

CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

Cultural Arts Commission

Minutes

January 13, 2021

Members Present: Karen Askin, Francis Bevington, Therese Capal, Liliane Blom, Patricia Dubroof, Howie Jung, Melissa Law, Connor Lee, Robert Summers-Berger, Heather Thompson

Members Absent: Helen Aberger,

Councilmember: Mark Pierzchala

Staff Present: Andy Lett, Betty Wisda, Laura Creech

Guests Present: Fran Miller, Eric Karns, Gabrielle Zwi

Karen Askin called the virtual online meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Re: Approval of the Minutes

The Cultural Arts Commission unanimously approved the minutes as written for the December 9, 2020 meeting.

Re: Councilmember Report

- Commission members were sent a summary of budget process and how and when to best advocate for the arts.
- Mayor and Council held discussions on January 4 regarding special districting and wayfinding in order to improve economic development and build presence in Town Center.
 - Looking into special requirements from state for possible Arts and Entertainment district.
 - Would help if there was an arts magnet in addition to VisArts.
 - Wayfinding – hired consultant to review signage around City. Aimed to improve accuracy and consistency of signage. Use wayfinding at access points from Metro.
- Federal Realty signed a couple of new leases recently in Town Center.

Re: Chairperson's Report

- VisArts agreed to display six smaller pyramids received from Wheaton Arts Parade. They will be on display on the VisArts rooftop by appointment only. Opening with five or six showings this week. There are no ADA compliant locations in town center for the larger pyramids currently.
- Rental reduction for VisArts was approved by Mayor and Council. Karen thanked Robert for drafting letter on behalf of CAC to recommend rent abatement for VisArts.

Re: Staff Report

- Kathrine Nelson with Rockville Art League accepted 123 works of art representing varied media for the virtual Rockville Art League Juried Members Show. Awards were presented virtually to winners in the various categories on Sunday, December 6.
- Held WebEx presentation of 45th anniversary production of the Nutcracker ballet performances on Dec. 5 and 12.
- The F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival planning committee met on December 10 to begin planning the annual festival to be held in October 2021.
- Received confirmation on December 22 of Public Art Conservation Grant from the State of Maryland for \$32,932 for art preservation and restoration of public art projects. The funding will be used for conservation work on the "Spirit of Rockville" by Dan Davidson at Courthouse Square Park and "Untitled" by William Calfee on the traffic island in front of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre. Betty Wisda will apply for the same grant again for next year since we have a long list of art that needs restoring.
- A video of chamber ensembles of the Rockville Concert Band performing various selections was featured on Monday, December 14.
- Held Rockville Chorus Band rehearsals Jan. 11.
- Staff working on Virtual International Night to be held in March.

Re: Arts in Public Places

- Betty Wisda presented updates on the Gateway Project
 - Followed up with Mayor and Council with the mitigation plans to reduce risks and they are fine with plans.
 - Shrubberies around the base to deter climbing on sculpture using horticulturalist recommendations.
 - No climbing signage.
 - Drafted an outreach tool to community to include image of Gateway sculpture with other works such as "The Awakening" for comparison.
 - Met with Transco Gas Co. regarding safety easements for the gas pipeline near the sculpture. Determined that sculpture will need to move 50 feet away from gas line for equipment to access gas line for repairs or

expansion. This requirement moves the sculpture further down the hill and may be too low to make the intended impact. Staff and AIPP subcommittee are exploring feedback from community about other potential sites for the sculpture to be placed.

- Presenting the Rockville Swim and Fitness Center Art Project to the Mayor and Council in March.
- Skate Park Art Project will be coming up next with \$14,000 budget.

Re: Cultural Arts Organizations and Creatives Summit Planning

- Helen Aberger held virtual meeting with sub-committee task force members Frances, Robert and Heather along with Andy on Dec. 21 at 4 p.m.
 - Three main topics discussed – previous goals of committee, reviewing and surveying the arts groups and speaker ideas for the summit.
 - Motion made to have Frances work on creating focus groups with arts organizations to survey them on their current needs and topics for future workshops.

Re: Human Rights Commission

- Connor reported on the following information from the last Human Rights Commission meeting:
 - holding a multi-media scholarship competition for high school students.
 - VisArts has social justice resident artist program and Karen suggested contacting them for information.
 - Preparing for virtual the Martin Luther King Jr. day celebration being held noon-1:30 p.m. on Monday, January 18.
- Gabrielle discussed the Rockville Human Rights Commission Student Ambassador program they are offering with goal to have two ambassadors from each high school in Rockville. Motion made to investigate making this an opportunity for student ambassadors.
 - Andy to send proposed information to Janet Kelly.
 - Connor offered to be on a student ambassador program sub-committee if one is created.

Re: Old Business

- Andy sent out current Cultural Arts Commission Responsibilities - Proposed. The current commission members need to accept or reject this set of responsibilities. There was a consensus that the group would like to make changes. Motion made to rescind the previous commission responsibilities and resubmit new document with updates for approval. Want to include more about the roles of arts and community health and well-being or how arts help establish a sense of

community. Robert and Frances will have a draft ready by next meeting and Andy will send out beforehand. Needs to be reviewed by legal department.

- Andy will re-send the Rec & Parks Strategic plan to commission members for the next meeting.

Re: New Business

- Patricia Dubroof has been asked to join the board of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival this year. She will be looking for volunteers and better outreach and exposure for the event to be held this fall. Festival was successfully held virtually last fall and may do the same this fall if necessary.
- Received Therese's commission renewal but not yet received Patricia's. Jackie Mobley needs to record it.

Re: Announcements

Patricia and Mark attending Victoria Lyric Opera performance via zoom on Friday, Jan. 15 at 7:30 p.m.

Re: Next Meeting

The next meetings will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, February 10, 2021.

Re: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.