

**CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 2, 2025
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Kaspr (Chair), Danny L. George, Steven Rust, Nori Grudin, Bob Abriola, Janay Sylvester, Marc Alan, Kevin Huffman (Ex-Officio Member).

STAFF PRESENT: Sabrina Godeski

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kaspr called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Godeski conducted roll call. A quorum was confirmed.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: October 7, 2025

****MR. ABRIOLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 7, 2025, REGULAR MEETING.**

****MS. SYLVESTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED WITH ONE ABSTENTION – MR. GEORGE.**

The minutes were approved as presented with no amendments, corrections, or omissions.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Endorse the Arts and Cultural Plan for inclusion in the Plan of Conservation and Development

Mr. Martin Cohen and Mr. David Plettner-Saunders of the Cultural Planning Group presented a detailed overview of the Arts and Cultural Plan. Mr. Plettner-Saunders reviewed the extensive 2025 engagement process including stakeholder interviews, discussion groups, community forums, an online survey that received 390 responses, and three steering committee meetings. He highlighted key findings including the need for better connectivity within the district, stronger infrastructure, improved perception of safety, increased artist support, historic preservation, and strong management capacity. He noted creative tensions around the district's unusually large size, rapid development versus displacement concerns, and balancing service to residents with

regional tourism goals. Survey results showed strong resident desire for more local arts programming and public art. Benchmarking of six comparable districts emphasized the necessity of stable funding, professional management, and consistent year-round programming. Mr. Cohen discussed the district's identity and authentic post-industrial character, the vision statement, five major goals, and implementation strategies including potential formation of a special services district. The Commission engaged in questions and discussion and expressed unanimous enthusiasm for the plan.

****MR. ALAN MOVED TO ENDORSE THE ARTS AND CULTURAL PLAN FOR INCLUSION IN THE CITY OF NORWALK PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT.**

****MR. GEORGE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. 2026 Events Discussion

The Commission held a brief preliminary discussion about potential events for 2026. No specific proposals were advanced and no action was taken.

C. Review of Merchandise Design Competition

Ms. Godeski reported that the Commission previously developed the iHeart Norwalk logo, which is now widely visible throughout the city. The initial merchandise run consisted of basic items such as gray t-shirts, gray sweatshirts, hats, and koozies featuring only the logo. All inventory from that run has been completely sold out. In order to create more unique, exciting, and visually appealing merchandise that could generate a positive return on investment and additional revenue for the Commission, staff launched a local design competition open to the public. Ms. Godeski stated that submissions are currently being accepted and encouraged continued promotion of the competition. The Commission expressed enthusiasm for the project and looked forward to reviewing the submitted designs at a future meeting. No formal action was taken.

D. Authorize the sponsorship of the Norwalk Film Festival – CT TV Fest in the amount of \$5,000

Mr. Huffman presented a request for \$5,000 sponsorship of the Norwalk Film Festival – CT TV Fest from account 01-1450-5623. He described the event's scope, anticipated attendance, and promotional benefits to the city. The Commission discussed the request positively.

****MR. GEORGE MOVED TO TABLE THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE NORWALK FILM FESTIVAL – CT TV FEST IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000 FROM ACCOUNT 01-1450-5623.**

****MR. ALAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Adopt and approve the Arts and Cultural Commission Partnership Guidelines and Application

Mr. George presented the proposed Partnership Guidelines and Application developed by the subcommittee. Extensive discussion followed regarding funding caps, whether to establish tiers or a flat maximum, evaluation criteria, budget submission requirements, and the need for flexibility versus clear policy. Mr. Rust expressed concern about the \$5,000 maximum being too high and the process being too subjective. Ms. Grudin agreed the amount appeared excessive without boundaries. Mr. George emphasized the importance of having policy in place to protect the Commission while retaining the ability to amend it later. Mr. Kaspr noted that data from approved applications would strengthen future budget requests to the city. After lengthy debate, the Commission voted to adopt the guidelines and application with the explicit understanding that they remain subject to future amendment.

****MR. ALAN MOVED TO ADOPT AND APPROVE THE ARTS AND CULTURAL COMMISSION PARTNERSHIP GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION AS PRESENTED.**

****MS. SYLVESTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. Events Recap – Nightfair and Thrown Stone Event

Ms. Godeski reported that the Nightfair event was an extreme success with a large community banner completely covered in artwork by the end of the evening, strong family participation, and plans to display the banner at City Hall after review for appropriateness. She praised the coordination efforts.

Mr. Alan and Ms. Godeski reported that the Thrown Stone event had 145 registrants with approximately 85 attendees, received uniformly positive feedback, and overcame a brief power outage caused by a blown breaker. Mr. Alan noted he spoke on behalf of the Commission from the audience aisle for dramatic effect and that attendees initially credited him with restoring power when the breaker was reset.

Mr. George congratulated Ms. Godeski and all involved, stating the Nightfair made him especially proud to be a Norwalk resident.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

****MS. SYLVESTER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Baldwin,
Recording Secretary