

CITY OF ASHLAND

PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

July 15, 2022

Draft Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ken Engelund called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. via Zoom.

Commissioners Present:

Ken Engelund
Cassie Preskenis
Laura Bloom
Stanley Smith

Staff Present:

Johanna Tuthill, Associate Planner
Mike Morrison, Public Works Superintendent

APRC Liaison:

Jim Lewis (absent)

Council Liaison:

Stefani Seffinger (absent)

Absent Members:

Joel Frank
Destiny Young
Jennifer Longshore

Members of the Public:

Peter Finkle
Andrew Stallman

II. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA - None

III. PUBLIC FORUM - None

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Public Arts Commission Regular Meeting, June 17, 2022

Commissioners Preskenis/Smith m/s to approve the minutes as presented. Voice Vote: ALL AYES. Motion passed 4-0.

V. LIAISON REPORTS

- Community Development Liaison – Associate Planner Johanna Tuthill shared that the Golden Connections sculpture had been cleaned.
- Council Liaison – Councilor Seffinger informed the Commission that the City Council will consider reducing the number of commissions for the City and who they each report to at its July 19, 2022 meeting. The Council will consider the Commission be renamed the Public Arts Council, which would report directly to the City Council. Councilor Seffinger added that City Manager Joe Lessard is currently working on a code amendment to this affect, but that she believes it would not hugely impact the Commission's duties or mode of operation. Commissioner Smith inquired if this would impact how the Commission chose new members or how it acquired funding. Councilor Seffinger stated that the Council is not considering a change how new Commissioners are chosen, but that concerns have been raised that a more thorough process of selecting new commissioners should be adhered to. She noted that there does not appear to be any desire from the Council to change the direction of the Commission.

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Councilor Seffinger related that the budget is still of concern to the Council, and that the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department is considering ending its lease of Pioneer Hall in addition to other budget changes.

On the next election ballot will be how much of the food and beverage tax will go the Parks department versus the general fund. Mr. Lessard has also indicated that all city administrators be considered city employees, and therefore Park Administrators would be hired by the City Manager instead of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

- Equity Lens Follow-Up, Land Acknowledgement
 - Chair Engelund read the Land Acknowledgement that was approved at the Commission's June 17, 2022 meeting, and suggested that the Commissioners rotate who reads the acknowledgement at the beginning of each meeting.
 - Commissioner Smith was in favor of the inclusion of the statement, but that the Commission should add an acknowledgement that the land had been illegally taken from the original inhabitants, and include an apology. Commissioner Preskenis agreed, and volunteered to work with Commissioner Smith on an addendum to the land acknowledgement.
- Public Works Update – Mike Morrison
 - Medallions – Four of the five medallions are ready, but the fifth one located at Railroad Park has become complicated. The concrete for the inlay will need to be replaced, along with a nearby ADA ramp that is out of compliance.
 - The plans for the installation are being reviewed by engineers, and the plan review themselves will likely cost approximately \$17,000, and the installation will cost approximately \$25,000 for the Railroad Park medallion alone.
 - The Ashland Parks and Recreation department will need to pay for any work done in the park itself, while Public Works will pay for the ADA ramp and the sidewalks adjacent to the installation site. The artwork itself will be paid for out of the City's Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), and will likely cost \$1,000 per medallion.
 - Commissioner Smith inquired if it would be more efficient to install the four medallions first and delay the installation of the Railroad Park medallion, to which Mr. Morrison responded that it would be more cost effective to install all medallions at once.
 - Nourishing Our Community Plaque
 - Mr. Morrison suggested that a plan be submitted to the city engineers for review. He informed the Commission that Public Works has had plaques stolen after installation in the past.
 - Art Painting of Utility Boxes
 - Chair Engelund stated that there is interest from the Ashland High School to have some teachers and students paint utility boxes around the City. Mr. Morrison requested that the Commission provide him with a list of utility boxes that it wished to see painted, but that the list would need to be sent to the Electric Department for confirmation. He noted that some stickers are legally required to be placed on utility boxes, and that they may affect the artwork.
 - Rio Amistad Repair

