

Notes

Selection Panel Gateway Island

September 11, 2015

Selection Panel: Bruce Bayard, Allison Renwick, Scott Fleury, Amy Blossom, John Davis, Erika Leppman, Christian Burchard

### Welcome

Margaret Garrington, chair of the Public Art Commission welcomed the panel. She reminded the group that art is subjective and encouraged the group to put aside personal likes and dislikes, to focus on the criteria and to reach consensus on the piece that works best for the site and for Ashland.

### Criteria

#### **A. Selection Criteria extracted from RFQ Project Intent – How closely does the art piece meet the goals set out in the RFQ:**

- Is the piece contemporary and original?
- Will the artwork stimulate conversation and create a sense of identity for site?
- Does the piece have the potential to become a visual landmark/iconic to Ashland?
- Will the piece enhance the Gateway location and the experience of entering downtown?

#### **B. Artistic merit and creativity**

- How strong (positive or negative) is your response to the visual appearance of the work? Does the piece have the wow factor?
- How well does the artwork activate the site in terms of size, form, color, magnitude, etc?
- Is the piece engaging from differing viewpoints, levels, angles, and perspectives?
- Comparatively, how does each work rate in originality, concept, vision, and overall aesthetics?

#### **C. Consideration of public art master plan goals, purpose and mission**

- Would the art piece elevate awareness of public art in the city?
- Is the design visually memorable to the diverse users of the site?
- Does the piece lend a unifying identity for Gateway and the public spaces, buildings, and roadways that surround/cross it?

#### **D. How the artwork fits within the context of the site**

- Does the concept articulate the space by expressing a coherent whole engaging to all (pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, library, fire station, and bus stop users)
- Is the work appropriate for the City placing Ashland in an contemporary context artistically?

#### **E. Potential safety conflicts**

- Does the proposal present conflicts that would interfere with traffic, pedestrian, bicycle or other public safety concerns?

#### **F. Practical considerations**

- Technical feasibility: can the work be built and installed as proposed?
- Is the piece/material easily maintained?

Davis started the discussion by stating that the three different artists have three unique approaches in respect to their background and history: product design (Stoller), engineering design (Beeman) and intuitive fine art design (Zoccola).

Zoccola's design approach is site specific. She conceives her designs based on the site, and the design is unlike any of her previous work. Stoller and Beeman presented concepts that seemed to be variations on their previous work. Stoller's concept is a duplication of his previous work and the primary change is the design of the laser art. Davis commented that he has seen Stoller's work and it is stunning but is concerned that his proposal for Ashland is not unique or original. Beeman's piece is creative and reflects his preference for interactive work.

He commented that Zoccola's choice for the patina of the steel captures the palette of colors and texture of Ashland, and respects the tonal architecture of the City.

Renwick agreed and added that Stoller's work was too literal. Blossom commented that while the idea of hidden "picture" was charming, at the other end of downtown is the literal piece We Are Here sculpture and did we need another vertical piece with identifiable images? It was mentioned that Stoller's concept is identical to his helix form in Carlsbad but with different iconography.

Burchard commented that Stoller's piece could be larger if the artist changed the stainless steel to corten steel.

Generally, the group felt that asking an artist to change their concept was wrong and art should not be designed by a committee. In addition, making a selection based on possible changes to the concept was not a good thing. All agreed the selection must be based on the work presented not on possible artistic changes.

Renwick opened the discussion of visual impact and scale. Generally the group felt that Beeman's piece was out of proportion and scale with the site. Zoccola's and Stoller's were more appropriate in scale. Davis feels Zoccola's piece with "bulk and height" was appropriate for the site.

The group went outdoors to view markers placed on a cobra light pole representing the height of each piece. All agreed that thirty feet (Beeman) was too tall and out of scale and that the height of either Stoller's or Zoccola's was more appropriate. They also reviewed the width and depth of the concepts and agreed that Beeman's narrow leg design was not appropriate in scale and out of proportion to the site. The widest point on Stoller's was 5 feet at the highest point of 15 feet. The group felt that Stoller's piece was not in scale to the site. Zoccola's piece is 20 feet tall with a width of 11.5 feet and a depth of 9 feet. All agreed this was the most appropriate in scale to the site.

The group agreed to eliminate Beeman's proposal from consideration.

Renwick believes that Zoccola's concept goes farther than Stoller's on all levels: it best articulates the space, it is the most appropriate in scale, it doesn't tell the viewers what to see but invites the viewers to think and to imagine what they see.

Davis feels that Zoccola is a 'fine artist' and intuited her piece from a sense of "this is what should go here". Her recommendation to place it off center was thoughtful and she presented complete ideas.

The discussion touched on safety and maintenance.

Does Zoccola's piece invite climbing? The group agreed that bad behavior can occur in any number of public places around town. As long as the piece is engineered correctly and built of non breakable parts and can withstand abuse, they should not be concerned with "what might happen". Will the patina of Zoccola's design need to be reapplied. Fleury noted that the design will be easy to maintain with the occasional power washing and that the patina will last 40 years or more since it will be applied using a flame treated application. It will be easy to repair if necessary as the piece will be built of stock steel (round and flat).

Garrington asked if the group has reached a consensus and if so was, were they ready to vote? All agreed that Zoccola's was the most compelling and appropriate piece for the Gateway Island. The vote was unanimous to move their recommendation forward to the Public Art Commission and to the City Council.

Garrington thanked the committee members for their time and their thoughtful, productive and respectful discussion.