Ms. Catherine Smith as the Director of Economic and Community Development (DECD). The Culture and Tourism Commission will be moving under the oversight of DECD. Norwalk is well positioned to fit in since 2008 the Norwalk Advisory Commission on Arts and Culture (NACAC) has been speaking economic development language economic and fostering economic activity with very strong programs of art. These activities have been used as a model for other communities such as Bridgeport.

The funding that the NACAC receives from both the City and State will be subject to the difficult decisions of the Governor and the Common Council, therefore the Commission should be aware of this to strategically fit the model.

Ms. Lightfield then reviewed the situation regarding the State funding and the City funding with those present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Lightfield then announced the following correction to the minutes:

Page 4, **MOTION:** please change the following motion from:

**** MR. BURTT MOVED TO APPROVE \$850 FOR THE NORWALK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR THE DESIGN OF A LOGO AND ASSOCIATED
MARKETING FOR THE UPCOMING NORWALK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
AND ROWAYTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUILT PROJECT.
** MS. BODDEN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

To:

**** MR. BURTT MOVED TO APPROVE \$800 FOR THE NORWALK HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR THE DESIGN OF A LOGO AND ASSOCIATED MARKETING FOR THE UPCOMING NORWALK HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND ROWAYTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUILT PROJECT.**

**** MS. BODDEN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MS. FRANK MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 11, 2011 AS CORRECTED.**

**** MS. CHRISTOPHERSON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PROJECT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

South Norwalk Train Station

The law department has approved the documentation and the RFP and call for artists will be posted by April 7th. The more applicants that are received, the better it will be. A question arose about language in terms of "metropolitan". Discussion followed. Notices have been sent out via email

Maritime Garage Gallery

Mr. Fucigna said that he had sent out an email about this. The skateboarding show will open April 14h and there are two additional slots available for the remainder of the year. A discussion followed about having the opening to a different date because of the conflict in event scheduling.

PR& Marketing

Two people have been scheduled for interviews. There was a delay because not enough responses had been received to move forward in January. Ms. Lightfield said that the events need to move forward. Ms. Christopherson pointed out that no deadline had been set earlier. A brief discussion about the deadline followed. Ms. Wallerstein said that it was good to know that there were new artists interested. Mr. Bondi asked if it was possible to have a quick meeting about the PR work to move it forward. Ms. Lightfield then reviewed the history of the RFP and said that the Committee had presented their report. She added that this forum was to make decisions, not committee discussions.

Middle School Digital Arts

Ms. Wallerstein said that there had been a good response to the appeal for digital arts classes, including Jerry Craft and others. A wonderful program has been created for a four week program. A new budget has been set up and it is hoped that there will be matching grant funds. Ms. Wallerstein said that the culminating event will be a digital event at Stepping Stones. The students will be producing a digital image of themselves.

Cabaret Night

Ms. Christopherson reported that the event was on track for April 14th from 7-9:30 p.m. in the Mary McCarthy Room at City Hall. There is still a need for an opening act.

Visual Arts

Ms. Bradbury said that the minutes of the last meeting had been sent out. The meetings will be on the first Friday of each month at Fat Cat. Currently, there are 3 storefronts in SONO where art is exhibited and those will come down on March 31st. The new installations will go up on April 8th. The new schedule is to have 3 four months sessions a year.

The discussion then moved to having the skateboard show tie in to the Art in the Windows. Additional sites are being considered, such as 50 Washington Street. Food is being ordered for the skateboard show, but a bartender is still needed. One idea under considered is an iPhone Photography show at the EB Homespace, on Haviland Street, which was the site of store front theater that the Arts Commission sponsored in the past.

Art in the Windows

Ms. Bradbury then directed everyone's attention to an information sheet in the packet on Art in the Windows (AiW). She indicated that the second page of the hand out of AiW had a small correction and she would be sending a revision out. Discussion then followed about bringing outside artists into the project. Ms. Lightfield said that among the artists who have been displaying their art in the windows or at the Maritime Gallery, some have sold pieces of their work. Ms. Lightfield said that this was the point of the project.

