CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS AND CULTURAL COMMISSION
TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024
VIA TELECONFERENCE

ATTENDANCE: Brian Kaspr; Chair, Marc Alan, MElyssa Matuska, Bob Abriola, Jana Sylvester, Steven Rust, Nori Grudin (6:04), Danny Loftus George (6:10)

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

OTHER: Oksana Tanasiv

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kaspr called the roll a reflected above.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were in attendance.

IV. ADMINISTRATION

a. Approve the minutes of the April 2, 2024, of the Arts and Cultural Commission.

**** MR. ALAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MEETING MINUTES.**
**** MR. ABRIOLA SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR AYES AND TWO ABSTENTIONS (STEVEN RUST AND JANA SYLVESTER).**

V. NEW BUSINESS

a. Approve the installation of the Ely Avenue Fencing Mural. – Oksana Tanasiv

Ms. Tanasiv described the mural she was planning to do for the city of Norwalk. She stated the project was a skyline and cityscape featuring blue, green, and maybe different shades of orange. Ms. Tanasiv said the skyline would be a simplified version of Washington Street. She noted it may include some historical buildings. Ms. Tanasiv talked about involving local schoolchildren in the final stages of the project.

Mr. Alan commented that he liked the use of silhouettes.

Ms. Godeski gave some background information on funding for this project. She indicated funding has been secured for a while. She pointed out the intent was to have a community installation. Ms. Godeski noted the delay in starting the project was the result of trying to find someone who was local, willing to do such a large project, and had experience working with children.

Ms. Godeski explained the mayor supports the proposal and any changes made by the commission. She mentioned several community stakeholders had seen the proposal. She noted they are supportive but want to ensure that the silhouettes and buildings represent the community. Ms. Godeski clarified that none of the funding for the project came from the Arts and Cultural Commission.

There was a question about the exact location of this project. Ms. Godeski stated it was fencing along the Metro-North Railroad on Ely and Henry Streets. Mr. Kaspr explained that Durabond panels would be attached to the fence, hiding Metro North from the section of the neighborhood. Ms. Godeski explained the installation process. She then stated Ms. Tanasiv had an installer. Ms. Tanasiv showed a sample panel and discussed the best paint for the project.

** **MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO APPROVE MS. TANASIV'S DESIGN.**
** **MR. ALAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
** **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Alan wanted to know if there was a time frame for installation. Ms. Godeski stated they should be able to go to the full council and receive approval on July 9th or the 23rd. She explained Ms. Tasnsiv could begin as soon as a contract was in place.

b. Budget Review – Bob Abriola & Sabrina Godeski

Mr. Abriola stated there was money in the budget that needed allocation before July. Ms. Godeski discussed several areas where they could apply the funds. Ms. Grudin suggested using funds to paint existing traffic boxes rather than purchase new ones. Mr. Alan asked if it would require a vote. Ms. Godeski said no because it falls under general operating expenses. Mr. Kaspr indicated they need a curator for projects like this. Mr. Abriola stated it was a difficult and time-consuming job, maybe they should find a volunteer or pay someone to handle it. Ms. Godeski noted they want to spend as much of the remainder as possible by June 30th and dedicate it to Traffic Graphic Box maintenance and/or new Traffic Graphic Boxes.

Mr. Abriola discussed writing up a program so interested artists could apply to do a box.

Ms. Grudin asked if the artist would be called and asked if they wanted to maintain the box they painted.

Ms. Metuska pointed out all the information for applying to the Traffic Graphic program is available on their website. Mr. Alan wanted to know if they could rewrite the current policy without a vote. Ms. Godeski stated if they wanted to put a new policy in place, it would have to be adopted. She felt it was a good idea to update the website information. She reiterated that any changes in the policy should be formally adopted by the commission.

Ms. Godeski explained the numbers from the Capital Expenses Account. She discussed the funding of various programs for the new fiscal year. Mr. Alan noted the MLK staircase needed cleaning and resealing. Ms. Godeski said they had money in a maintenance fund specifically for art.

