CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 6, 2025
VIA ZOOM VITUAL MEETING

ATTENDANCE: Brian Kaspr; Chair, Robert Abriola, Mark Alan, Janay Sylvester, Melissa Matuska, Kevin Huffman; Ex-Officio, Nori Grudin (6:17 p.m.)

STAFF: Sabrina Godeski

OTHER: Jagger Little (Artist), Amanda Atunes; Art Teacher, Ash Nichols (Artist/Graphic Designer)

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kaspr called the roll as reflected above. A quorum was present

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: March 4, 2025

** **MR. ABRIOLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**
** **MS. MATUSKA SECONDED THE MOTION.**
** **THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION, (JANAY SYLVESTER)**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present to comment..

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approve the Rowayton School Traffic Graphic Box design

Ms. Matuska gave an overview of the project, noting the box's location and the fact that it is an eyesore, and Rowayton School wanted to paint it. She explained that the students created renderings of what they would like. With the help of Amanda Atunes, art teacher, who coordinated the effort, the school chose the work of Jagger Little.

Mr. Little discussed his inspiration for his piece and the reason he chose to make the sky a sunset. Mr. Kaspr asked how long he had been painting and drawing and being an artist. Mr. Little discussed what he has been working on currently, noting he likes doing abstracts.

Ms. Matuska went into further detail about the project logistics. Ms. Atunes commented there were seventeen students in the Artistically Talented program including Mr. Little. She hoped that all of the program students would pitch in. She stated the idea was a group effort. She then noted that Mr. Little's submission took the theme and turned it into a seamless and cohesive. She discussed her plan to include any fifth grade student who wants to participate.

Mr. Abriola asked about the age of the traffic box. Ms. Matuska indicated the box was likely older. Mr. Abriola indicated there was prep work and steps that needed to be done on older boxes. He offered the commissions help in the process.

Ms. Grudin joined the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

**** MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO APPROVE THE DESIGN.**
**** MR. ALAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Kasper requested a vote to change the order of the agenda to place item C before item B on the agenda.

**** MR. ABRIOLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE CHANGE TO THE AGENDA.**
**** MS. SYLVESTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****	THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

C. Approve the Norwalk Cultural District branding.

Mr. Kaspr provided a brief overview of the project and an introduction for Ash Nichols. Ms. Nichols discussed the three directions and presented slides showing logo ideas based on the preferred mood board. She noted there may be an opportunity for an acronym. This idea was not met with great enthusiasm.

Mr. Kaspr and the Commission members discussed their preferences. Ms. Nichols stated she appreciated the feedback from the Commission members. Feeling a need for another round of refinement, Mr. Kaspr suggested everyone email him with their choices.

Ms. Nichols brought up the issue of time and the fact that she was being asked to do revisions on two design directions. Mr. Kaspr stated that if they wanted Ms. Nichols to explore revisions in two directions, they should approve more money for her. He asked Ms. Godeski about the process. Ms. Godeski said it was best to wait till the next meeting and have a proposal for the amount of money they will need.

Mr. Kaspr asked for a motion for Ms. Nichols to continue to explore concepts two and three.

****	MR. ABRIOLA MOVED TO HAVE MS. NICHOLS EXPLORE CONCEPTS TWO AND THREE.**
****	MR. ALAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
****	THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE IN FAVOR AND ONE NO VOTE (MR. KASPR).**

B. Discussion on the Ely Avenue Fencing RFQ.

Mr. Kaspr stated they were not selecting artists at this time. He noted they would be putting together a subcommittee composed of Dajuan Wiggins, Darlene Young, and three commission members. Mr. Kaspr explained that the subcommittee would select the two or three artists or groups of artists who will be offered a proposal stipend.

Mr. Kasper referred to the agenda packet containing resumes of various artists. He stated that personally, he wasn't impressed with what he had seen so far. He listed those that he felt deserved consideration. He also listed those he would like to extend an invitation to.

Ms. Godeski indicated she agreed with Mr. Kaspr. She noted choosing people who were already part of the community would eliminate some of their previous issues with artist selection.. Mr.

Kaspr added that it would immediately exclude some of the applicants. Ms. Godeski said the community-driven nature of the piece lends itself to being done by someone who is part of the local community.

Mr. Kaspr provided a brief description of the project to Mr. Abriola. He stated that the artists or artist groups could define the content. He noted the project requires the community to participate in its creation. He explained they would be looking first at Norwalk residents, then slowly growing to Fairfield County, and if necessary, further out into Connecticut.

Mr. Huffman wanted to know if there was impetus on the part of the commission to present something that might nudge people to behave or engage in pro-social behavior. Mr. Kaspr indicated it was something to consider.

In response to Mr. Alan, Mr. Kaspr explained this was an update and discussion allowing everyone to chime in. He also stated he was hoping to find commission members to be part of the sub-committee.

VI. **OLD BUSINESS**

A. Update on the NEA grant for the Heritage Wall.

Ms. Godeski stated the NEA has been defunded and is not paying out to people who were already approved. She said they did submit, but unless something changes, she doubts it will go anywhere. She suggested they start looking elsewhere for grant funds..

VII. **DISCUSSION**

A. Budget Review

Ms. Godeski presented the budget review as provided in the agenda packet. She indicated there was no real change. She said they had a small amount if they wanted to do something. She noted the available amount had to be used by June 30th. There was discussion about where the money should go, with suggestions including another mixer, supplies for the traffic graphic boxes, and hiring people to touch up or repaint the tagged traffic graphic boxes. Ms. Godeski pointed out the People's Gallery needed an update, and there were walls in City Hall that were just sitting empty, waiting for a project..

Ms. Matuska asked if something could be done to highlight local musicians. Mr. Alan said they had planned on something like that, and he described his original idea. Ms. Matuska said she had several ideas for making it look nice. She wanted to know how many pieces would be involved. Mr. Alan said he had all the necessary materials but was looking for someone to help him with the visuals.

Ms. Sylvester mentioned sponsoring another Factory Underground Open Mic Night. She also mentioned discussions about Make Music Day.

Ms. Grudin wanted clarification on how they would handle Traffic Graphic Boxes that were painted as much as 20 years ago. Mr. Kaspr, considering the artists, explained how he felt it should be handled.

B. Member Updates

Ms. Syvester and Mr. Alan provided updates on the mixer and poetry open mic. He noted they had taken video, and the poetry had been recorded and will be turned into a live record that will be coming out on Spotify.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. SYLVESTER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
**** MS. MATUSKA SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Kaspr adjourned the meeting at 6:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
China Mayhew
Telesco Secretarial Services