

CITY OF ASHLAND

PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
October 21, 2022
DRAFT Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ken Engelund called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. via Zoom.

Commissioners Present:

Ken Engelund
Cassie Preskenis
Laura Bloom
Stanley Smith
Destiny Young
Joel Frank

Staff Present:

Johanna Tuthill, Associate Planner
Brandon Goldman, Acting Community Development Director

APRC Liaison:

Leslie Eldridge

Council Liaison:

Stefani Seffinger (absent)

Absent Members:

Members of the Public:

Peter Finkle
John Pugh

II. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA - None

III. PUBLIC FORUM – No member of the public wished to speak.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Public Arts Commission Regular Meeting, August 19, 2022

Commissioners Preskenis/Bloom m/s to approve the minutes with non-substantive corrections. Voice Vote: ALL AYES. Motion passed 6-0.

V. LIAISON REPORTS

- APRC Liaison – Chair Engelund introduced Ashland Parks and Recreation Commissioner Leslie Eldridge as the new APRC Liaison to the Commission.
- Community Development Liaison – Associate Planner Johanna Tuthill stated that Michael Morrison, the Public Works Superintendent, had informed her that the Medallions had been delayed due to staffing shortages but were still progressing.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

- Introduction – Chair Engelund introduced Acting Community Development Director Brandon Goldman to the Commission. Mr. Goldman provided his professional background as well as his connection to Public Art.
- Chair Engelund proposed a resolution expressing appreciation and admiration for former Community Development Director Bill Molnar, who retired from the City on September 30, 2022 after many decades of public service.

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Commissioners Smith/Preskenis m/s to approve the resolution. Voice Vote: ALL AYES. Motion passed 6-0.

- Mr. Goldman detailed appropriate conduct for public officials and employees regarding elections. He noted that members of the Commission are considered public officials and as such are prohibited from engaging in political advocacy while in their official capacity.
- Annual Report to Council – Chair Engelund briefly spoke to annual Commission report he gave to the City Council on October 4, 2022, and thanked Ms. Tuthill for her assistance.

VII. PAC WORKPLAN and PROJECT UPDATES

- Peter Finkle suggested that a new plaque be commissioned for the "Nourishing Our Community" project. He offered three options for consideration (see attachment #1).

Commissioners Smith/Frank m/s to approve option #3 with the following corrections:

- Change the sentence from 'All three "nourished" Ashland residents...' to 'All three nourished Ashland residents, both figuratively and literally...'
- Removing the last sentence.

Voice Vote: ALL AYES. Motion passed 6-0.

Commissioners Smith/Preskenis m/s for Commissioner Frank to design the plaque in a similar fashion to the Gold Connections piece and get a quote for the project. Voice Vote: ALL AYES. Motion passed 6-0.

- John Pugh Presentation – Proposed Gift to the City: Elks Building Mural
 - Mr. Pugh provided a presentation to the Commission regarding his proposed mural on the Elks Lodge building (see attachment #2).
 - Commissioner Preskenis inquired if Mr. Pugh had reached out for feedback on his project from local indigenous peoples. Mr. Pugh replied that he had begun to seek feedback but that he is very early in the process. Commissioner Preskenis suggested that Mr. Pugh consider how his project could be perceived by local indigenous peoples, to which Mr. Pugh replied that he is open to opening that dialogue, making changes, and growing the project.
 - Commissioner Smith suggested that the artwork include an historical figure like Grandma Aggie. Commissioner Preskenis added that Grandma Aggie's ancestors could also be an appropriate addition. Mr. Pugh was receptive to this idea.
 - Commissioner Frank recommended that the project no contain any politically-charged elements, particularly with the artist being of Caucasian heritage. Mr. Pugh responded that it is his intention to create an historical piece, not a political one. Commissioner Smith agreed that the political impact should be considered, but that the proposed project has a greater historical context than a political one. Commissioner Smith added that Mr. Pugh could be accused of appropriating Native American imagery. Commissioner Young agreed that the Commission should be prepared for some political pushback. Commissioner Preskenis commented that the artwork would not be political, it would be human, and could promote healing within the community. Mr. Pugh stated that his art could have the opportunity to provide healing.
 - Chair Engelund noted that, with the mural packet required for the project, the budget for whole artwork would be approximately \$200,000.
 - Commissioner Frank commented that many pieces of City art had become oversaturated with references to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and that Mt. Shasta would not be appropriate for

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inclusion in a City of Ashland artwork. Mr. Pugh responded that the mountain included in the artwork was Mt. Ashland, and that only a prelude to OSF would be represented in his project.

Commissioner Smith/Bloom m/s that the Commission endorses the “Where the Crow Lights” concept and to bring into the public art collection upon completion as a gift to the City, with the appropriate due diligence to the related indigenous communities. Voice Vote: Commissioners Bloom, Smith, Preskenis, Young, Engelund: AYE.