Mr. Abriola wanted to know if they could have a booth at the Fine Arts Festival in Sono. Ms. Godeski indicated that was under general operating expenses.

c. Authorize the Director of Business Development and Tourism to sign up the Norwalk Arts and Cultural Commission to become a member of the CT Arts Alliance for fifty dollars. – Brian Kaspr

Mr. Kaspr explained that the NACC was asked to join the CT Arts Alliance. He presented the bullet point description of what the Alliance offered. He described the Alliance as a form of lobby/advocacy group for the arts.

** **MR. ALAN MOVED TO APPROVE TO AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM TO SIGN UP THE NORWALK ARTS AND CULTURAL COMMISSION TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CT ARTS ALLIANCE FOR FIFTY DOLLARS.**

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

** **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

d. Review and Update on Washington Street Marketplace Performers. – Marc Alan

Mr. Kaspr mentioned an email sent by Mr. Alan that discussed various issues with the Market Street Performers. He noted they were not moving forward with the marketplace events.

Mr. Alan said he enjoyed the experience. He explained the process, discussing his concerns, and issues that arose while working with certain private businesses. He acknowledged the need for better terms that wouldn’t place them in awkward or legal situations. Ms. Godeski noted there were always opportunities to feed in local talent. She also noted there were other events they could prioritize.

Ms. Sylvester asked for some context about the situation. Mr. Kaspr requested she be forwarded the email containing a description of the events. Mr. Alan explained the event ultimately was too much for him to run. He stated that his solution didn't go as planned. Ms. Matuska said the solution created confusion about who was putting on the event. She felt the city should maintain ownership of the event. She then discussed an earlier plan to comprise a list of local talent and venues to be used by private businesses to create an event. Mr. Kaspr felt it wasn't out of line for the commission to pay a stipend to an artist to perform at a private company or business. He stated they need to establish parameters before moving forward with the plan. Mr. Alan discussed the Events Committee led by Ms. Breault. He suggested there should be an ambassador from the Arts Commission to this committee. Ms. Metuska mentioned possible pitfalls and suggested they should be an intermediary rather than a booking agent. Mr. George stated they should focus on the whys. He asked, what is the purpose of an event, and what is the purpose of having these artists? He felt that projects should align with the betterment of the city and its citizens. Mr. Alan agreed and highlighted the economic opportunity for local artists. Mr. Kaspr added it provides exposure as well.

Mr. Alan discussed the street performances and what they add culturally to the area.

Mr. Casper and Mr. Alan discussed the need for a committee to handle the particulars of running events. Ms. Sylvester expressed interest in taking on that role.

e. General Committee Member Updates

Mr. Kaspr, speaking for Ms. Clark said she was no further with teaching fellowship and the Maritime Garage curation. He stated she would be cranking it up upon finishing the school year.

Mr. Kasper noted that some of the money dedicated to the You Are Not Alone Project had to *go back into the pot.* He said after the fact, they were informed they lacked the authority to approve the project. He stated the Department of Education controls all the school buildings. Mr. George wanted to know the issue the Department of Education had with the murals. Ms. Godeski stated they wanted to take the plan to the BOE for approval. She explained this would require an additional meeting. She noted that the artists were already present and ready to work. The artists couldn't wait. She added this led to the project shutdown. Ms. Godeski noted for future reference projects involving school buildings must be brought to the BOE for approval.

Mr. George suggested using one of his buildings for the planned mural. Mr. Alan wanted to know about the reallocation of funds. Ms. Godeski felt the artists were done with them, but the money was now there to do as they saw fit.

Mr. George commented he had several events coming up. He stated he would love having an Arts Commission Table at these events. Mr. Kaspr. asked Mr. George to share the events schedule. He also asked if they could take donations at the event table, to which Mr. George said yes.

Mr. George discussed his meeting with the city. He said he proposed using the concert hall space for more than orchestral and symphonic music. He suggested use by both theatrical and dance organizations. Mr. Rust described some issues trying to move forward with similar ideas and expressed his willingness to help. Mr. George discussed plans to create a budget to handle any necessary modifications.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

`a. West Avenue Wall Mural Update – Sabrina Godeski

Ms. Godeski explained they sent around quotes to include in the mural. She stated they settled on, "Welcome to Norwalk". She said they were moving forward and were going to send it out to a public vote for the actual language. Ms. Godeski noted that the mayor wanted the community to be more involved. He wants the artists to supply three different designs, not changing the type of art or the elements but with color variations. These images will be put out for public choice. Ms. Godeski noted that the removal of The Vines was affecting the timeline. She talked about other locations that may be good for its relocation. She stated that for the time being the sculpture will be de-installed and stored in the DPW garage.

