CITY OF NORWALK
ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 4, 2025
ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

ATTENDANCE: Brian Kaspr; Chair, Danny Loftus George; Vice Chair; Melissa Metuska, Steven Rust, Marc Alan, Janay Sylvester, Nori Grudin, Brad Dancer; Ex-Officio, Kevin Huffman; Ex-Officio

STAFF: Sabrina Godeski

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kaspr called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called at reflected above. A quorum was present.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: January 7th, 2025

** **MR. ALAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**
** **MS. SYLVESTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**
** **THE MOTION WAS APPROVED WITH FOUR VOTES IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (MR. RUST)**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

Before proceeding, the new ex-officio members, Brad Dancer and Kevin Huffman, introduced themselves. Mr. Kaspr welcomed them to the commission and clarified their role as participants, not voting members.

V. **OLD BUSINESS**

A. Finance Review

Ms. Godeski presented the review as indicated in the packet. She explained there was a line item review followed by a summary. She stated that about $8,500.00 was left in the budget and they are proposing new events. She then gave the breakdown for all the various accounts. She indicated that roughly 27,000.00 was available in the Capital account. Ms. Godeski noted they wanted to apply $20,000.00 to the Traffic Graphic Program. She also gave the results of the commission's funding requests for the upcoming budget. Ms. Godeski discussed the Nea grant that will help subsidize the Heritage Wall Underpass. She pointed out that the numbers presented were not final and depended on the Mayor, The Board of Estimate, and the Common Council.

B. Commission Member Updates

The Commission discussed a proposed event for March 2025. Ms. Godeski noted that there is no plan for what it might be. Mr. Kaspr said there were two projects being considered and possibly a third.

Mr. Alan described several event types currently being held at the Underground Lounge that include open mike nights. He noted the difficulty in finding all-ages-friendly open mike nights. He suggested possible events that would include younger people.

Ms. Sylvester proposed joining forces with other places doing similar projects.

Ms. Grudin suggested partnering with the library to do a poetry slam. Ms. Sylvestri said she would reach out to businesses for an opportunity to collaborate..

C. Review and Discuss the Mural Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and Artist Selection Policy.

Mr. Kaspr discussed the policy as presented in the packet. He stated it attempts to make artist selection for projects more transparent. He explained the plan was to publish the document and use it as a framework for everything they do. He pointed out the section that described the rights extended to the selection jury. Mr. Kaspr explained the reasoning behind the content of the statement. He clarified the commission can choose any artist without having to put out an open call. He went on to state the purpose was to alleviate issues like those that occurred with the West Avenue Mural. He explained the wording allows for juried selection and/or invitation of artists who are local and from outside the area.

Mr. Alan was in agreement with Mr. Kaspr about the language. He stated the language gave them control of the process and helped maintain the ability to invite artists. Mr. Kaspr said their goal was to have internationally recognized public art and they should be able to reach out to internationally recognized public artists.

Ms. Sylvester requested clarification of the process as outlined in the packet. Mr. Kaspr stated this aspect of the project would be when they are seeking qualified artists. This would be followed by selected artists giving a proposal. The process would include an open call and invitations to selected artists some of which may have a vetted past. Artists chosen to propose would receive a proposal fee.

Mr. Kaspr then discussed the selection process as outlined in the document as follows:

- The initial qualification review.
- Proposal submission
- Selection of the finalists
- The finalists are allowed to edit their proposals based on commission feedback.
- Public engagement

Mr. Alan said the only members of the public who should weigh in on a project are Norwalk residents. He noted social media polls were open to both residents and non residents. He stated the commissions control should not be surrendered over to the public.

Ms. Godeski answered Mr. Rusts question about how the surveys ar handled online. She explained they ask about residency and demographics. She indicated the public would be voting on proposals the commission was already comfortable with.

Mr. Huffman asked for clarification on the role of the neighborhood representatives. Mr. Kaspr indicated they would be part of determining who was considered qualified, but not what proposals would be presented.
Ms. Grudin was concerned about only having everything on the website and suggested sending out flyers. Ms. Godeski stated that surveys are not limited to the website and are posted in multiple community based locations.

Mr. Rust asked if the proposals submitted for public approval would include the cost of the project. Mr. Kaspr stated by this stage it would be a moot point because those decisions are already made. He then asked how the the public participation will be incorporated into the decision making process. Mr. Kaspr stated the proposal that gets the most votes will be the one presented to the Common Council.

Ms. Godeski pointed out the need to include that this policy is for pieces of art that exceed $20,000.

Mr. Dancer was curious about what happens if there is a tie. Ms. Godeski stated that a provision to handle a tie should be added to the document.

Ms. Godeski noted that the finalized version of the document will be sent over to legal for review.

D. Approve the City of Norwalk Traffic Graphic Program Policy

Ms. Godeski described the guideline document for the Traphic Graphic Program as outlined in the packet. It includes:

- Eligibility requirements
- The selection process
- The submission process
- Contracts
- Implementation and installation
- The approval process
- Funding
- Maintenance

Mr. Kaspr noted the document needed a clause allowing the commission to reserve the right to revoke or deny a proposal.

** **MS. METUSKA MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRAFFIC GRAPHIC PROGRAM POLICY.**
** **MR.ALAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
** **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Rust wanted to know the status of the Cultural District Consultant's work. Ms. Godeski stated the Mayor's office has a list of individuals proposed to be on the Steering Committee. She discussed what would happen after the approval process for committee members. In response to

Mr. Rust, Ms. Godeski said the final decision on the committee members will be made by the Mayor’s office. She stated she would provide regular updates as the process moves along.

Mr. Huffman had a question about whether the city had a list of film locations within Norwalk. Ms. Godeski pointed out the city is flexible on using city property for filming and on film locations in general. She said she would give Mr. Huffman their list of available locations.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

** **MR. ALAN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
** **MR. RUST SECONDED THE MOTION**
** **THE MOTION PASSED UNANINMOUSY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7: 32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
China Mayhew
Telesco Secretarial Services