

CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

**Minutes
July 8, 2020**

Members Present: Karen Askin, Liliane Blom,
Patricia Dubroof, Melissa Law,
Jesse Marciniak, Howie Jung, Helen Aberger,
Therese Capal, Connor Lee, Tim Nixon

Members Absent: Gary Gill

Councilmember: Mark Pierzchala

Staff Present: Andy Lett, Betty Wisda

Guests Present: Gabriella Zwi - CAC liaison for Human Rights Commission

Karen Askin called the virtual online meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Re: Approval of the Minutes

The Cultural Arts Commission unanimously approved the minutes as written for the June 10, 2020 meeting with one correction noted.

Re: Councilmember Report

- o Mark thanked to Jesse for his contributions saying his advocacy for the Rescos has been very important. City council was able to get \$5,000 to assist them during the pandemic. Jesse was key to bringing the Resco organizations to present themselves and promote the theatre arts to M&C over the past year.
- o Boards and commission task force - need a better understanding of our boards and commissions.
 - Karen watched the meeting online and didn't feel there was a clear path forward. What will the process be? Can we weigh in on the suggestions made?
 - Karen - Regarding the report. Lack of orientation for commissioners. Need for more training. Lots of discussion about the process for finding new commissioners. Led to discussion on diversity. Need to be a transparent process for how volunteer positions are filled. She was glad to see the issue brought up. She is glad they are focusing on how to on-board people. She was disappointed that they kept the requirement that you must be a Rockville resident. Many can't afford to live in Rockville.
 - Mark thinks one of the opaquest things is how people are appointed. Councilmembers could help the Mayor find people. The big problems are lots of vacancies and no one knows why they were selected or not selected. They never hear back. Lots of problems but hopefully these will be solved.
 - Webpage - mission statement. Each Commission should write its own story. What are they trying to accomplish? Testimonials from members. Web pages need to be more dynamic for all boards and commissions. Updating dates of meetings, etc.
- o VisArts is looking for \$14,000 in relief from the city.

- City is working to give some relief.
 - When the pandemic is over, who do you want your partners to be? VisArts, RESCO's. Long standing Rockville organizations with key roles.
 - VisArts has been a mainstay for the town square and constitutes a large financial investment for the City.
 - As more spaces become vacant in town center it will become more difficult to bring back/in more businesses.
 - City needs to support who is there town center.
 - Some spaces are only occupied because REDI lets them stay there, not paying commercial rate.
 - We need to build on our foundation of core businesses including VisArts
 - VisArts relief request includes rent abatement, not to pay rent for the rooftop for the coming year, plus a reduction in insurance \$5 million liability policy.
- o Mark state he will continue to keep fighting for support for VisArts. Town Center needs a lot of help, even before the pandemic.

Re: Chairperson's Report

- o Karen and Andy talked with Hjarmon from the Community Services Department.
 - The discussion revolved around on communities that are not normally represented with the CAC and how to increase diversity.
 - Several ideas for ways to make connections these communities suggested.
 - Hjarmon thought the website description for the CAC was boring. No action words. Nothing enticing to attract new members. Need better marketing.
 - Hjarmon is willing to help CAC with promotion and suggestions.
 - CAC agreed to look at City's website and offer suggestions for changes to description.
 - Tim Nixon offered to provide some wording for the group to work from.
 - CAC suggested to invite Hjarmon to a future meeting for to give group a chance to ask questions.
- o Karen introduced Gabriella Zwi - CAC liaison for the Human Rights Commission. Singer/songwriter in the DC area. CAC members introduced themselves.

Re: Staff Report

Staff reported the following items.

- o Artist nomination committee - David Scull Park and other projects are moving forward. Glenview mansion staff trying to get the artwork back to artists. First draft for underpass. Review it now to see what else is needed before moving on to next steps for CSX. A few things are needed. Mimi McNeel - received volunteer award. The Peace Day proclamation is coming up with Mayor and Council.
- o The Artist Nomination Committee, the Art in Public Places Committee, and the Cultural Arts Commission unanimously recommended that Kris Connors be awarded the \$4,000 commission for his proposal of a carved Red-Tailed Hawk for the Cedar tree at David Skull Park.
- o The Artist Nomination Committee reviewed 210 applications from interested local, regional, and national artists for consideration for the Rockville Swim and Fitness Center Art Project. The Committee met in June to select finalists to

- o create a site-specific proposal.
- o The Artist Nomination Committee reviewed 151 applications from interested local, regional, and national artists for consideration for the Rockville Gateway Art Project. The Committee met in June to select finalists to create a site-specific proposal.
- o The following art organizations were selected for exhibits from August 2020 through June 2021 at the Glenview Mansion Art Gallery: Times5, Women by Women, Fairweather Artists, Washington Watercolor Association, Rockville Art League, and the City of Rockville Students (middle & high school) Juried Show.
- o Mimi McNeel of the Rockville Concert Band was presented with a Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award by the Rockville Recreation and Parks Foundation at the Mayor and Council Meeting on July 6.
- o A proclamation for Peace Day will be presented by the Mayor and Council at their meeting on July 13.