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- Mr. Morrison stated he is waiting for a proposal from the artist before beginning repairs. He added that any contractor working for the City would need to be given insurance for the work, which creates a cost barrier to repairing the art piece. An exception could be made, but the City Attorneys would need to examine any reduction in the required insurance before work could begin. Chair Engelund pointed out that the City is required to maintain its art pieces, and Mr. Morrison replied that the city employees working on the project would be not able to accomplish it in an artistic fashion. Therefore the artist would need to be involved.
- Haines & Friends Grant – Neighborhood Project – Peter Finkle
 - Mr. Finkle suggested that the Commission submit an application for art funding to the Haines & Friends Grant for more neighborhood art projects, specifically the utility boxes proposal. Any application would need to be submitted before August 30, 2022. Mr. Finkle stated that he would be willing to help find individuals or neighborhood groups who wish to have public art on their streets or in their HOAs.
 - Mr. Finkle requested that the Commission apply for \$1,500 - \$2,000 from the Grant to fund neighborhood art.
 - Commissioner Smith inquired what the process for approval would be, citing the Commission's arduous process in confirming any art project. Mr. Finkle suggested that the Commission contact any Commissioners who were part of the original approval process for the utility box art projects done between 2009 – 2015. He added that it appeared that the Commission would request designs from artists before approving them and moving them on to the City Council for final approval.
 - Chair Engelund asked if a motion to submit an application for \$3,000 for neighborhood funding from the Haines & Friends art fund would be sufficient. Mr. Finkle responded that the application will also need to include a specific timeline, cost of equipment and supplies, and a proposal for the artwork.
 - Commissioner Preskenis suggested that the application included a disclaimer that the Commission would be awarding the funds to 5-6 neighborhoods that apply for it. This could meet the requisite level of specificity for the application, while also giving the Commission an opportunity to create a application to be used by various neighborhoods looking to fund utility box art projects. Commissioner Preskenis volunteered to help create the neighborhood art application, and also assist in writing the grant application. Commissioner Bloom also agreed to help write the grant application.
 - Commissioner Smith suggested that the Commission not make the neighborhood art fund requests conditional upon approval of the Haines & Friends Grant application, and that the Commission should instead commit to funding the neighborhood art regardless. Commissioner Preskenis pointed out that any funding from the Commission would first need to be approved by the Council.
 - Commissioner Bloom expressed concern that the Commission had too many variables to consider before writing the grant application before the August 30th deadline. Mr. Finkle responded that he had had already seen interest from the community in reviving the utility box art project, and added that he could also reach out to individuals and various art groups. He concluded that he could garner interest in the project to meet the grant request deadline if the Commission could create a simple community application form within the next two weeks.
 - Commissioner Smith queried if the Commission should request funding from the Council before requesting art work applications from the community. Councilor Seffinger suggested that the community applications stipulate that acceptance of the proposal would be contingent upon approval of the funding by the Council or the Haines & Friends art grant.

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- Commissioners Bloom and Preskenis volunteered to work with Mr. Finkle the grant application and neighborhood art project, and provide an update to the Commission at its August 19th meeting.

VII. PAC WORKPLAN

- First Friday Report
 - Commissioner Preskenis stated that the First Friday art talk was very successful and that she appreciated being able to engage with the community. There will be another First Friday art talk in September. Chair Engelund agreed, and noted that there was a large amount of foot traffic.
- Golden Connections Update – Plaque clean-up
 - Chair Engelund informed the Commission that they have been moved up for the plaque fabrication, at which point the Commission can move on to bidding for the plaque attachment.
- Say Their Names Proposal Update
 - The proposal went before the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission on July 13, 2022. The location was approved, and the project will now go to the City Council.
- John Pugh Mural Project: Status Report
 - Chair Engelund and Commissioner Smith went to Mr. Pugh's studio last week and looked at some of his projects in development. He is an internationally renowned artist who now resides in Ashland.
 - There was also an Elks Lodge representative who was very excited, and the Elks Lodge will be funding a draft model for Mr. Pugh to make.
 - Commissioner Smith conveyed that this would be an incredible and significant addition to the public art, but the cost would be approximately \$160,000.
 - The Commissioner discussed it could find independent supports and funding for the project.
 - Chair Engelund informed the Commission that Mr. Pugh will begin by creating a 3D model of the project before potentially making a proposal to the Commission in August. Beyond that, it would need all necessary approvals.
 - Chair Engelund noted that The Elks Lodge does not want to be the champion of the fundraising, so funding will need to be secured before approving the project.
 - He spoke with Ms. Tuthill about requesting the new finance director, who has yet to be determined, to create a specific account for these contributions. Historic Commissioner Beverly Hovenkamp has indicated that the Historic Commission is in agreement that Mr. Pugh's mural could be the basis for the MAP II for downtown.
 - Commissioner Preskenis drew the Commissions attention to projects from Micah BlackLight that is also looking to be funded, and suggested that the Commission view this discussion through an equity lens. She asked what the Commissioner was raising for Mr. Pugh versus what it was raising for Mr. BlackLight.
 - Chair Engelund stated that both projects would total a \$300,000 investment, and that both would bring the art scene forward in the City. He also noted that Mr. Pugh has indicated that he will be including representation of native people in his artwork. Commissioner Smith agreed with Commissioner Preskenis that these two art pieces should not be competing for funding from.
 - Chair Engelund stated that the Commission has the opportunity to recommend seed money which could draw attention to each project.

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- Chair Engelund noted that he had sent Mr. BlackLight a link to a website that funds Black Lives Matter art pieces.
- Class Project – Commissioner Preskenis
 - Commissioner Preskenis informed the Commission that she was tasked with interviewing members of the community, and she chose to conduct these interviews through the lens of public art. She was taken aback at how few people knew of the Commission and its work, and wondered how they could connect with the community on a greater level.
 - Councilor Seffinger commented that the City in general does not have a large social media presence.
 - Chair Engelund mentioned the Power of Public Art video that was created by the Commission in 2020 as an informative source. He suggested that they shorten the video and use it to connect with deeply with the community and get people to think about public art in a way that they may not have in the past. Chair Engelund assured the Commission that he would bring this forward in a later meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT - 9:43 AM
Next Meeting: July 15, 2022

IX. ATTACHMENTS
June 17, 2022 Minutes