

# CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

## Cultural Arts Commission Minutes

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

Members Present: Karen Askin, Cristin Cash, Liz Ortuzar, Francis Bevington, Patricia Dubroof, Brian Rogers

Members Absent: Melissa Sera, Rosemary Storey, Spencer Knoll, Therese Capal, Howie Jung

Councilmember:

Staff Present: Andy Lett, Betty Wisda

Guests Present: Abe Bruckman, Grants Manager

Chairperson Karen Askin called the virtual online meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

### Re: Approval of the Minutes

Cristin Cash motioned to approve the minutes, and Patricia seconded. The Cultural Arts Commission unanimously approved April 12, 2023, minutes.

### Re: Chairperson's Report

- Mayor and Council did not pass the budget on Monday, May 8, 2023, and will revisit the budget on Monday, May 15, 2023. The one-tenth of one percent of the previous year's budget funding for Art in Public Places is not included. Barring divine intervention, the Mayor and Council will not make that payment this year. Mark mentioned to Karen that during a challenging budget year, yes, the City did not fund AIPP this year but received more than it lost, keeping the new Arts, Culture, and History position. Mark was breathing a sigh of relief.
- The New Art Manager, Karyn Miller, will start on June 12, 2023. She is from DC's Golden Triangle Business Improvement District. Karen was pleased, she attended the Rockville Arts Festival and introduced herself and, you know. The Art Festival was a good introduction for her to get a taste of the art in Rockville. Rob DiSpirito and Barrack Matite approved a welcome reception for Karyn. The plans haven't been finalized, but the idea is to hold it at the VisArts venue if anyone has ideas, please share.
- The Mayor and Council approved City Hall and the Rockville Senior Center murals. It was a team effort to inform the Mayor and Council about the details of the murals. Cristin's letter to Mayor and Council was outstanding, Francis's comments at Public Forum were eloquent, and Andy's presentation was fantastic. That said, Francis and Karen had real concerns about how the political officials were making suggestions for changes at the end of the process. Developing a best practices recommendation for the Mayor and Council was suggested.

- The Rockville Art Festival went wonderfully. The weather was perfect. Many CAC members were in attendance, and the City Manager and Deputy City Manager were there. This year, Visarts focused on recruiting more artists of color to participate in our show. Visarts successfully added four new artists who excelled in self-promotion. The increase in diversity among exhibiting artists was evident in the attendees, making it a truly wonderful experience. Our community program was successful, and Visarts hopes to share the pictures online soon. Visarts is now preparing for next year's event.

## Re: Councilmember Report

- No report.

## Re: Staff Report

- Under the direction of Dr. Juan Gallastegui, the Rockville Concert Band performed a “Zarzuela & Pasodobles” concert on March 12 at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre. 385 people attended this concert featuring a celebration of Spanish drama and dance. Many audience members noted the challenging musical selections performed by the band members during this concert.
- Under the direction of Eleanor Simpson and Erin Kwong, the Rockville Civic Ballet presented “Lancelot”, one kingdom's tale of knights, adventure, and love! 890 people attended the performances performed on March 25 and March 26 at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre. The enthusiastic audiences enjoyed the excellent choreography, the amazing sets, and the beautiful costumes.
- Under the direction of Dr. Juan Gallastegui, the Rockville Concert Band performed “A John Philip Sousa Tribute” concert on April 2 at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre. 425 people attended this concert featuring music from the biggest name ever in the wind band world in the United States.
- Betty Wisda, the City’s staff liaison, attended the F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival meeting on April 11.
- The Art in Public Places: Rockville Senior Center Mural and Rockville City Hall Generator Screen Mural are consent agenda items at the meeting of the Mayor and Council on April 24. The motion is for approval of implementing these murals based on the recommendations of the Artist Nomination Committee and the Cultural Arts Commission. The recommendation is that Katie Giganti be awarded the \$12,500 art commission for her proposal for the Rockville Senior Center Mural and that Shawn James be awarded the \$12,500 art commission for his proposal for the Rockville City Hall Generator Screen Mural.
- The “Meet the Artists’ for the Maryland Pastel Society exhibit is scheduled from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on April 30 at the Glenview Mansion Art Gallery. Attendees can view the artwork and talk to the artists featured in the current exhibit. The exhibit will be on display through May 12.

- The City Attorney's office requested the CAC review the Ordinance changes again before going to Mayor and Council. The date to go to M&C is to be determined.
- The Community Planning and Development Services team is seeking feedback from the community on the Rockville Town Center Master Plan. They request City boards, commissions, and committees to inform their members about the initiative and attend their meetings to give a short presentation on the master plan update and receive feedback.
- The Arts, Culture, and History Manager interviews have concluded. The City Manager and Deputy City Manager are scheduled to meet later in April with the recommended candidate from the interviews to review the position and confirm interest in duties.
- Staff was notified that the City received an award of \$29,230 from the Maryland State Art Council for Art Relief at the Rockcrest Ballet Center. The focus for improvements will be to the flooring at the studio.

