

Cultural Affairs Commission Meeting September 2, 2025

Attendees: M. Cajigas, T. Dhonup, I. Gardin, N. Gilson, R. Hageman, R. Moore, L. Stanger, K. Wuzzardo

Absent: A. Crutchfield, M. Monk Flake, K. Flores, M. Loter

Staff: K. Futrell, R. Fuller (Intern), M. Riley (NHFI, Inc.)

Meeting called at 5:06pm. Introductions and welcome to new member Richard Hageman

I. Minutes

M. Cajigas called for a motion to approve the July 7 minutes. K. Wuzzardo motioned to approve minutes. Seconded by N. Gilson. Minutes unanimously approved.

II. Directors Report

America 250th -

ARPA – the department will re-release unawarded ARPA funds. The new RFA process is anticipated to begin in November. R. Moore and K. Wuzzardo offered to hold an info session to help organizations with the application process. R. Moore will add a session on applying for city RFPs to the "Skillbox Lives" schedule.

Boathouse - the boathouse will likely be closed for a significant portion of 2026 due to the planned replacement exterior concrete platform. This will have an impact on bookings, particularly weddings. K. Wuzzardo raised the question of whether insurance would cover the potential loss of business.

Black Wall Street - the August event was well attended. A debrief with the Chief Administrator's Office will be held in the coming weeks. Discussion centered on incorporating more historical aspects into future festivals. Suggestions included a standalone event or a historical tent.

Other - The department has received a partnership proposal from Nick DiMaria about scaling up the current Fall weekend jazz performance series.

Public Art – Murals: Members revisited the discussion about the Fair Haven I-91 underpass mural maintenance. Concern was expressed over long-term maintenance of murals. Members agreed to assist with additional mural power washing. Members proposed a "Adopt the Mural" program where local businesses could sponsor its maintenance.

Tree Lighting - The event is scheduled for the first December 4. Small Business Holiday Village will not be on the green this year. Members discussed options for activating the Green. The department is exploring the cost of adding amusements, like a Ferris wheel, to the budget.

III. Old Business

T. Dhondup provided an update on his outreach for an Immigrant Heritage Month/Welcoming Week project. He has connected with the Asian Pacific American Coalition of Connecticut (APAC) but has found other groups are currently focused on community emergencies. The commission discussed ways to move forward with a small, collaborative event.

IV. New Business

M. Riley noted A Portrait of New Haven" with Chris Randall had a successful opening. ARIA (Anti-Racism in Action) exhibit titled "From Erasure to Empowerment" will open Thursday, September 4th at 6 PM in City Hall. The Elm City Flow event on September 12th will likely be postponed due to the Guinness World Record pizza party and cycling race scheduled for the same day.

M. Cajigas offered to coordinate with M. Riley around the decoration of City Hall for Hispanic Heritage Month using last year's decorations.

Members encouraged to participate in the Taste of New Haven Guinness World Record pizza party downtown on September 12.

M. Cajigas announced that there are open spots on the Commission and that a few applicants have been vetted by City Hall.

V. Public Comment

none

ADJOURNMENT

I. Gardin motioned to adjourn. Seconded by N. Gilson. Meeting adjourned 6:04pm

NEXT MEETING MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025 via zoom AT 5:00pm.