Re: Arts in Public Places

- o David Scull Park Project - Betty Wisda is preparing a memorandum for Rob DiSpirito via Tim Chesnutt regarding concurrence with the recommendations of the Artist Nomination Committee, the Art in Public Places Committee and the Cultural Arts Commission. The recommendations are that Kris Connors be awarded the \$4000 commission for his proposal of a carved red-Tail Hawk for the cedar tree at David Scull Park. Betty notified Kris Connors regarding this next step. Once we receive approval from Rob, we will go into contract negotiations for November.
- o Swim Center Project - On June 16, the Artist Nomination Committee met to review and discuss applications submitted by interested local, regional and national artist for the Rockville Swim and Fitness Center art project. The committee consists of Cultural Arts Commissioner Liliane Blom, Therese Capal and Patricia Dubroof; Robert Taylor, Recreation and Parks Advisory Board representative; Allegra Cermak, Rockville Swim and Fitness Center Advisory Commission representative; Kori Purdum- Matheis, project's architect; and Moline Jackson, Montgomery County Planning Department. The committee selected the following finalists: Pavalina and Alfredo Alea from Georgia, Matthew Geller from New York, Parran Coltery from Maryland; and Amy Cheng from New York. The four artists were notified.
- o On June 22, the Artist Nomination Committee met to review and discuss applications submitted by interested local, regional, and national artists for the Rockville Gateway Art Project. The committee consists of Cultural Arts Commissioners Liliane Blom, Therese Capal and Patricia Dubroof; Tom Lynch, Recreation and Park Advisory Board representative; Sarah Miller, Planning Commission representative; Patricia Walsh, Americans for the Arts. The committee selected the following four finalists: Laura Haddad and Tom Drugan from Washington; David Hess from Maryland; Jennifer Madden and Jeffrey Reed from California; and Michael McLaughlin from Connecticut. The four artists were notified. Will prepare site specific projects over the summer. Proposal Aug. 27. Will do all meetings remotely.
- o Underpass Project – Gable Sign and Graphics Company submitted shop drawings for the attachment to the concrete wall for the art project at Park Road. Will submit drawings to CSX for review.

Re: Cultural Arts Organizations and Arts Summit Planning

- o Subcommittee met and decided how to best use the tools we have made.

- A letter from the subcommittee was sent out to the list of groups that came to the CAC meetings:
 - The letter asked for an update on their biggest challenges.
 - The support they currently need.
 - Have there been changes in leadership and contact information?
 - Plus a list of resources that VisArts has compiled was also included.
 - The emails were sent from the Rockville CAC email so that we will receive responses.
 - A follow up is needed to the groups via personal outreach will be needed to get answers to the questions sent.
- o With Jesse's departure new leadership of the subcommittee is needed.
 - The CAC agreed that a break from the Cultural Arts Organization is needed until we figure out the scope of everything.

Re: Old Business

- o Exit Interview with Jesse Marciniak
 - What is the CAC to Jesse? It is a volunteer position meeting once a month to help Rockville become an arts destination. CAC is getting closer to what the actual story is and what we want to do. We don't need to give the answers, but we need to find the right questions first. That's why he wanted to bring the groups in to find out what their needs were.
 - He didn't know what he was getting himself into and didn't see much direction. He recognized early on to make it worth it to him he was the one who needed to light the fire to get things done.
 - Taking great care to have more of an onboard process.
 - The challenges he faced was too many responsibilities and not having enough time. It's ok to asking for help.
 - For someone joining the CAC take a hard look at your calendar. Is this something that you can do without getting overwhelmed?
 - Suggestion for the CAC is to have a new member shadow another member to help them get up to speed. This commission could lead the way on how to introduce a new member. Mentorship.
 - Ideas about the Rockville Creatives Summit: The Summit would be a chance for city stakeholders to come together to network, get tools, make themselves more visible, make a partnership with the City. It's possible to do via a virtual option but in person will not happen for some time.
 - The CAC members thanked Jesse for his time and dedication to the CAC and wished him luck as he moved on to the next phase of his life.
- o Recreation and Parks Strategic Plan – comments provided by the CAC this will go to Tim Chesnutt and the department will be looking and trying to incorporate this into our strategic plan. Guide for R&C on how to move forward.
 - Since the art position is not projected to happen any time soon. Is Recreation and Parks ready to make arts a priority since this is where we will be.
 - The next step in making art more of a priority is to have it included in the Recreation and Parks Strategic Plan.
- o Justification for an Arts position will have to be how it will help the City of Rockville help the city resurrect itself. Prioritizing this position must carry what's in it for the City.
- o Mark – the position will come forward eventually. What can Rockville offer that is unique? The position can help define that.

Re: New Business

- o Karen will send an introduction to invite Hjarmon Cordero to a future meeting.
- o Connor is interested in being the Human Rights Commission liaison. Patricia made a motion. Motion was passed.

Re: Announcements

- o Patricia – still have Rockville masks to sell. Karen – will sell at VisArts to help.

Next meeting August 12. Karen asked Andy to take a poll to see what members will be present for a meeting.

Karen made a motion to adjourn – 9:26 p.m

