

**CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS & CULTURAL COMMISSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2024
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Brian Kaspr; Chair, Marc Alan, Steven Rust, Melissa Matuska, Janay Sylvester, Nori Grudin, Bob Abriola (6:22 p.m.)

STAFF: Sabrina Godeski; Director of Business Development & Tourism,

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

The roll called was as stated above.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Diane Lauricella
21 Little Fox Lane

Directing the commission's attention to the West Avenue Mural Update Ms. Lauricella spoke about items discussed at the joint E&DC/A&AC meeting. She reiterated the comments she made at that meeting. She again noted her opposition to the current project. She requested a copy of the original RFP.

Mr. Kaspr stated contracts were in place and the project was signed sealed and delivered. He also noted Norwalk citizens had voted on the content of the mural.

Ms. Godeski stated nothing was final until the council said so.

Mr. Alan stated the RFP was done on the Call for Entry website. He noted it is a site used by professional muralists. He addressed the lack of local artists who applied to the open call. He stated that "they can't make people get involved."

Someone remarked that the Art Commission had nothing to do with the Vines. She noted that that was Redevelopment Commission

ADMINISTRATION

**CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS & CULTURAL COMMISSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2024**

- a. Approve the minutes of the June 4, 2024, meeting of the Arts and Cultural Commission.

**** MR. ALAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**
**** MS. SYLVESTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR IN FAVOR AND TWO ABSTENTIONS**
(MR. ALAN, MS. GRUDIN)

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Summer Arts Pop-Up – Factory Underground – event date August 10th from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Mr. Alan presented his report on the Summer Arts Pop-Up Factory Underground. He described it as a pop-up vendor market within the factory for art and culturally related things. He noted they are actively seeking vendors. He went on to describe some of the plans for the event. Mr. Alan said they weren't asking for money just help spreading the word.

- b. Budget Review – Bob Abriola & Sabrina Godeski

Mr. Abriola was absent. Ms. Godeski presented the Budget Review. She stated the new budget was in effect. She mentioned the availability of funds already contracted that could be used on other projects. She noted the decision would be up to the Budget Committee.

- c. Authorize the Director of Business Development and Tourism to complete payment to the Poet Laureate Program of Norwalk in an amount equal to one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500). – Marc Alan

Mr. Alan discussed the reformation of what had been the poet laureate program. He said they were teaming up with the library to this end. He noted the library had approved \$1500 and the Cultural Commission had agreed to put up an equal amount. Mr. Alan explained how the money would be applied. He also noted that they would select a junior Lauriat later in the year.

Mr. Abriola joined the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Mr. Kaspr had questions about how the funding would be used. Mr. Alan listed potential ways the funds would be used. He also explained that the search for candidates is ongoing.

Ms. Matuska wants Lauriat to be involved with the Arts Commission and attend meetings.

**** MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 5C.**
**** MR. ABRIOLA SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS & CULTURAL COMMISSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2024

d. Event Updates – Janay Sylvester

Ms. Sylvester discussed her plans for coming up with different ideas and buckets for events. She thought they could take what was already planned and supplement those events. She suggested a networking event across the arts in late September/early October. She presented a slide describing the first kickoff networking event. She showed another slide with a potential budget for the event.

Mr. Abriola questioned where the funds would come from. Mr. Kaspr noted there were funds available that were left over from other projects.

Mr. Alan spoke of the difficulties surrounding getting the commissioners to attend meetings and events. He pointed out it doesn't do a good job of representing the Arts Commission. He also stated without the participation of the commissioners at these events, he wondered if they were worth doing.

Mr. Kaspr noted that these things take time and with consistency can improve over time. He said they weren't looking for an immediate solution. He also indicated a need for better communication to increase involvement across the board.

Mr. Alan agreed that communication was key. He mentioned the loss of the Communication Infrastructure Sub Committees. He stressed the point of public outreach.

Mr. Kaspr brought up the lack of a digital space to go. He pointed out they don't run their Instagram. I stated they need to have a conduit to the community. Mr. Kaspr made several suggestions as a means to achieve that. He further noted that no one is stepping up to fill the void. He held up Bridgeport's newsletter as a fine example of what they could do.

Mr. Abriola suggested using money available for advertising to pay someone to administer a newsletter.

Ms. Godeski offered up several possibilities she could look into.

Ms. Sylvester suggested a cooperative venture with surrounding towns for an email where information is shared to be presented to a larger audience. She talked about getting all the local event creators to inform them of their plans, with information dispersed through the newsletter and social media.

Mr. Kaspr noted there had to be a place where the public could get the necessary information.

Ms. Sylvester suggested revamping the website. Ms. Godeski stated there was no specific page for the Arts Commission. Ms. Matuska said she could help but needed access to content. She wanted to know what stipulations she would need to abide by for a starting point.

Ms. Godeski explained the process they would go through to create a page on the Visit Norwalk website. She offered suggestions on collecting the information for the site. Mr. Alan noted there were other places where they could post Norwalk events as well.

Ms. Sylvester stated they could do the networking event and wait until everything else is in place to offer more in 2025.

Mr. Kasper noted Ms. Sylvester's proposal of a budget for the initial networking event. Ms. Godeski explained where the funding could come from. Ms. Sylvester discussed the requested amount and showed a slide detailing the budget breakdown.

Mr. Abriola wondered from an attention standpoint if they could sponsor an event that is already happening as opposed to hosting a cold event

**** MR. ABRIOLA MOVED TO APPROVE MS. SYLVESTER'S REQUEST FOR \$735.00.**

**** THE MOTION WAS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

e. Teaching Fellowship – Naomi Clark

Ms. Clark was not present.

f. General Committee Member Updates

Mr. Abriola suggested an event similar to the one at Connecticut State Community College of Norwalk.

OLD BUSINESS

a. West Avenue Wall Mural Update – Sabrina Godeski

Ms. Godeski described the events of the E&CD meeting on August 1, 2024. She stated the outcome of the vote, four approved and two voted no citing their concern that local artists weren't hired. She addressed cost, ADA accessibility, and content issues. Ms. Godeski said if the contracts were signed the parties would fly in Labor Day weekend to start work.

b. Ely Avenue Fencing Mural Update – Sabrina Godeski

Ms. Godeski indicated the committee was looking for a more physical representation of what the project would look like. She stated the artist was currently working on that. She noted the artist is local and will be incorporating the community into the project.

Mr. Kaspr noted he would be power washing and priming the West Avenue site and asked for volunteers to help. Mr. Alan and Mr. Abriola offered to help.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. ALAN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN.
** MS. MATUSKA SECONED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting ended at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
China Mayhew
Telesco Secretarial Services