

**CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 7, 2026
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

ATTENDEES: Danny L. George, Marc Alan, Naomi Clark, Janay Sylvester, Bob Abriola, Steven Rust, Nori Grudin, Melissa Matuska.

STAFF: Sabrina Godeski.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Arts and Culture Commission was called to order by Mr. George at 6:02 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. George conducted the roll call. Present were Mr. George, Mr. Alan, Ms. Clark, Ms. Sylvester, Mr. Abriola, Mr. Rust, and Ms. Grudin. Ms. Matuska joined the meeting shortly thereafter. Mr. Casper was absent.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: March 3, 2026

****MR. ALAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 3, 2026 REGULAR MEETING.**

****MR. ABRIOLA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED. ABSTENTIONS – MS. SYLVESTER THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS PRESENTED.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Lauricella spoke regarding the budget review on the agenda and urged the Commission to make the sponsorship program more user-friendly and flexible for smaller businesses, to include outright donations rather than requiring sponsorship status, and to reduce the burden on taxpayers.

Mr. Hosten spoke in support of the proposal from the Norwalk Conservatory of the Arts for the Broadway in the Park event, noting it would be the third year of the event and that any level of Commission support would help make the event accessible to families with young children and allow collaboration with Wolfpit Elementary School.

Mr. Magnifico introduced himself as a young local filmmaker born and raised in Norwalk and inquired about potential grants or funding available through the Commission or other local programs for young artists and filmmakers.

Mr. George and Ms. Godeski responded that the Commission's application process is specifically for events rather than individual filmmakers, directed him to the Innovations Program through the Business Development and Tourism Office, and recommended he contact the Connecticut Office of the Arts for possible grants.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Budget review current and future

Ms. Godeski reviewed the current budget, noting remaining funds of \$500 for printing and duplicating, \$1,000 for advertising, \$700 for business expenses, and \$14,000 for special events, all of which must be expended by June 30th or they would return to the general fund unless tied to an active approved contract. She also provided an update on next year's budget, stating the operating budget request was approved as submitted and the capital budget includes \$20,000 for historical signage.

Ms. Godeski addressed comments from public participation regarding sponsorships and clarified that the application process is for the Commission to provide funding to the public for events, that the sponsorship package allows for any amount, and that staff have actively sought sponsorships with varying success due to companies being strapped for cash. Mr. Alan discussed the proposed move of the music artists of Norwalk exhibit from the Mayor's Gallery to the People's Gallery and inquired about required approvals and available funding from printing and duplicating and business expenses lines. Ms. Godeski confirmed no specific approval was needed to move the exhibit but that line-item approval would be required for any expenditures at the next meeting.

Ms. Matuska expressed concern about security and potential loss of headsets in the People's Gallery location. Mr. George suggested placing the item on the agenda for the next meeting. Ms. Matuska inquired about marketing and branding for the districts and related signage. Ms. Godeski confirmed the logo had been approved and paid for and that the capital request for signage had been included in next year's budget. Mr. Rust inquired about rumored budget cuts. Ms. Godeski clarified that the misconception stemmed from the Business Development and Tourism Department's separate events funding and that the Commission's operating and capital requests had been fulfilled.

B. April 30th event update Mr. Rust and Ms. Sylvester provided the update on the April 30th event. Mr. Rust reported that a number of artists had been confirmed and reviewed the budget, noting performers in the neighborhood of \$2,400, production costs around \$1,200 to \$1,400, and catering still to be determined for an estimated 100 people. Mr. Abriola confirmed the location as the Oakwood Estate at St. Philip's on France Street. Discussion was held on how artists and the caterer would be paid, with Ms. Godeski explaining the need for W-9 forms and invoices to process checks in advance or mailing them afterward. Ms. Godeski also noted the importance of prioritizing advertising for the event. Ms. Clark offered to assist with advertising and social media and noted the Commission's Instagram had not been updated since October 2025. Mr. Rust confirmed that advertising was the number one item to address.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. WPA Mural restoration project Mr. Bryant discussed the WPA mural restoration project, offering to photograph the murals at the highest possible resolution and share them with a trusted local restorer for an estimate. He also suggested exploring grants or local sponsors. Discussion followed regarding costs, the possibility of federal grants, the historical documentation available including a book published by the Transit District and an article from The Hour, and the potential for social media outreach to highlight the project's history. Ms. Matuska noted the Commission's focus on art from 1950 and above and the roles of partner organizations such as the Historical Society. Ms. Grudin clarified her past experience as a docent for the murals and that they had previously been under the Commission before moving to the Historical Society. Mr. George confirmed the Commission's mission statement includes stewarding the city's public art collection, including the WPA murals. The group agreed to hold an offline meeting with interested members including Mr. Alan, Ms. Grudin, and Mr. Bryant to explore the project further. Ms. Matuska noted the public art inventory project had received approval.

B. Authorize the expenditure of the Commission's agreed grant amount to the Norwalk Conservatory of the Arts for Broadway in the Park. ACCT: 011450-5723 Mr. George recused himself due to his affiliation with the Norwalk Conservatory of the Arts. Mr. Alan spoke in favor of supporting the Norwalk Conservatory of the Arts and the high-profile Broadway in the Park event. Ms. Matuska inquired whether a lower amount could be considered given that it represented a significant portion of the remaining budget and referenced the amount provided to the film festival. Ms. Godeski clarified that the agenda item allowed the Commission to authorize any agreed amount and that the application specified the funds would support production costs and free workshops for public school students. Further discussion was held regarding the total event budget of \$16,000, the impact on remaining funds after the April 30th event, and the community benefits of the event. Mr. Alan made a motion to authorize \$5,000. Ms. Clark seconded the motion.

****MR. ALAN MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE EXPENDITURE OF \$5,000 TO THE NORWALK CONSERVATORY OF THE ARTS FOR BROADWAY IN THE PARK.**

****MS. CLARK SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED WITH MS. MELISSA MATUSKA VOTING NO.**

VII. DISCUSSION

Mr. Alan noted the Commission's mission statement on the website includes stewarding the WPA murals. Ms. Sylvester inquired about the timeline for approving events from the remaining special events budget and whether events could occur after June 30th. Ms. Godeski clarified that expenditures must occur by June 30th but events approved this fiscal year could extend beyond that date. Ms. Sylvester also flagged ongoing conversations regarding a potential networking event with District Music Hall and her need for support coordinating Make Music Day due to a scheduling conflict. Ms. Clark offered to assist with social media and requested that graphics for the April 30th event and other upcoming events be sent to her. Mr. Rust inquired about next steps for advertising the April 30th event and the status of the Wall Street space. Ms. Godeski

confirmed Anna would create the flyer once details were provided and noted an RFP for the Wall Street space was awaiting release by purchasing. Mr. George thanked the Commission for their patience during his first time chairing the meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

****THE MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE AND SECONDED.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary