



CITY OF CHICAGO



COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL EVENTS, CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND RECREATION  
CITY COUNCIL  
CITY HALL - ROOM 200  
121 NORTH LASALLE STREET  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

ALDERMAN NICHOLAS SPOSATO  
CHAIRMAN

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JAN 5 '22 9:29AM

**COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL EVENTS, CULTURAL AFFAIRS & RECREATION  
MONTHLY RULE 45 REPORT  
DECEMBER 2021**

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**Pursuant to Rule 45 of the City Council Rules of Order, the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation submits the following Monthly Rule 45 Report for December 2021.**

**Date, Time & Location of Meeting:**

On December 2, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation held a virtual video conference meeting, in Chicago, Illinois.

**Attendance:**

The following members were virtually present at the December 2, 2021 Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation Meeting: Chairman Sposato (38), Vice-Chair Vasquez (40), LaSapata (1), King (4), Sadlowski-Garza (10), Rodriguez (22), Tabares (23), Taliaferro (20), Cardona (31), Nugent (39), Tunney (44), Gardiner (45), Martin (47), Osterman, (48), Hadden (49), and Silverstein (50).

The following member(s) were not present at the December 2, 2021 Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation Meeting: (All committee members were present)

The following non-member Alderman were present: Coleman (16), Burnett (27)

**The Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation addressed the following items:**

Approval of the November 2021 Monthly Rule 45 Report for the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation.

*APPROVED BY COMMITTEE 12/02/2021*

A2021-170 Appointment of Erin Harkey as Commissioner of Cultural Affairs and Special Events  
Lightfoot (Mayor)

*PASSED COMMITTEE 12/02/2021*

**December 2, 2021, 10:00 a.m. Meeting of Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation**

Vice Chairman Vasquez called the meeting to order (which was held virtually, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.) Chairman Sposato then took roll call, which established a quorum of members present and noted that their “yes” or “present “ response will be determined as a “yes” vote when this quorum roll call is used as a reference vote for later items. He announces that there are no speakers signed up for public comment and he will move on with the regular agenda.

The Vice Chairman then called for the approval of the **November 2021 Monthly Rule 45 Report** for the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation. Having no questions from the members, Alderman Hadden made a motion to approve the Monthly Rule 45 Report. Hearing no objections, the item was approved.

Vice Chairman Vasquez moved on to the next item on the agenda. **A2021-170** An appointment of Erin Harkey as Commissioner of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. He then introduced Erin and asked if she would like to tell the committee a little bit about herself.

Erin Harkey addressed the committee members and said that the nomination of Commissioner of Cultural Affairs and Special Events is without a doubt the highlight of her career and she is very excited about the opportunity. Erin said the arts have been a central part of her life for as long as she can remember. She graduated college in Washington DC at Howard University with a BBA in Marketing. She enrolled in the University of Southern California where she obtained two masters degrees in public art administration and urban planning. After completing her education, Erin worked at numerous cultural institutions in California until five and half years ago, when she felt a calling to go to Chicago. The City of Chicago hired Erin as a project administrator with DCASE, where she oversaw the Year of Public Art and was then promoted to Deputy Commissioner for programming. She was then promoted to first Deputy Commissioner at DCASE in March 2021 where she served a dual role as Senior Policy Advisor for arts and culture at the Mayor’s office, working closely with the policy team, advising on cultural policy and strategies across all city agencies. She also noted that the last two years have been incredibly hard with the pandemic upending the cultural sector, and then provided detailed statistics of the industry losses in finance and jobs.

Erin Harkey publically thanked Mayor Lightfoot and all the committee (Alderpersons) for the unprecedented investment in the 2022 recovery budget where DCASE will see an increase of 26 million in new arts and cultural investment to support artists and creative industries, including a 10-million-dollar allocation from the corporate budget - the first in the city’s history. She then spoke at length about the plans moving forward to include all 77 neighborhoods (in all 50 wards) equally, and to further include and/or increase partnerships with CPS, CTA, libraries, parks, and the City Council Members.

Vice Chairman Vasquez thanked Erin, letting her know that she is valued and that Mayor Lightfoot should be commended for recommending Erin Harkey for appointment. He then opened the floor to the committee members for questions and comments.