### Re: Arts in Public Places – Significant Works of Art

- The proposed budget has funding to replace the Woodley Garden sculpture.
- The Swim Center Outdoor Pool project has changed due to inflationary increases. The pool renovation is scheduled to be completed by the beginning of next summer. We will need to get a call for artists by mid-summer. The overall budget for the project is \$89,000. The anticipated design will be completed in September, with a bid for the construction posted later in the year. The anticipated start date for construction is Fall of 2024, with completion before Memorial Day 2025. Artist will need to work with the designer and construction company in coordinating schedules.
- Additional funds AIPA will be added for the 6 Taft Court Renovation project.

### Re: Arts in Public Places- Temporary Works of Art

- On April 21, 2023, Cristin, Frances, Betty, and Andy meet to prepare for the upcoming Mayor and Council meeting. France volunteered to speak at the Mayor and Council meeting, and Cristin volunteered to send a letter to the Mayor and Council.
- On April 24, 2023, the Mayor and Council approved for staff to move forward with the Senior Center and City Hall murals.
- At the Mayor and Council meeting, Francis discussed the enthusiasm of the selection committees for public art and the amazing job city staff had done incorporating public feedback. Then Andy set up by emphasizing the importance of considering the diversity of location, equity to access, and other factors when selecting public art sites.
- Francis expressed concerns about the appropriateness of the Mayor and Council discussing the merits of public artwork at a public forum (i.e., colors, location, and symbols), particularly at a late stage in the project.
- Francis suggested creating an appendix for best practices for elected officials and researching how other municipalities handle public art discussions.

- Karen noted that best practices tell us politicians shouldn't be involved in selecting art.
- Luckily, the artists are very flexible, but we don't want that to happen again.
- Members discuss developing a process allowing for earlier input to approve the consent agenda.
- Discussed needed improvements to survey design, such as using range systems for identifying with subject matter instead of yes/no questions or open-ended subjective feedback. The CAC needs to use the information to tell a story.
- All members agreed that the Artist selection process needs to start sooner. Preferably over the summer.
- The Bloomberg Grant was announced in late April. The due date of the grant application is June 12, 2023. Staff is coordinating with Transportation and other stakeholders to develop the grant proposal. The first step is agreeing on a location. Two locations are being explored. The First is on Beall Ave. between Maryland Ave. and N. Washington Street. The second is on Middle Lane between Maryland Ave. and Gibbs Street. Staff will update the CAC as the next meeting.

### Re: Human Rights Commission

- Planning continues for the Pride Festival in Rockville Town Center on June 24-25. We have three performers lined up so far. The City of Rockville gave \$3,000 towards the event.

### Re: Old Business

- Karen and Frances asked for clarity on the recommended event and the timeline needed for FY2024. The previous discussions revolved around Hometown Holidays and the Pride event. But nothing was finalized, but advanced planning is needed. A request was made to investigate a fall event for 2023. All agree that it can be part of the budget preparation discussion once the new Arts, Culture, and History Manager arrives. The question the CAC needs to think about is what initiative does the CAC recommend for how the funding is used to engage the community? Is it just to have art at an event, or is it an initiative to generate interest in art from the community at a future art location or as part of an Asphalt Art community painting party? Frances likes the idea as a creative way to gather feedback and raise awareness using art related to the event.

### Re: New Business

- Karyn Miller, the new Arts, Culture and History Manager, will start on June 12, 2023. Andy promised to work with Karyn to get her up to speed to set for success and start with City processes.
- Patricia suggests that joining a civic association could allow one to become more engaged with the Cultural Arts Commission. Many members of these associations are unaware of cultural events and would appreciate the information. By conducting a

survey or emailing them, the CAC can identify any gaps and use this as an easy method to promote the arts. Karyn could attend the meetings as the cultural arts liaison and introduce herself.

- Patricia also offers to host a casual cocktail party after the fourteenth to create a relaxed environment to network with fellow Cultural Arts Commissioner and serve to engage with Karyn.
- Karen stated that the Cultural Arts Commission has a lot of new members, and it would be great if we could visit some of the City's facilities, mainly since we're doing art in several projects that are coming up. It would be nice to see where they're going to be located.
- Andy will send out a survey to the Cultural Arts Commission members about returning to in-person meetings.

### Re: Announcements

- Patricia discussed recent changes in F. Scott Fitzgerald Festival locations, moving from the Unitarian Church to Montgomery College due to cost and a better partnership. The website is being updated with registration forms, and they need volunteers for upcoming events. They are partnering with the writer center for a reading and lecture, and the short story contest is still open. The poster contest deadline is approaching, and they expect increased attendance this year. Patricia also mentioned a potential collaboration with workshops through the Asian American Health Initiative. She encouraged people to volunteer, visit the website, and share ideas for other artists.

### Re: Next Meeting

CAC will meet via Webex at 7 p.m. on May 10, 2023.

### Re: Adjournment

At 8:22 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.