



CHATTANOOGA PUBLIC ART COMMISSION JUNE 2020 | MINUTES

Thursday, June 18, 2020, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Zoom Video Conference

PRESENT: Ellen Simak (Chair) Vernisha Savoy (Vice Chair), John Brown, Charlotte Caldwell, Megan Ledbetter, Justin McBath, Ric Morris, Rachel Reese, Virginia Anne Sharber, and Lindsey Willke

ABSENT: John Henry and Sara Tolbert

Staff: Katelyn Kirnie (Director), Kat Wright (Program Coordinator)

CITY ADVISORY: Harolda Bryson (Legal), Eric Asboe (CDOT), Jason McKinney (YFD) and Morgan McCormick (Parks & Recreation), Eric Booker (Engineering)

- I. Recognition of Resigning Commission Member, Shaun LaRose
- II. Acknowledgement of Juneteenth: Reading
- III. Welcome and Call to Order: Ellen Simak
- IV. Verbal Roll Call for virtual meeting requirement
- V. Approval of April / May 2020 minutes; passed

ITEMS FOR VOTE

- I. **"Winter" by Daud Ahkriev proposed relocation due to 1st Street construction**
 - A. Staff proposed the relocation of "Winter", one of the "Four Seasons" series by Daud Akhriev after conversations with the 1st Street redesign project team. The relocation is prompted by the construction of "The Scramble", a sculpted streetscape project that repurposes existing infrastructure.
 - B. The "Four Seasons" were originally intended to flank both ends of the Market Street bridge, but that was not possible due to the limited clearance on the North side of the bridge and State Highway regulations.
 - C. "Winter" is currently located out of sight, up 1st Street, and the construction presents the opportunity to both repair the damage to the artworks' pedestal and provide a more prominent location that enhances the connection between the "Four Seasons" sculptures.
 - D. River City Company (RCC) and the City will coordinate to relocate "Winter" in

direct alignment with “Fall” across the 1st & Market St. intersection in the Tennessee Aquarium plaza.

- E. Staff conveyed that both Akhriev and former “Four Seasons” project team members (Peggy Townsend and River City Co.) support the relocation of “Winter” to enhance both visibility and connection for the artworks and the newly designed 1st street corridor.
- F. After concerns were raised about jurisdiction over the sidewalk and the cross walk easement, staff reassured the Commission that the siting will avoid the brick area that encroaches upon the state highway and be located instead on Tennessee Aquarium’s property.
- G. Staff intends to coordinate the relocation of “Winter” with the completion of 1st Street and “The Scramble” and complete as much of the work as possible with the assistance of City Public Works and the existing contractor for 1st street construction.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE “Winter” relocation

II. “High Four” by Louise Peterson proposed relocation due to Walnut Plaza / Ed Johnson Memorial construction

- A. Matt Whitaker of WMWA, designer of the Walnut Plaza project, has proposed the relocation of “High Four” in the new design of the plaza.
- B. “High Four” is currently located to the left of the Walnut Street Bridge where the Ed Johnson Memorial is planned. WMWA proposes to move the artwork to the right side of the bridge. Staff displayed a rendering with the proposed location.
- C. The Commission expressed concerns that the proposed site for the playful “High Four” great dane sculpture may not be appropriate given the contemplative tone of the forthcoming Ed Johnson Memorial.
- D. Staff relayed the cost advantage to site the work in the Walnut Plaza vicinity, as the general contractor has included the relocation in their scope of work. However, it was noted that the piece is quite small and PAC could look to relocate the work to existing pads downtown or in Renaissance Park.
- E. Plaza construction started last week and Staff has placed “High Four” in storage for safe keeping.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO DEFER relocation of “High Four” until after Ed Johnson Memorial is complete