Alderman LaSpata let Erin know that he appreciated their conversation earlier in the week, and her perspective on place keeping for those on the verge of displacement or trying to hold on to a sense of identity in their community, and finding ways of maintaining those critical voices in our communities. He said he looked forward to working with her and recognized Vice Chairman Vasquez on sitting in as Chair for the meeting.

Vice Chair recognizes Alderman Martin. The Alderman states that he agrees with his colleagues and is excited for this appointment, saying that we know that so many arts and culture institutions and individuals who work in that space were the first to be profoundly impacted by Covid and in many situations, among the last to rebound. As we continue to support our artistic community, he thinks it has never been more important to maintain and expand this close working relationship, because our artists will help us make sense of the pain and trauma we continue to experience, and we cannot lost sight of that right now.

Vice Chair recognizes Chairman Nicholas Sposato. The Chairman tells Erin he is thrilled about her nomination and is confident that it'll be a landslide, not only in this committee, but in Council, and he looks forward to working with her in this awesome department and offers his best wishes to her on this great appointment.

Alderman Osterman stated that trying to celebrate the arts in the communities and work with local institutions, on the ground, and with all 77 neighborhoods is really critical for DCASE. Secondly, he asked that she try to partner and coordinate with the Park District, saying that there are so many events between the two, and that he would like the information to be more readily available to all of "us". He recognized her great department and great staff.

Alderwoman Hadden expressed that she thought the direction the department is headed is fantastic. She is thrilled to have her at the helm and let her know that her leadership did not go unnoticed before.

Vice Chair recognizes Alderwoman King. Alderwoman King states that she does not know Erin that well, but that her colleagues are thrilled to have her in the position, so she is looking forward to it as well. She wanted to follow up on Alderman Osterman's query about making sure that Aldermen are notified about events, saying there were times in the past year where events were planned in her ward, and she had no idea. She said she could've been very helpful to the department, but instead it caused a lot of confusion. Alderwoman King said she thinks that the department had different people in it that had a different view about how we should be notified, and she wanted Erin to speak to her approach to this.

Erin said she was glad she brought it up, saying the department heard Alderwoman King loud and clear at the budget hearing where a lot of Aldermen expressed concern about the amount of time and interface with planning these special events in the wards, and they are in process of reviewing the administrative back end of these procedures and potentially extending the deadline for applications to be submitted to ensure enough time to communicate and get input back to event organizers. They are also going to update their communication system by asking for a designated person to speak to from each ward so that nothing is happening in your ward without your awareness, input, and buy in. Alderwoman King then expressed that she and Alderwoman Dowell would likely hold off on the legislation they've introduced to reinforce existing statute regarding a more rigorous process while Erin is looking into it. She said she was looking forward to working with Erin.

Vice Chairman Vasquez notes that since there are no further questions from other members, he has a few he would like to ask, following up on a previous conversation with then Commissioner Kelly about the opportunities for merchandising and the like at the store in the Cultural Center. He sees an opportunity there to uplift talent and get exposure even on something like a consignment level. Erin said the Buddy store is up and running and she would be glad to have a conversation further about it, and possibly introduce him to the people running the store. Vice Chair said that he and Alderman Scott have been talking through the city branding and possibly being

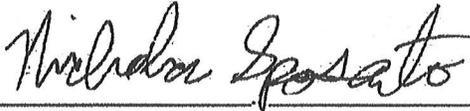
merchandised but wanted to inquire what would need to be changed on a policy level to get that accomplished. Vice Chair said he had already started in the 40<sup>th</sup> ward on the ground, working with CDOT, creating a public space for open programming and performers. Erin said they could have more conversation and that she believes Alderman LaSpata and Alderman Osterman also brought this up about finding local on the ground partners that DCASE can partner with.

Vice Chair thanked Erin Harkey and said she had big shoes to fill following Commissioner Kelly. He then asked for a motion to recommend passage of this item (A2021-170) by the affirmative vote of all the members present for the roll call to determine quorum. Chairman Nicholas Sposato makes a motion. The "do pass" recommendation of this ordinance will be reported out at the next City Council Meeting.

Chairman Sposato spoke briefly, saying he wants to thank everyone, and telling Erin that the 100 percent participation in the meeting says a lot about her, and he looks forward to working with her.

Vice Chairman Vasquez recognized that having no further business before the Committee and asked for a motion to adjourn by the same roll call vote used to determine quorum. Alderman Martin moved to adjourn. The Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Nicholas Sposato,  
Chairman, Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation