

**CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
JULY 8, 2025
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brian Kaspr called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

ATTENDANCE: Brian Kaspr (Chair), Bob Abriola, Melissa Matuska, Steven Rust, Nori Grudin, Naomi Clark, Kevin Huffman - Ex Officio

STAFF: Sabrina Godeski

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

**** MR. ABRIOLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**

****MS. MATUSKA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public comment at this time.

V. OLD BUSINESS

There were no old business items formally listed or brought forward for discussion.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Authorize a payment of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) to Ash Nichols for the creation of the Cultural District logo.

Mr. Kaspr advised that Ash Nichols has been prepared to continue the work pending this approval. The \$1,000 covers development of two revised versions, selection, and final logo completion. It was clarified that there should not be additional charges for final revisions beyond this scope.

**** MS. MATSUKA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**

****MR. RUST SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. Authorize the inclusion of the three submitted proposals to be released in a public survey for the Ely Avenue Fencing Project.

Mr. Kaspr opened the floor so the three artists can briefly walk the Commission through their projects.

Five Fingaz: Described a historically-themed timeline mural, including QR codes linking to oral histories and local documentaries, and a plan for community painting sessions at his studio. Commission members requested artistic style closer to the artist’s recognizable public work but applauded community engagement elements. The artist agreed to stylistic revisions within two days but maintained concept structure.

Jahmane West: Presented a patchwork “fabric of the city” concept inspired by community quilting traditions, to be developed collaboratively with library-based community workshops. Patchwork panels would include references to local icons/events identified by public input. Panel installation would avoid direct ground contact for weather durability.

Oksana Tanasiv: Detailed a landscape-style mural incorporating city landmarks and scenes of daily Norwalk life, painted on durable metal panels. Emphasized final details painted by local schoolchildren for community connection. Confirmed materials and process would be adjusted for budget compliance.

Following discussion, the Commission supported allowing each artist one week for optional revisions based on feedback before a public survey release.

The Commission proceeded to vote on each artist individually.

**** MR. ABRIOLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE ARTIST FIVE FINGAZ.**

****MR. RUST SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MS. CLARK MOVED TO APPROVE THE ARTIST JAHMANE WEST.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MS. CLARK MOVED TO APPROVE THE ARTIST OKSANA TANASIV.**

**** MS. GRUDIN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VII. DISCUSSION

A. Event Updates

Ms. Godeski reported they had participated in the international Make Music Day initiative, hosting performances at four locations across Norwalk. In doing so, they received a \$1,500 grant enabling direct artist compensation for performances. The event was considered highly successful, with future participation and growth anticipated.

Ms. Godeski updated the Commission on the resident meeting on July 29th for the Cultural Plan. The consultants are still gathering information to ensure their recommendations are aligned with the community's desires. On July 31st there will be an artist mixer at Space67, where participants can partake in interactive stations.

B. Arts and Cultural Plan Updates

Ms. Godeski advised the consultants for the Cultural Plan will present a progress report at the Commission's August or September meeting. From July 29–31 the consultants will be in Norwalk, conducting focus groups with residents, artists, business owners, and faith-based organizations, as well as specific outreach to the Hispanic community.

C. 2025-2026 Operating and Capital Budgets

Ms. Godeski reported that the operating budget increased by \$20,000, bringing the total to approximately \$32,000, which will go towards special events. The Common Council approved \$100,000 allocation for Art in Public Places, intended primarily for public art initiatives such as the Route 1, Connecticut Ave. underpass. Funding through NEA grants is currently uncertain; the City will proceed with prioritized projects using committed capital funds.

Further discussion took place regarding expanding the display of student artwork around City Hall. Ms. Grudin led the discussion, advising on specific areas. Ms. Matsuka discussed potential improvements to art installations and placards in SoNo, especially recognizing original artworks altered over time.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. GRUDIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. MATSUKA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Baldwin