

**CITY OF NORWALK  
ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
JUNE 6, 2023**

**ATTENDANCE:** Marc Alan, Chair; Robert Abriola, Ava Jacobs, Brian Kaspr, Melissa Matuska, Steven Rust

**OTHERS:** Sabrina Godeski, Sam Schutz, Annica Lydenberg

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Alan called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Mr. Alan called the roll. A quorum was present.

**III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no one present who wished to address the Commission at this time.

**IV. ADMINISTRATION**

**a. Approve the minutes of the March 7, 2023 regular meeting.**

The Commission members reviewed the minutes.

**\*\* MR. ABRIOLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 7, 2023**

**\*\* MR. KASPR SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 7, 2023 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (ABRIOLA, KASPR, MATUSKA AND RUST) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (JACOBS)**

**V. COMMITTEE/STAFF UPDATES**

**a. Budget Committee Update – Sabrina Godeski**

Ms. Godeski presented her report. She said that Mr. Shockley had retired from the City, so Ms. Godeski will be handling the Traffic Wrap Box program. There is also \$20,000 in the budget for this. A discussion followed about possibly increasing the amount offered to the participating artists.

Ms. Godeski then gave a brief overview of the budget and noted that Mr. Kaspr would be giving a more in depth report.

**b. Communications Committee Update – Marc Alan**

Mr. Alan said that the City administration would be taking over all the social media and a new system will be introduced. This means that the Arts Commission will not need to have their own, separate social media account. Discussion followed about the transfer process for Arts and Cultural Commission and the potential for creating new committees.

**c. Infrastructure Committee Update – Brian Kaspr & Sabrina Godeski**

**i. Authorize the expenditure of \$25,000 of Art in Public Places capital funding to execute the You Are Not Alone Murals.**

**ii. Authorize the expenditure of the remaining \$5,000 operating budget as described by the Infrastructure Committee.**

Mr. Kaspr introduced Ms. Schutz and Ms. Lydenberg. Ms. Schutz said that the group had started in 2019 and they have 70 different murals around the world. The focus is mental health and the theme is “You Are Not Alone.”

Ms. Lydenberg said that she was a painter and had read Ms. Schutz’s book about her struggles. Mural arts are temporary and reaches out to those who are passing by. Mural have appeared in different countries and done by artists in a variety of languages.

Ms. Schutz said that the goal is to inspire the artists around the world to participate and reach the people who need to hear this message. There are interviews with the various artists along with the various artists’ stories. The goal is to reduce stigma and shame associated with mental health. The people who are hearing the message are going on to share that same message. There is consistency in terms of the message and color palette.

Ms. Schutz spoke about the recent event in Darien where the empty Bank of America building, which is scheduled to be demolished, was painted with the message and described how many residents participated.

She also outlined their proposal for September, which is Suicide Prevention Month and detailed the process.

Discussion followed about the quality and quantity of the murals, the City’s bidding process and whether the murals would be located on public or private property.

Ms. Schutz said that they would like to have five murals in the Norwalk area. The organization is looking for \$25,000 to complete the five murals.

Ms. Schutz said that they could come back to the Commission with the locations and size of the walls. The discussion moved to how long the various murals last and whether they could be changed.

**\*\* MS. MATUSKA MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE EXPENDITURE OF \$25,000 OF ART IN PUBLIC PLACES CAPITAL FUNDING TO EXECUTE THE YOU ARE NOT ALONE MURALS WITH THE CONDITION THAT MR. KASPR CURATES THE PROJECT AND THE COMMISSION APPROVES THE DESIGN AND LOCATIONS IN ADVANCE.**

**\*\* MR. ABRIOLA SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ii. Authorize the expenditure of the remaining \$5,000 operating budget as described by the Infrastructure Committee.**

Mr. Kaspr said that there was \$5,000 remaining in the Operating Budget. Discussion followed.

**\*\* MR. ABRIOLA MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE EXPENDITURE OF THE REMAINING \$5,000 OPERATING BUDGET AS DESCRIBED BY THE INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATION.**

**\*\* THERE WAS A SECOND.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The discussion moved to the interactions with the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation regarding the use of State owned spaces in Norwalk.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Arts and Cultural Commission Transition and Reappointments.**

Ms. Godeski explained that the Arts Commission was transforming into the Arts and Cultural Commission and that the current Arts Commissioners have first choice to remain on the Commission. She added that the Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed by the Mayor and the change in the by-laws will allow the Commission to raise funding. There are nine seats with three ex-officio members who are not required to be Norwalk residents. She requested that the members who wished to remain to send her their resumes.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no additional old business to consider at this time.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. KASPR MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MR. ABRIOLA SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services