

Westport Arts Advisory Committee
Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 12 noon, Town Hall room 201

Present: Nancy Diamond, Kathie Bennewitz, Miggs Burroughs, Eric Chiang, Richard Epstein, Diane Lowman, Shobana Mani, Charles Rosoff, Elizabeth Strick, Dina Upton,

Unable to attend: Frederic Chiu, Lee Goldstein, Jerri Graham, Kimberly Wilson

1. WestPAC update:

Kathie reported that Randa Trivisono will be stepping down after four years as chair of WestPAC, but will continue as a member of the committee. Ive Covaci will step up as chair of the WestPAC committee. Nancy will notify First Selectwoman, Jen Tooker of the changes.

The committee reviewed deaccession of a group of fifty [50] posters and non-fine art prints all currently insured under the Town Art Collection. Some of the work is in storage and some is on display in the schools. It was suggested that Parks and Rec assume the insurance of the cannon at Compo Beach and the non-fine art should be removed from the Town Art insurance policy. Diane made a motion to declassify all the posters and the Cannon at Compo Beach from the Town Art Collection Insurance, Nancy seconded; all were in favor.

Kathie recommended Gale Katz for membership to the WAAC Committee. Her resume, which indicates her extensive involvement in the arts, was sent to the committee prior to the meeting. Nancy Diamond recommended Gale Katz for membership to the WAAC Committee, Diane seconded all were in favor. Nancy will pass on recommendation to the First Selectwoman.

2. Poet Laureate update:

Diana Meyer Lowman's term as Westport's Poet Laureate ends on June 30. She served three years, an extra year due to Covid. She and the newly appointed Laureate, Jessie Noyes McEntee, will be recognized at a 9am meeting on June 21 in the Selectwomen's office. A thank you to Diane and a welcome to Jessie will take place on June 29th at 12 noon at the Westport Library. Diane recommended to Jessie she attend the last Friday of the Month "Lets Connect" meetings where all non-profits gather. Eric, Shobana, Miggs and Dina will rotate and represent WAAC at this monthly meeting

3, Diversity sub-committee:

Shobana reported on discussions she has had with members of the public who had concerns about the subject matter depicted in the murals in the alley beside Anthropology. She said she explained that these paintings are not historically accurate works, but a conceptual rendering of the period. To further clarify this, Nancy will draft a new statement along with a QR code to enhance the understanding of the project. It will be run by members of the diversity sub-committee before it gets printed.

Kathie reported on the John Steuart Curry murals in the auditorium of Kings Highway School which were created in 1934 and represent a snapshot of American culture at that time. Some of the images depicted are no longer acceptable today. A sub-committee was formed to research the issue and evaluate. From WAAC they are: Diane, Kimberly, Shobana, Charles and Kathie.

4. TEA Talk, November 6, 2022

Two concepts were presented:

Shobana suggested the event be about the democratization of the art world as a result of the growth in technology and social media. The ability to create art and promote art as a way to protest and offer social commentary has become easier. The George Floyd mural is an example. The event might open with a video representing examples of how technology has influenced access and creativity, followed by conversations with artists.

Richard suggested we explore news-worthy speakers to talk about what changes have happened in the arts world post-Covid. He feels we need to re-evaluate the event in light of the changing Westport demographic; recognizing CT artists, regional arts opportunities and entertainment in the area.

The next meeting in July will be devoted to TEA Talk.

Next meeting is Tuesday, July 12, 2022, Town Hall room 201

Meeting adjourned at 1:15pm

Respectfully submitted
Elizabeth Strick, Secretary