

**CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
SPECIAL MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 2025
BY ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone and/or Zoom, or a recording in the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at norwalkct.gov/meetings.

Members of the public may call in to participate. Callers will not be able to see the meeting participants. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, dial *9 on the phone and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed. Please find the information using the link above.

Members of the public who wish to provide "live comments" may also use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the "raise your hand indicator" and you will be called by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed. Please find the information using the link above.

Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be included into the record, they must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. Please email Sabrina Godeski at sgodeski@norwalkct.gov with the subject line "Public Comment" to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Goldstein called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Josh Goldstein, Chairman; Darlene Young, Barbara Smyth, Heather Dunn, Jim Frayer, Jalin Sead

STAFF: Sabrina Godeski, Jay Habansky

OTHERS: Johan Lopez, Nicole Eady, Jim Travers, Greg Pacelli, Ken Bushka, Fred Eshraghi, Dajuan Wiggins

II. ROLL CALL

Chairman Goldstein called the Roll: Josh Goldstein, Chairman; Darlene Young,

Barbara Smyth, Heather Dunn, Jim Frayer, Jalin Sead

At Roll Call there were six (6) Committee members present constituting a quorum. Lisa Shanahan was absent.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. REGULAR MEETING: AUGUST 7, 2025

There was no report on this item.

****MS. SMYTH MOVED THE ITEM**

****MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ana Tabachneck 4 Gilbert Street. She watched the Art Commission meetings. She has some concerns about the selection process and how they define a Norwalk resident or what is meant by Norwalk native. The public engagement didn't include any background on the artists or if they were local to Norwalk or even Fairfield County. It also stated that there would be two (2) representatives from the community but instead two (2) council members were there. She feels that the AI and plagiarism stuff was handled poorly. She asked if someone could appeal, the process seemed biased against 5ive Fingaz. She recommends that unless the commission produces a record of the selection committee minutes, scoring comments, AI screening process used for all applications and their outcomes, the full public survey results with demographics and all of that then it should be redone.

Natalia Aristizabal is in support of 5ive Fingaz. She has worked alongside him for over a year. She would like to know how the AI accusations came about. 5ive Fingaz has built a name for himself in the community. He is a huge supporter of art the old school way (pen and paper). He has given more than enough evidence to show he has done that work originally. Doesn't believe the AI program is 100% accurate as AI is fairly new. She would like to halt this process. She has a petition of over 300 signatures. She believes this has not been a fair process and 5ive Fingaz needs to be given a fair chance.

Melody Reagan (Sweets). She is representing Jahmane West for the project. She said if 5ive was treated unfairly then do him right. She stated that Jahmane is a Norwalk native, who started his brand on Ely Avenue and has since gone global. He gives back to the community and all around the state. Jahmane has paved the way for street art to

not be viewed as vandalism but as art. The community needs to be a part of the conversation. If this was in a different neighborhood, they would be talking with that community. Not to mention, it does not match the South Norwalk community. She votes Jahmane West for the mural, and she hopes they do too. She thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak.

Erica DiPalma 110 Perry Avenue. She said she had the privilege to work with 5ive Fingaz on several national brand campaigns. He would bring ideas to life quickly and build out designs from scratch. He didn't need AI back then and doesn't need AI now. She encourages the group to reopen the Ely Avenue Mural survey, re-evaluate the process and give them the opportunity to recognize his artistry, his powerful message and positive impact he has had on this city.

Romney Donald stated that a lot of people that have never stepped in Roodner Court or spent time with any of the residents there are somehow making decisions for their community. She said this wouldn't happen in other communities. Representation matters. She was the first person to call out the voting process because it was not transparent or equitable. She asked the committee to act with integrity, do the right thing, ensure Jahmane is selected for the mural and commit to improving this process going forward. Real equity isn't just talked about, it's practiced.

Mia Calhoun 14-year-old artist. She met Jahmane at an art show and it really inspired her to see a professional artist that looks like her. She thought it was cool to have a mural that would represent the community, their history and their pride only to learn that people outside that community were trying to decide what's best for it, and that didn't feel fair and representation matters. She asked that they choose an artist who reflects the people who live there.

Diane Lauricella 21 Little Fox Lane. She stated that she was sad her in-person meeting request was denied. She submitted brief comments that she would like to be added onto the record. She would like to speak about the process for the Ely Avenue Mural. She feels this is a big mess. She would like people to be held accountable. This has caused great stress in the artist community. MLK Grant could be spent on other things. There needs to be structure reform.