III. **“City Thread” Artwork donation and transfer from River City Co. to the City.**

- A. Staff presented the collaborative project with RCC which was completed over a year ago. RCC the Commissioned the piece, has been responsible for the maintenance of the work, and now seeks to donate it to the City’s permanent outdoor collection for long term maintenance and care.
- B. Staff shared “City Thread” background as the winning design from the Passageways 2.0 competition hosted by RCC after the success of the 2016 temporary exhibition, Passageways. Staff provided an overview of the selection and installation process. The interactive piece has been the site of many activities pre-COVID 19; including concerts, yoga classes, and casual pop up shops.
- C. Staff relayed that upon voting to accept the artwork into the permanent collection, they would meet with Parks and Recreation maintenance and Chattanooga Department of Transportation (CDOT), who have jurisdiction over the location, onsite to review maintenance expectations.
- D. RCC completed initial maintenance on the piece in May 2020, details of which were provided. Staff mentioned that this work will require quite a bit of regular maintenance due to high use, but that the maintenance is fairly low cost and the piece is easy to touch up. Staff relayed that skateboard deterrents had been considered, but the artists stressed that installing the deterrents will most likely create rust on the piece. Some form of deterrent in the pavement may need to be considered.
- E. The Commission asked if the painted walls were part of “City Thread’s” assessment to which staff conveyed that the sculptural element of the piece was more of the focus, and that they will confirm with RCC how the walls will be maintained as some of them are on private properties.
- F. The Commission inquired how programming of Cooper’s Alley is managed. Staff relayed that RCC manages the programming through a temporary use permit provided by CDOT.
- G. The Commission asked if Staff had any concerns about acquiring “City Thread”. Staff conveyed that due to budget constraints as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, they were not able to hire a Collections Specialist, so capacity is limited. However, Staff said with the help of Parks Maintenance, they will proactively stay on top of maintenance as best as they can and will look to RCC to report damages as they occur.
- H. The Commission discussed the benefits of rustoleum vs. powder coating and other paint alternatives. PAC said they would explore alternative paint options that may hold up better to heavy use.
- I. The Commission asked if security cameras were in the area to which staff could not say for certain outside of Market City Center. Alley tenants, however, have

taken on more ownership in monitoring the alley, with the use of outdoor dining space in the alley.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE acceptance of “City Thread” into the City’s permanent outdoor collection with \$8,000 contributed to the public art maintenance fund.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION:

I. Round 3 of EPB ARTSPARK Goes to School program and box locations

- A. Staff presented an overview of year 3 of the program in collaboration with RCC and Hamilton County School District. As the boxes are EPB property, no formal vote is required by the Commission.
- B. Staff will advise on 5 available utility box locations for this round. Options include locations on the Northshore, Downtown and Riverfront.
- C. Staff offered the opportunity for a Commission member to sit on the ARTSPARK Goes to School Selection Panel.

II. Artists’ Work Grant Program partnership

- A. The proposed program and funding was included in the first reading of the City’s budget by City Council last week. No questions have been received regarding the program, which is typically a good sign.
- B. The program provides project funding to individual artists, artist studios and non-profit arts organizations to produce artworks for Chattanooga’s public realm. This fund will not only provide much-needed work for independent artists in the wake of COVID-19, but it will also infuse the local creative economy with various project-related purchases tied to the creation, installation, and documentation of art projects.
- C. Southeast Tennessee Development District (SETD) has been identified as the preferred fiscal agent for the City’s funding, as it is a quasi-governmental entity who does not receive operational support from the City and frequently works with governments to provide grants and loans to nonprofits and small businesses. They have partnered recently with local foundations and the City to award COVID-19 small business loans.
- D. Once the budget passes, the Lyndhurst Foundation board will consider a \$50K grant to ArtsBuild, as a lead partner in the program to provide funding to individual artists for smaller artistic projects. ArtsBuild is also working to secure a match from the Benwood and Footprint Foundations in order to facilitate more projects, which will have fewer restrictions than the City funded grants awarded via SETD. The goal is to have \$300k in total available funding for artist-led projects.