Commissioner Frank: NAY. Motion passed: 5-1.

Mr. Goldman commented that the Historic Commission had voiced approval for the project, and that the Commission could seek a further endorsement for the artwork’s final approval.

- Ashland Gateway Project
 - Chair Engelund mentioned that the prospect of a Gateway project had arisen in discussions with Scott Fleury, the Director of Public Works, and Beverly Hovenkamp, the Chair of the Historic Commission. It was suggested that the City consider the idea of establishing a Gateway Project and explore ideas for a more welcoming artworks at one-two sites in Ashland. It would be unrelated to the MAP project.
 - Commissioner Bloom wondered whether this would interfere with projects currently in progress.
 - There were discussions about what form these gateways would take. Commissioner Preskenis suggested a mural underneath the train tracks on the north end of the City, but both her and Commissioner Bloom were concerned about the Commission’s limited time and resources in undertaking another project.
 - Chair Engelund volunteered to begin the process, with other Commissioners taking on various steps in the future.

Commissioner Bloom/Preskenis m/s for the Commission to explore the establishment of a Gateway Project. Voice Vote: ALL AYES. Motion passed 6-0.

- Meetings with H.C. Chair and Commission: MAP I, MAP II, Volunteers
 - Chair Engelund stated that he had given a presentation to the Historic Commission, and had proposed that both commissions recruits one-two members to form a subcommittee regarding the MAP II project, There was discussion regarding who among the Commission would be willing to volunteer to spearhead the MAP II project. Chair Engelund commented that the MAP I project had taken a considerable amount of work, but had established much of the needed groundwork for MAP II.
 - Commissioner Preskenis expressed interest in assisting identifying the next MAP II project location. Chair Engelund thanked Commissioner Preskenis, and commented that Mr. Finkle and members of the Historic Commission would also be involved.
- Public Forum considerations with Micah Blacklight’s work as a key component
 - Commissioner Preskenis announced that Micah Blacklight’s project was approved by the City Council, and Mr. Blacklight has now begun fundraising. He has requested that the Commission hold two public forums to assist with this, with the first taking the form of a panel discussion. There could also be an open discussion portion where non-BIPOC members of the community would be able to offer candid feedback on the project, as well as a Q&A. Chair Engelund said that the first public forum is currently scheduled for January 12, 2022, and would be used to then set up the second public forum.
 - Commissioner Preskenis invited any additional Commissioners to join in the organization of the meetings.

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- Chair Engelund detailed how there have been discussions over the idea of creating a rack card for the Public Art Collection. It could be distributed at art galleries, and would direct holders to the Public Art Collection website.
- Commissioner Smith noted that one may already exist, and Commissioner Preskenis said that there is an outdated one at the Chamber of Commerce.
- Chair Engelund stated that the price would not exceed \$500 and be developed by Bruce Bayard, and would be 5x9. Commissioner Smith suggested that his company could do the printing if the Commission covers the cost of the paper.

Commissioner Engelund/Preskenis m/s to commission the creation of 1,000 5x9 rack cards with Sole Source design to the Art Authority for the cost of the paper. Voice Vote: ALL AYES. Motion passed 6-0.

Commissioner Smith inquired when the Commission would return to in-person meetings. Chair Engelund stated that it is up to the Commission's discretion, and that the meetings could be a hybrid of in-person and Zoom in order to accommodate Commissioners with limited schedules. Mr. Goldman stated that the City could host in-person meetings, and that the Commission could vote to allow online participation during the meetings. Chair Engelund noted that the Historic Commission allowed for online participation for its members. Commissioner Young remarked that in-person meetings could be disruptive to those with full-time jobs. Chair Engelund suggested that he discuss this topic with staff prior to the November 18, 2022 meeting.

Chair Engelund requested that some clarity be provided to the Commission regarding the state of its art funding balance. Mr. Goldman mentioned that he reached out to the Finance Department for the funds used for public art. He noted that the balance is currently \$57,000, but that those funds are limited to tourism-related projects and all funding is granted at the discretion of the Council. A separate Public Art fund would come with auditing requirements, and past allocations from the Council were between \$20,000 - \$35,000 annually. Chair Engelund thanked Mr. Goldman, and requested that he assist the Commission in receiving regular financial updates regarding the fund's balance.

Commissioner Preskenis mentioned the Commission had not gotten an update about the Utility Box art application to the Oregon Department of Transportation, and hoped that it was progressing. She also noted that the Commission had asked Council Liaison Stefani Seffinger to bring the updated land acknowledgement to the Council.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT - 10:06 AM
Next Meeting: November 18, 2022