



1763 N NORTH PARK AVE | CHICAGO, IL 60614

## **Minutes of the OTTA Members' Annual Meeting January 23, 2025**

President Ray Clark called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. Ray introduced the guests attending the meeting: Sara Feigenholtz, IL State Senator; Margaret Croke, IL State Representative; and Rileigh Heeke for Bridget Degnen, Cook County Commissioner; 43<sup>rd</sup> Ward Alderman Timmy Knudsen; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Alderman Brian Hopkins; and Isabella Lee for Mike Quigley, US House of Representatives, 5<sup>th</sup> District. Sargeant Christoph Schenk from the Chicago Police Dept/18<sup>th</sup> District also spoke briefly. Representatives from Via Chicago were also present.

### **Agenda Items:**

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Drew Roesch presented the year-end report. December 2024 Cash Balance was \$513,858. OTTA is financially sound, with no debt or mortgage. There is increased financial activity due to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Art Fair and the renovation. The Board is evaluating all revenue streams. The overall objective is to wisely spend on the neighborhood, community and investing in the Art Fair.

**Strategic Plan:** Ray reminded us that the Strategic Planning idea was initiated three years ago at the January 2022 Annual Meeting and approved on January 9, 2024. The first milestone occurred in March 2023, when the mission statement, vision & values were drafted. The actual Strategic Plan is only six pages long and is posted on the website. There are two documents: The Plan, plus a separate report & appendix, which will serve as the tool kit for the Board, and includes, goals, key measures, etc. The intent was to develop Immediate, Mid-Term and Long-Term Goals. Specific committee goals are drafted each December, with regular check-in on progress.

### **1. Committee Reports:**

#### **a. Art Fair Report by Chris Nelson**

Chris noted that we'll be celebrating our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on June 14-15<sup>th</sup>. The event has received a record 826 artist applications for 235 spots, so the Exhibitor Committee will be busy evaluating the applications. OTAF is partnering with the Silverman Group, who will help with marketing and hopefully drive more gate revenue. There is also an increased sponsorship effort. February 28<sup>th</sup> is the kick-off event, "an Old Town Art Affair." Many volunteer activities so get involved.

#### **b. Capital Improvements (CIC) by Ray Clark**

Ray reported that OTTA received \$570K in total State Grants for capital improvements to the "Art Center". The Art Center Ad Hoc Committee (ACAHC) started the process in June 2023, with Via Chicago Architects ultimately appointed in January 2024. An RFP for general contractors resulted in Brookwood Builders approved bid in October 2024. Construction began in November 2024, and in spite of unforeseen conditions, anticipated project completion date is May 1, 2025.

### **c. Events Report by Kim Thorstensen**

Chair Aneta Tomaszewicz was unable to attend, so Kim provided an update. The Events Committee had an exceptionally busy 2024: Bastille Day, Oktoberfest, Third Thursdays (highlighting local figures and businesses), Greek Food & Wine, Elvis Tribute Concert, etc. Plans are in place for an event-filled 2025, too.

### **d. HD/PZ Report by Beth Burk**

Beth noted HD/PZ has hosted “Fun” raising activities and local interest tours in 2024. The Committee is also advising neighbors on city rules and process. One of the biggest achievements was the Old Town Building Catalog: a link is included on the OTTA website.

### **e. Grants Report by Lotika Pai**

Lotika recapped the 2024 Grant activity, which awarded \$40,000 to 16 grant applicants. The 2025 Grant budget is \$30,000. Grant applications will be received through March 31<sup>st</sup>, with the final grantee list provided to the Board at their May 2025 meeting.

**2. Year in Review by Ray:** Highlights of 2024 included: Bylaws review and revision (3-year cycle); New planter boxes at Triangle Center; 2024 Earth Day activities; new John Kearney horse sculpture, clearing out storage/Garage Sale and Giveaway (in preparation for building renovation); engaged more than hundred neighbors in service programs benefitting our local Police & Fire Departments, veterans, migrants and others in need.

**3. Election of 2025 Board Members:** Jane Bachmann, Secretary, noted that the Nominating Committee (comprised of Laura Becker, Chair, Vi Daley, Dorothy DeCarlo, Leah Marshall, & Dave Montgomery) did an excellent job of identifying candidates for the 2025 OTTA Board. Those nominated were introduced, and a voice vote was taken to confirm the election of the following 2025 Board Members: Ray Clark (President/2-year term), Drew Roesch (Treasurer/2-year term), Matthew Langer (1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/1-year term), Harrison (Sony) Oliff (Secretary/1-year term), Kim Thorstensen (Director/3-year term), & Ben Wolfe (Director/3-year term). (Please note: The following individuals continue as Board Members: Aneta Tomaszewicz, Beth Burk, Lotika Pai, and Elaine Frei. Chris Nelson is the Art Fair Chair and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.)

**4. Recognition of Retiring Directors:** Ray acknowledged outgoing Board members for their hard work: Anne Giffels (1<sup>st</sup> Vice President), Jane Bachmann (Secretary), and Directors Dave Montgomery and Alan Lougee. Ray also thanked Barbara Guttman (Director of Operations) and Elinda Xiao (Administrative Assistant) for all they do for the Center.

**3. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM

**Respectfully submitted,  
Jane Bachmann, 2024 OTTA Secretary**