- E. Staff relayed that the program will likely manifest artworks unique to this moment in history, and prompt healing and connection amongst Chattanoogaans as an added benefit.
- F. Staff reviewed goals of the program including the intent that 75% of every project budget must support local artists, suppliers, fabricators, etc... in the Thrive region (16 counties in Tennessee / Alabama / Georgia); however, grant guidelines still need to be developed.
- G. Staff requested volunteers from the Commission to serve on the program committee and develop grant guidelines going forward. Staff and Legal clarified that the Commissioners could not serve on the committee or selection panels if they or their organization intended to apply for a grant. They may apply for grants, but cannot play a role in decision making due to the conflict of interest.
- H. The Commission urged that this program directly reflect PAC's mission and guiding principles. Staff confirmed this will be considered in developing the program and grant guidelines going forward.

REQUEST FOR UPDATES

- A. The Commission inquired about the City Artist's work amid the challenges of COVID-19. Staff confirmed that it has been challenging to integrate the City Artist, Jules Downum, into CDOT, as their capacity is somewhat limited and building relationships through virtual conversations is difficult. PAC is considering pivoting the Jules's work due to these constraints. Jules is currently exploring the possibility of a COVID-safe artwork within City streets as it relates to CDOT's work in public space. She has also curated a virtual exhibition series for PAC's social media platforms. PAC is also encouraging and exploring collaborations with Jules and other City departments.
- B. Walnut Street Plaza and Ed Johnson Memorial construction is starting with PAC providing heavy project management support. Ed Johnson Memorial is slated for completion and dedication March 2020 to coincide with the anniversary of Ed Johnson's lynching.
- C. Staff reviewed upcoming JUNETEENTH activities.



CPAC SPECIAL MEETING: JULY 2020 | MINUTES

Thursday, July 9, 2020, 2pm-3pm

Zoom Video Conference

PRESENT: Ellen Simak (Chair), Vernisha Savoy (Vice Chair), Charlotte Caldwell, John Henry, Megan Ledbetter, Justin McBath, Ric Morris, Rachel Reese, Virginia Anne Sharber, Sara Tolbert, and Lindsey Willke

ABSENT: John Brown

Staff: Katelyn Kirnie (Director), Kat Wright (Program Coordinator)

- I. Welcome and Call to Order: Ellen Simak
- II. Verbal Roll Call for virtual meeting requirement

CITY ADVISORY: Harolda Bryson (Legal)

ITEMS FOR VOTE

- I. **Final Concept for Brainerd YFD Mural by Brandon Donahue**
 - A. Staff reviewed the project background, which is an Art in Neighborhoods project granted to the Woodmore Manor Neighborhood Association from 2015.
 - B. Staff presented the mural design by Brandon Donahue, which was informed by community input and engagement activities co-facilitated by local creative strategist, Erika Roberts.
 - C. Staff noted the challenges of altering the engagement strategy to function predominantly online versus in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing constraints and provided an overview of engagement activities.
 - D. The Commission inquired about the provisions for restoration in which Staff confirmed that information will be included in the maintenance report, which is the deliverable for final payment.
 - E. The Commission asked if the community will be involved in the mural installation to which Staff replied, due to current conditions imposed by COVID-19 and with the Center closed, it would not be possible to have such a gathering.

- F. The Commission representative who served on the selection panel offered an explanation of the panel's feedback throughout the design process.
- G. The Commission asked if the portraits were of children who lived in the area and Staff relayed that the artist used a combination of stock imagery and a photograph by another TN artist, who had granted him rights of use. Brandon did provide the opportunity for the community to submit photos of neighborhood children to use in the design; however, he was not able to obtain a high quality image with the desired facial orientation and expression for use in the mural. The selection panel, which included community members preferred these photos and expressions.
- H. A Commission member mentioned that it seemed odd to have soccer ball as a symbol in the mural design, as it is not a sport that is often seen played in the Brainerd community, particularly with the strong history of basketball rivalry at Brainerd High. Staff offered to suggest this consideration to the artist and see if he would be in favor of incorporating a basketball in the design due to the local basketball rivalry and Olympian Basketball player, Venus Lacy, hailing from the community.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE Brainerd YFD Mural design as presented with the suggestion of replacing the soccer ball with a basketball.

