

Westport Arts Advisory Committee
Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at Town Hall room 201

Present: Nancy Diamond, Shobana Mani, Katie Bennewitz, Miggs Burroughs, Eric Chiang, Paul Davis, Richard Epstein, Lee Goldstein, Jessica Noyes, William Palmer, Charles Rosoff, Britt Steel, Elizabeth Strick, David Rosenwaks, Dina Upton.

Co-chair Nancy Diamond opened the meeting at 12:08pm.

TEA Talk November 17, 2024

“Cancel Culture” and/or Comedy/Humor in the Arts are the general concepts for TEA Talk to be held at the library. At the time of TEA TALK there will be an exhibition of cartoons by Brian Walker. Kathie suggested that Brian, an activist cartoonist, would be interested in being part of the program. Miggs will speak with him. Eric felt humor after the election will be important. Charles suggested Michael Rapaport, actor comedian, and the actress, writer and producer Shonda Rhimes. Richard suggested Matt Davis who also does political artwork. A moderator is also needed to facilitate the event. Britt suggested Alex McHale, an English teacher and (stand-up comedian) from Staples and will follow-up. The committee also discussed humor in other facets of art beyond comics. Richard will explore examples in music and revert back to the group. Miggs suggested Norm Siega; Nancy suggested Fred Stropple, a Theater Artist Workshop comic playwright. Nancy also will speak with Olivia Levine, a film director and stand-up comedian.

“Let’s Connect” Shobana Mani.

A summer social will be held at the Playhouse Barn Garden on Tuesday, July 16th from 3:30 – 5:00pm for non-profit arts organizations. Representatives from each organization along with the First Selectwomen will be invited for ice cream, and cold drinks.

Sculpture Update: Dina Upton.

On July 30th at 4pm at the Westport Library the committee will meet to work on guidelines for selecting sculptures for Town parks. Guest speaker Janine Esposito will join the meeting. Dina met with Mark Zarif and Babette Bloch to look at three parks for them to consider. The parks are Riverside, Grace K and Canal Park. Babette was interested in Canal Park; she would also like her work to be for sale. WAAC is a not-for-profit so cannot receive a commission, a charitable donation was suggested as an alternative. Mark is considering Riverside Park.

Poet Laureate update: Britt Steel.

The jurors and some members of WAAC met with Donna Disch. The committee has recommended her for the poet laureate position. Jen Tooker and Andrea Moore will meet with her as a next step. As part of her role, she would like to install a Poetry Box near Compo beach. She will also continue to work with the schools and Senior Center.

Jessica will continue as Poet Laureate till the end of the year.

On November 14th Jessica will be speaking at the Westport Library about her recently published book of Poetry. Nancy will host.

Nancy Diamond made a motion to recommend Donna Disch as Westport's next Poet Laureate for a two-year term starting January 1, 2025. Paul Davis seconded the motion and the committee voted unanimously in favor.

WestPAC: Kathie Bennewitz

As of June 30th, WestPAC will no longer be the agent for the Town Art Collection. It was suggested that the Arts Advisory Committee take on the role.

Kathie Bennewitz made a motion to recommend that the Westport Arts Advisory Committee {WAAC} should be the collections agent for a 10-year term. Lee Goldstein so moved, and Charles Rosoff seconded, the committee voted all in favor.

Lee reported that a climate-controlled storage container for work not on display from the Town collection has been secured. Lee also reported that the collection is now on two platforms, The artwork is the property of the Town and cannot be reproduced without permission.

Nancy reported that new signs are up in the alley off Main Street.

Lee Goldstein provided some background on the ARPA use of funds by the town arts non-profits. She will be finalizing the report soon.

**There will be no meeting in August, our next meeting is Tuesday, September 12, 2024,
Town Hall room 201**

Meeting adjourned at 1:35pm

Respectfully submitted

Elizabeth Strick, Secretary Westport Arts Advisory committee