

## Westport Arts Advisory Committee 6/13/2023 Minutes

Tuesday, June 13, 2023. 12:00 – 1:30pm Westport Town Hall, Room 201

WAAC members attending; Nancy Diamond, Shobana Mani, David Rosenwaks, Kathie Bennewitz, Jessica McEntee; Dina Upton, Miggs Burroughs, Eric Chiang.

Additional attendees: Ive Covaci (WestPAC)

Announcements: Jessica McEntee, poet laureate, has curated a poem for the Memorial Day ceremony as part of the Selectwoman's remarks.

### AGENDA items:

1. WestPAC member approval: Nancy Diamond read the names and roles of proposed WestPAC members for reappointment. Eric Chiang made a motion to recommend the group submitted by WestPAC to the Selectwoman for reappointment; Miggs Burroughs seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Members voted unanimously to recommend the group for reappointment.
2. Sculpture Subcommittee: Dina Upton reported on her meeting with Jen Fava of Parks and Recreation and visit to sculptor **Carole Eisner**'s property. Of 22 parks in Westport, 6 are eligible for public sculpture installation. Discussion followed of possible installation of "Windows" by Carole Eisner for **Stroffolino Park** near exit 17. Concerns discussed included transportation and proper installation, danger of people climbing on the sculpture, removal of existing plants/trees, length and projected cost and funding of the loan. Kathie Bennewitz recommended Scott Springer (on WestPAC committee, architect and HDC member) attend site visit with the group and evaluate how to install. Next steps: Kathie will connect Scott S with the WAAC group, and Dina will send a note to schedule site visit, including the sculptor Carole Eisner, Jen Fava, Mike West, Parks, and Rec Manager.

Discussion of other eligible parks: **Pasacreta Park** on Riverside as a possible site for a work by Niki Ketchman. Other eligible parks for public sculpture include Grace K Salmon, **Mackamucks Park** on Greens Farms Road, Canal Green, Eloise Ray Park. It was recommended to connect with RTM member **Lou Mall** who knows Eloise Ray's son, who is a sculptor. Nancy will send Dina Lou's contact info so she can contact him.

Kathie Bennewitz reported on the cleaning of the Minuteman and the Doughboy statues. **Francis** has started work on these; waxing them is next. Suggested doing some PR on this project (Dan Woog), Miggs to take photos of the work in progress. Kathie also reported on the repair of the **Minuteman** landscaping done by Parks and Rec, which

does not meet WAAC standards of aesthetics and proper conservation. Kathie has reached out to Mike West who will take a look and talk to Francis about repairs.

3. Social Media: Shobana Mani reported that a person has been selected for the position: **Canyon Scheritz**, who does social media work for various non-profits including Norwalk Art Space. They have not discussed cost / budget yet, and it is necessary to define the scope of work WAAC wants her to do. Possibility of having her present at the next Let's Connect meeting in the fall to share with rest of group.
4. Downtown Walkway Artwork: David Rosenwaks has volunteered to coordinate the cleanup and signage for this site, including artist statements. Some graffiti on acrylic and on brick walls, to be discussed with David Waldman. Discussion of long-term protection and the possibility of hanging a large sign to indicate the art's location and best way to include / print artist statements. Discussion of possible outdoor sculpture map for Westport eventually.
5. TEA Talk: November 5, 2023

Discussion of possible topics, speakers, and demonstrations for AI-focused TEA Talk. Eric Chiang mentioned different applications for creators, for educators, for collectors. Kathie Bennewitz mentioned the installation of AI-generated art in the MOMA lobby, as possible model case. Shobana Mani asked if we were deciding different disciplines, or different applications / use cases. Miggs Burroughs suggested using an AI avatar as a presenter / demonstration so that people can see capability; Miggs also knows an artist who recently created an AI-generated (?) book. Discussion of not wanting to replicate David Pogue's recent presentation. Shobana also brought up the idea of how AI is changing design education, arts education.

Next steps: group will brainstorm a list of possible presenters / panelists, finding people who are really "in" this world already, in various areas (creators, educators, etc.). Group also liked idea of having demonstrations of capability (either at start or throughout). Possibility of a keynote speaker.

The next WAAC meeting will be held on Tues July 11 at noon. There will be no meeting in August.

Meeting adjourned 1:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ive Covaci  
Chair, WestPAC  
June 13, 2023