Ms. Christopherson asked about the 10% of what is sold. Ms. Lightfield said that the funds come back into the General Fund. As the program gains legs, there will hopefully be more funding coming to the Commission through this. New Haven has a great history of supporting the arts, but the difficulty of selling art in the window is high there. Norwalk's shows are smaller, but the amount of art sold is increasing.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Ms. Wallerstein then reviewed the financial spreadsheet included in the information packet. She reviewed the fact that this was an 18 month projection.

The discussion then moved to the use of the Gatehouse by NACAC. Ms. Lightfield said that during the winter it became evident that meeting at Fat Cat was easier. The Arts Commission had agreed to sublet the conference room, but the meeting attendance numbers have increased and the group can no longer fit in the conference room. The Cultural and Tourism group has not signed a renewal on the Gatehouse.

The discussion then moved to possible alternative locations. Ms. Lightfield said that she was willing to appear before the Historic Commission and state that the Arts Commission would not be interested in continuing to meet at the Gatehouse. It was the consensus that the Commission would continue to meet at Fat Cat.

There was a brief discussion about the membership line item. The NACAC Norwalk Chamber of Commerce membership has been recently renewed. Ms. Lightfield said that if there was a Chamber event that someone wished to attend, please let her know.

Ms. Lightfield said that there was some funding that should be expended by the end of June. She then encouraged people to consider additional proposals. Discussion followed.

OLD BUSINESS

Program /Event Proposal Form

Ms. Lightfield said that a form has developed for proposals. She said that it is important to have the decision making process documented for transparency. Consistency will be helpful in this. An email will be sent out regarding putting items on the agenda. If the item has not been submitted on the Monday of the week of the meeting, it will not be included. There will be exceptions for late breaking issues.

ArtSpot - This has been discussed earlier in the meeting.

Google Group Email

Ms. Wallerstein said that there had been some reconfiguring of the Google group, so that if someone had to reply to a specific person on an issue, this could be done without the emails going to all those on the list. There is also now an opportunity to create subgroups. Ms. Lightfield said that the NACAC was moving from Recreation and Parks to the Mayor's office and there have been discussion with the Mayor about who he would like to have on the Commission. There has also been work done towards establishing partnerships with other organizations.

NEW BUSINESS

Capture Norwalk

Mr. Bryant and Mr. Matt Scully came forward to give a presentation about an event to take place on June 9th. The idea is to capture Norwalk through the photography lens of students and through those of amateur photographers. A proposal was then distributed. Mr. Bryant said that this was in cooperative event with the Norwalk Inn. The Inn will provide some award money and an awards event location. The focus is about capturing the character of Norwalk. After the awards event, the show would have to move to a different location. The number of physical photographs will be limited, however all submission will be on a website. Discussion then followed.

Mr. Bryant said that this presentation would be for information only. He said that they were requesting support and expertise in terms of judging. The application fee will be used towards the cost of mounting the show and the cost of a website. It was the consensus of the Commission to support this proposal

Norwalk Farmer's Market

Ms. Lightfield said that there was a March 9th letter from Lori Cochran Dougall in the packet requesting a \$500 grant to sponsor an art booth at the Norwalk Farmers Market. Ms. Frank said that Gilbertie's has a wonderful Farmer's Market. Ms. Dougall is the Market Manager for that one. There are over 20 vendors at the winter markets. Ms. Lightfield said that the form should be filled out and added that a possible for the Norwalk Market location could be in front of the Maritime Center.

Short term public relations service

Ms. Lightfield said that the current website needs to be updated and news releases are not being sent out. Ms. Lightfield said that her recommendation was to hire someone for three months to cover a number of upcoming events.

COMMENTS/SHARING

Mr. Bondi said that he had concerns about the fact that there would be a number of under aged attendees at the skateboard event. Ms. Lightfield said that this had been discussed and was the reason that a bar tender was being brought in.

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Lightfield announced that the Norwalk Symphony would be having a gala on May 14th at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. BURTT MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MS. FRANK SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services