Ms. Grudin wanted to know why they weren't using the logo name. Mr. Kasper answered it keeps changing.

Mr. Rust wanted to know the process for the public voting on the mural. Ms. Godeski explained all work will be pre-vetted by the commission and the mayor's office. She explained they would put out an online survey with the options. She explained how long the survey would be available. Ms. Godeski stated the press and social media will be used to garner support for the process. She also discussed their hopes for a potential start date.

Mr. Rust had a question about The Vines sculpture and what is required to support it. Ms. Godeski explained the reasons why the sculpture couldn't be installed at the Maritime Garage. She also stated there were opportunities for re-installation, but for now, the sculpture would be going into storage. Mr. Alan asked if they had talked to the artist about the sculpture coming down. Mr. Kaspr responded he felt it was the right thing to do. Ms. Godeski stated they're planning to inform the artist of their plans to remove the sculpture and re-install it elsewhere.

b. Monroe Street Mural Update – Brian Kaspr

Mr. Kaspr. announced Mr. Kaspr. announced that the artist involved in the Monroe Street mural had arrived. He noted the hope was to prime and project and start the painting tomorrow. Ms. Godeski mentioned a June 6th at 1 Chestnut event featuring a Q&A with the artist and other family-friendly activities. that the artist involved in the Monroe Street mural had arrived. He noted they were hoping to prime and project then start the painting tomorrow. Ms. Godeski mentioned a June 6th at 1 Chestnut event featuring a Q & A with the artist and other family friendly activities.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

****	MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
****	MR. ALAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
****	THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting ended at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
China Mayhew
Telesco Secretarial Services

Norwalk Arts and Cultural Commission Budget Summary FY23-24							
Dept	Account	Summary	Original Balance	Expenses	PO	Transfer In/Out	Balance
011450	5221	Printing & Duplicating	$ 1,000.00				$ 1,000.00
	5225	Secretarial Services - Telesco SS	$ 1,800.00	$ (980.00)			$ 820.00
	5235	Membership & Dues	$ 100.00				$ 100.00
	5237	Advertising	$ 1,000.00				$ 1,000.00
	5258	Other Professional Services	$ 8,000.00	$ (3,599.88)			$ 4,400.12
	5286	Business Expenses	$ 2,500.00				$ 2,500.00
	5298	Other Contractual Services	$ -				$ -
	5329	Other Operating Supplies	$ -				$ -
		TOTAL					$ 9,820.12

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Capital Accounts
Summary of YTD Expenses and Account Balances

Description	Department #	Pro.#	Original Balance	Expenditures	PO	Avail. Bal.
MLK Blvd Art	0921-1450-5777	C0792	$ 50,000.00	$ 40,500.00	$ -	$ 9,500.00
	Julio Pardo PO		$ 16,500.00	$ 16,500.00	$ -	$ -
	Studio 162, LLC		$ 26,500.00	$ 26,500.00		$ -
Arts in Public Places Program	0922-3760-5777	C0804	$ 25,000.00	$ 17,300.00	$ 7,700.00	$ -
	You Are Not Alone		$ 19,000.00	$ 11,300.00		$ 7,700.00
Arts in Public Places Program	0923-3760-5777	C0804	$ 50,000.00	$ -	$ 50,000.00	$ -
	You Are Not Alone		$ 4,800.00			$ 4,800.00
	Rough Edge Collective		$ 45,200.00			$ 45,200.00
Arts in Public Places Program	0924-3760-5777	C0804	$ 200,000.00	$ -	$ 4,800.00	$ 195,200.00
	Rough Edge Collective		$ 4,800.00			$ 4,800.00
State Grant	360001 5790 G0033		$ 1,200.00	$ 1,200.00	$ -	$ -
TOTALS						$ 262,400.00

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