II. Ratification of Informal Vote to Approve Temporary Street Mural Proposal by RISE Chattanooga

- A. On Tuesday, June 23, 2020 Staff emailed the Commission with a proposal from RISE Chattanooga to paint a temporary street mural on MLK Blvd.
- B. Additional Information was requested by the Commission Chair, which was provided on Wednesday, June 24. With RISE's status as a Creative Strategist already under contract with the City to conduct public art engagements along MLK Corridor, an informal vote via email was permitted.
- C. All votes were submitted via email by Thursday, June 25 at 1:00 PM as follows: APPROVE: Ellen Simak, Chair, Vernisha Savoy, Vice Chair, Charlotte Caldwell, Megan Ledbetter, Justin McBath, Ricardo Morris, Rachel Reese, Virginia Anne Sharber, Sara Tolbert, Lindsey Willke. ABSTAIN: John Henry and John Brown.
- D. As the vote was conducted informally via email, the Commission will need to take a formal vote to ratify the decision.
- E. Staff reviewed the proposal and shared completed mural photos and a video clip of the installation process which was conducted safely and without any major issues.
- F. Staff reviewed the informal vote tally taken via email and then conducted the formal vote to ratify.

VOTE: APPROVE: Ellen Simak (Chair), Vernisha Savoy (Vice Chair), Charlotte Caldwell, Megan Ledbetter, Justin McBath, Ric Morris, Rachel Reese, Virginia Anne Sharber, Sara Tolbert and Lindsey Willke. **ABSTAIN:** John Henry

III. Policy & Review Process for Temporary Street Mural Proposals

- A. In response to the Black Lives Matter proposal, and the many subsequent requests for information regarding implementing street murals, PAC and CDOT staff have collaborated on a formal Street Mural Policy and Process that reflects the process and requirements that were adhered to by RISE Chattanooga and City departments reviewing the proposal.
- B. Staff reviewed the policy in detail with the Commission.
- C. Artwork condition and maintenance provisions were discussed at length.
 - a. The Commission and the City have the ability to remove a temporary street mural at any time if a plan for removal is not outlined in the proposal. Generally speaking, temporary street murals fade over time due to the volume of vehicular traffic. The Commission suggested implementing a measure for their review of the mural's condition before removal. The Commission also suggested that an applicant provide a maintenance plan that they will be responsible for implementing during the mural's lifespan. The Commission inquired if a temporary mural could transition into a permanent artwork. Staff conveyed that the Commission can extend the lifespan indicated in the contract if the work is still in good condition should they so choose.
- D. Speed Limits and Safety provisions were discussed at length.
 - a. The Commission asked that CDOT review the 30 MPH speed limit requirement for temporary murals, as speed limits in the downtown area are known to range from 25 - 40 MPH in order not to be restrictive to desirable mural locations. CDOT will ultimately have jurisdiction on what speed limit is permissible for street murals; however, it is PAC's intention to help the applicant by providing clear guidelines upfront.
- E. Artwork Classification and Content was discussed at length.
 - a. The Commission discussed what would be considered "art" versus "statements". Staff said that if an artist is not involved in the process, the Commission could defer to CDOT's approval for tactical urbanism projects that do not include an artist. Staff also confirmed that a design that is deemed to contain primarily commercial content would be deferred to the Board of Sign Appeals for review. Staff emphasized that the Commission's review process will be focused on artistic integrity, siting, public safety, and maintenance considerations to ensure a fair evaluation.

- F. Staff urged the Commission to formalize a policy as soon as possible due to the increase in inquiries from individuals and organizations interested in implementing street mural projects.
- G. The Commission asked if the policy could be revised as new concerns or needs arise, which Legal confirmed was possible.
- H. The Commission again inquired about the ability to deny an artwork based on content or obscenities. Legal conveyed they would research Supreme Court cases concerning the 1st amendment, obscenity and hate speech and provide guidelines to the Commission to aid in their review process.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE Policy & Review Process for Temporary Street Mural Proposals with suggested revisions incorporated as noted above.