



Donovan Richards
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Community Board No. 2

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Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson
Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

April 9th, 2024

Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Attendees:

Karesia Batan, Chair
Kat Bloomfield
Ann Marie Baranowski
Kenny Greenberg
Eric Narburgh
Akello Thomas

Absentees:

Anatole Ashraf
Stephen Cooper
Ryan Smith

Edjo Wheeler – Public Member

Guests:

Andre Irving, Cucala Dance Company
Nancy Bruno
Alexa Gonzalez
Angel Hart – LIC Partnership
Dirk McCall – Sunnyside Shines BID

Community Board 2:

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager

Karesia Batan welcomed everyone to the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee meeting.

The Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee had a small discussion on MTA Transit art at the subway stations. The MTA department that handles transit art is now called Arts & Design. That department is aware of when a station is under reconstruction. They do calls twice a year for artists.

Karesia Batan introduced Dirk McCall, Executive Director of Sunnyside Shine BID

- Dirk McCall spoke about a grant that is partially funded by the City, National Grid, and a few foundations.

“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”

- Sunnyside Shine BID was selected as a grant recipient to help with improving the public space, engagement with the community and art installations.
- They are presently looking at these locations for use of this grant, Lowery Plaza, Bliss Plaza and Sabba Triangle.
- Dirk McCall has a survey to get feedback on what the community wants in these locations. Increased lighting is mentioned for two of the locations.
- Dirk McCall mentioned that Sunny Pride will be on Friday, June 14th, 2024.

Karesia Batan introduced committee member Kenny Greenberg and Angel Hart of LIC Partnership to discuss the Creative Lighting Initiative Project sponsored by NYC Small Business Services. (***Pergola Presentation is attached***)

- Angel Hart explained that LIC Partnership received a Small Business Services grant which was a commercial lighting grant. The grant is for creative lighting projects in public spaces. The location selected for the lighting installation will be at Vernon Mall and Gordon Triangle.
- Kenny Greenberg shared with the committee what the design will look like.
- It will be 2000 color changing LEDs that will be programmed to various patterns, colors and movements. A symphony of light.
- To view the design of the exhibit visit:
<https://www.neonshop.com/LICP/Pergola%20Presentation.pdf>
- The lights will not be on 24/7.
- The exhibit should be displayed in June 2024 for at least 7 months.
- LIC Partnership will be maintaining this exhibit.

Karesia Batan requested Dirk McCall to give an update on the Bliss Theater.

- The Bliss Theater was created in 1930.
- It was a movie theater until 1964.
- The Pickman Family then sold it to the Jehovah Witnesses.
- The building is an Egyptian style building and in great condition. There was a request that this location be considered for Landmarking.
- The building is being sold and they are asking \$16 million for the site.
- There is a lot of communication with the elected officials and CB2 to try and save the theater.
- Karesia Batan stated that a letter was drafted at the last community board meeting requesting that the owners work with the community in terms of prioritizing bids that do want to preserve the space and prioritize it as a cultural arts center. The letter will also state that landmarking be looked into and also stated the historical significance.
- Thalia Spanish Theater is willing, able, and interested to run the space.
- So far 40 bids are interested in the site.
- The Jehovah Witness plan to stay there and operate for another year.

Announcements, events, opportunities from attendees

Nancy Bruno, LIC-A - Announced Long Island City Artists (LIC-A) will be having Arts Open. Studios will be open. LIC Springs and Arts Open will be the same weekend. The kickoff for the artists will start May 15 running to May 19, 2024. LIC-A is looking for dance and music performances. Further information can be found at <https://licartsopen.com/>

Edjo Wheeler, Culture Lab LIC – Mentioned that the exhibition Behind the Mask, Women in Art is still showing. It is all women who are sculptures and metal workers Arise Spring Dance Festival – Queens Conquest dance battle will also be happening. Free Concerts in the front gallery every Saturday evening at 8pm.

Theater Camp – Saturday, April 20th

All listings can be found at <https://www.culturelablic.org/>

They are presently looking for volunteers to help them.

Culture Lab is in the middle of their membership drive.

Edjo Wheeler shared the link for an open call for Art for PRIDE month:

<https://www.culturelablic.org/artist-opportunities>

Kat Bloomfield recommended reaching out to an organization to have vogue dance classes for pride month. Please visit <https://www.btfacollective.org/> for further information.

Andre Irving - Cucala Dance Company is having their monthly social on Saturday, April 13th, 2024 at 8pm. Visit www.cucaladance.com for more information.

Ann Marie Baranowski shared with the committee that she has been working with AAA New York Chapter, a series of programs called Future Public Space and Public Art. The first program will be May 6th, 2024. It is a panel situation where different people talk about various aspects of public art in public space.

Karesia Batan introduced Alexa Gonzalez a new community board member. Alexa Gonzalez is from High Public Space a place making studio in LIC.

Old / New Business

Karesia Batan mentioned that the Queens Borough President's office has a non-profit network that is very active. It is mainly information and meetings and resource events that are communicated through e-mail. If you want to join the network you have to email STANENBAUM@queensbp.org and ask to be added to the list.

Karesia Batan shared with the committee that there is a link on the Parks Department website that puts together all the spaces that are eligible for art activations, open RFPs and a map that has every public art display currently in the five boroughs. Visit this link <https://www.nycgovparks.org/art/art1132>

The first round of murals at the Ottomanelli's deck along the LIC waterfront was unveiled last year; they just completed their selection for the second round.

A new poetry installation was installed at Lou Lodati Park in Sunnyside.

The mural along Doughboy Park was completed last summer and Karesia invited attendees to visit it.

Karesia Batan shared with the committee the merger of Queens Council on the Arts with the Boys and Girls Club in Astoria. She had a discussion with the committee about the history of Queens Council on the Arts.

More information on this merger can be found at this link <https://licpost.com/queens-council-on-the-arts-merging-variety-boys-girls-club-queens>

The committee had a discussion on how the arts & culture groups need leadership. Queens is the only borough that does not have an active arts council. There was a discussion on funding and the lack of awareness for artists when funding becomes available.

Karesia Batan thanked everyone for their attendance at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kim Waber