Staci said thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Jahmane West.

Larissa Santella Woodward Avenue. Supports 5ive Fingaz. She stated the process needs transparency. The AI accusation needs transparency. The accusations were very harmful and disrespectful to the artist.

Chairman Goldstein closed the public hearing at 7:28p.m.

V. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY AND PARKING

1. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH FIBER OPTIC PLUS, LLC TO PROVIDE CITY FIBER OPTIC CABLE EMERGENCY AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR AN AMOUNT OF \$50,000.

ACCTS:

0916-4120-5777-C0232, TMP

0922-4120-5777-C0232, TMP

0923-4120-5777-C0232, TMP

011370-5245, IT

Mr. Eshraghi reported on this matter. He gave a brief explanation of the project. He said this is a collaborative effort with IT to connect the fire departments to the libraries and police departments to their traffic network. He answered all questions the committee had.

****MR. FRAYER MOVED THE ITEM**

****MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ORDERS ON THE CONTRACT WITH COLONNA CONCRETE FOR THE ROWAYTON SIDEWALK PROJECT FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$40,481.00.

ACCTS:

0922-3750-5777-C0774

0926-3750-5777-C0649

Mr. Travers reported that this item was approved at the last committee meeting. They are requesting an increase for traffic control that was omitted from the last request.

****MR. FRAYER MOVED THE ITEM**

****MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A MASTER

AGREEMENT FOR ON-CALL TRAFFIC ENGINEERING SERVICES WITH AKRF, INC., CREIGHTON MANNING ENGINEERING AND SURVEYING. PLLC, FHI STUDIO, NOW IMEG, FUSS & O'NEILL, GREEMAN PEDERSON INC, M&J ENGINEERING, VANASSE HANGEN BRUSTLIN (VHB), AND WESTON & SAMPSON ENGINEERS, INC FOR A SUM OF APPROXIMATELY \$100,000 ANNUALLY FOR EACH FIRM.

ACCTS:

0926 3750 5777 C0441

0926 3750 5777 C0562

0921 4120 5777 C0648

0920 4120 5777 C0649

0926 3750 5777 C0649

0924 3750 5777 C0777

0921 4095 5777 C0782

0922 4095 5777 C0782

0925 3750 5777 C0824

0926 3750 5777 C0824

0924 3750 5777 C0835

Mr. Pacelli reported that this was to find several qualified and experienced consultants to provide task-based engineering services on a as needed basis to work on traffic planning and signal planning, traffic engineering, design work, and design review. Each task order will be presented to each consultant. Each of the consultants has specific specialties. They can respond to the task order more efficiently. They have set up a mini-RFP process with the purchasing department. The current contract only has three (3) consultants, and this number of consultants allows them to get more work completed. A discussion began on how this would work with multiple consultants on a master agreement. The turnaround is quicker and more efficient. Every three (3) years, they will firm up the list. It was noted that the budget is \$800,000.00 for the master agreement.

****MS. SMYTH MOVED THE ITEM**

****MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

B. ARTS AND CULTURAL COMMISSION

1. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH JAHMANE WEST FOR THE ELY AVENUE FENCING MURAL IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$70,000.

ACCT: 520000-5796 (MLK GRANT)

A discussion ensued about the entire selection process and representation for the Ely Avenue Fencing Mural. They discussed the AI situation and 5 Fingaz. There is concern about 5 Fingaz having an opportunity in the future to submit his artwork and it was recognized that he will have other opportunities. Each Council Member had a chance to speak and ask questions. Ms. Godeski answered and explained the process, rules and protocol. One of the main protocols was to have some connection to Norwalk. It was noted that an artist should be selected from the community where the art will be represented and the community should have a voice in that selection process as well. There was talk about tabling the item but that was rejected prior to any motion being made.

****MR. SEAD MOVED THE ITEM**

****MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH OKSANA TANASIV FOR THE ELY AVENUE FENCING MURAL IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$70,000.

ACCT: 520000-5796 (MLK GRANT)

Item B.2. is not a motion the committee needed to vote on because there was a unanimous vote to move Jahmane West's application forward.

C. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

1. ECONOMIC OUTLOOK PRESENTATION

Ms. Godeski gave a presentation on the Economic Outlook for Norwalk. She shared her screen with the committee. After the presentation a discussion ensued about resident perception versus what the presentation represents. Ms. Godeski answered any questions the committee had.

VII. DISCUSSION

There was no further discussion

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Young moved to adjourn.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:51p.m.