



CHATTANOOGA PUBLIC ART COMMISSION AUGUST 2020 | MINUTES

Thursday, August 20, 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 Brown, Ric Morris and John Henry

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

CITY ADVISORY: Harolda Bryson (Legal) and Morgan McCormick (Parks & Recreation)

- I. Resignation announcement and recognition of Katelyn Kirnie, PAC Director. Last day is September 18, 2020.
- II. Acknowledgement of Kat Wright, Program Coordinator working alone with Commission support as the City conducts a National search for the next Public Art Director.
- III. Staff noted that they have asked the Administration to include the Commission in the selection process.
- IV. Welcome and Call to Order: Ellen Simak
- V. Verbal Roll Call for virtual meeting requirement
- VI. Approval of June / July 2020 minutes; passed

ITEMS FOR VOTE

- I. **MLK Underpass Activation Semi-Finalists**
 - A. Staff provided an overview of the project, which is the last project of 7 projects through the Art In Neighborhoods 2015/2016 grant program.
 - B. Staff reminded the Commission that the MLK Neighborhood Association requested that the project's design development commence through a concept design competition in which the selection panel would select three semi finalists to receive a stipend for their concept design before selecting the commissioned artist.
 - C. The selection panel convened in July to review the qualified applicants and selected three semi finalists in which Staff is presenting for Commission's review

and approval to enter into a concept design contract with each.

- D. The budget for the overall commission is \$90,000 and the RFP requested multi-disciplinary artists/artist teams apply to respond to the distinct history of MLK while also enlivening the area underneath the underpass.
- E. Staff presented imagery for semi finalist Cecilia Lueza who has done small wooden sculpture for the Brainerd Community in the past. She has moved more into metal sculpture and painting since then.
- F. Staff presented imagery for semi finalist DeeDee Morrison, a sculptor who often works with light. Staff noted that there were not a lot of artist submissions who were multidisciplinary in nature. DeeDee was previously a part of a Biennial Sculpture exhibition where her piece was sited in Renaissance Park for two years.
- G. Staff presented imagery for semi finalist Giuseppe Percecati, muralist.
- H. Staff relayed the selection panel discussion of where the two muralists are used to working with less of a budget, but in order to accomplish the overall design goals, they will have to look to incorporate lighting with their mural treatment. Conversely, the panel felt that while DeeDee's works were lit, they did not necessarily have the color vibrancy by day that the panel desired. All three semifinalists appear to be on the same footing due to these considerations and their different approaches.
- I. The Commission inquired about if; and how, the Community may impact the commission or final design. Staff conveyed that RISE Chattanooga is the Creative Strategist assigned to this project, and they have already been engaged in a variety of ways with the community which will inform the semi-finalists in their concept design.
- J. Staff relayed the cross section of those in the community who were on the Selection Panel, which included Commissioner Savoy and a representative from RISE Chattanooga.
- K. The Commission urged that lighting be strongly considered in the final design as the lack of lighting in the area poses safety concerns.
- L. Staff noted a challenge this project has unlike the AIN projects in that PAC will have to work in conjunction with Norfolk Southern Railroad as they have jurisdiction in how the area underneath the underpass is activated. The costs associated with reviewing engineering plans of \$15K may factor into the overall project budget. Staff is working to mitigate those costs.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE Cynthia Lueza, DeeDee Morrison and Giuseppe Percavati as semi finalists for the MLK Underpass Activation who may enter into a contract with PAC for concept design.

II. Creative Discovery Museum (CDM) "Our Town" Grant Application for 300 Block

Project

- A. CDM would like to include PAC as a partner in this National Endowment for the Arts grant application, which would provide up to \$150,000 in funding.
- B. They will not find out if they will receive the grant for another year, but PAC wanted to gauge if the Commission would approve of the partnership should they receive the grant.
- C. PAC staff time would be fairly light in an advisory capacity, as CDM intends to manage the project with their overall facility renovations.
- D. WMWA Landscape Architect, River City Company and Chattanooga Design Studio are engaged in the planning of the 300 Block.
- E. The grant is specifically for a public artwork, which would be part of the plaza and a hugely interactive and iconic piece with a budget of \$500,000.
- F. Artwork RFQ is slated to go out in January 2021.
- G. The Commission requested that a Commissioner sit on the selection panel as Staff has limited capacity.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO PARTNER with CDM in the Our Town Grant Application for public artwork in the 300 Block Project.

III. The Porch Project: Hardscape Painting Proposal

- A. Staff prefaced the proposal as one of the first that would need to meet the requirements of the newly established temporary street mural policy which does go through PAC and CDOT review.
- B. Staff stressed that the proposal does not have a lead designer associated with it, so that may shift how the Commission views it, but that the proposal is the result of a larger planning effort with Chattanooga Design Studio (CDS) and the Gehl Studio involving extensive community engagement over two years resulting in the Innovation District Public Realm Action Plan.
- C. The Commission asked for clarity on how they should view the proposal in the absence of an artist. Staff said that the City does not have another channel for review of street paintings for aesthetic and maintenance concerns.
- D. However, Staff said that the Commission could choose to defer to CDOT, but that the Commission would need to consider the precedent it may set for others going forward. Consistency is key.
- E. Staff yielded to Commissioner Willke who is employed at CDS for a broader project overview, which focuses on Patten Towers as a dense concentration of activity.
- F. The Porch project has different components, but this proposal relates to the painting of hardscape only at corners of Patten Towers to Georgia Ave. to 10th Street in order to increase perception of a broader neighborhood.

- G. Artist Genesis Greykid, who led community engagement, has secured a team of artists to install the hardscape painting. They will be paid for their services.
- H. She also conveyed that they would like to engage a small group of Patten Tower residents to assist in the installation, and will be mindful of COVID-19 protocol in place.
- I. The paint is intended to fade over time, but CDS has set aside a budget line item for removal should it be needed.
- J. The sidewalk paint will last quite a while due to pressure washing and priming before painting. The quality will be assessed in a year, which may lead to permanent paving or similar investments beyond this temporary intervention.
- K. Staff excused Commissioner Willke so that further discussion could take place. She will also be recused from voting.
- L. The Commission addressed concerns about how the painting will fade.
- M. Questions arose if CDOT had reviewed the design, in which it was confirmed that they had, but had not weighed in on color choices in the design as of yet.
- N. The Commission asked if the diagonal lines in the crosswalk designs could be misconstrued as traffic crosswalks in which pedestrians may be confused. Staff expressed that CDOT has the jurisdiction over the matter so it will be explored further.
- O. Staff mentioned that this falls more into tactical urbanism that the Commission will continue to see going forward projects for public enhancement, but not necessarily evaluation as an artwork.
- P. The Commission expressed concerns with how the design interacts with the environment at large in that the many different colors and patterns overwhelm its surroundings.
- Q. Staff encouraged the Commission to trust the community engagement work conducted beforehand in how the community will value the intervention.
- R. Commissioner Willke rejoined the meeting in which Staff inquired about the diagonal lines / crosswalk. She said that was not included in the latest design so it will not be an issue moving forward. She also mentioned that the artists will be painting between the crosswalks that already exist, and an increase in seating capacity with modular furniture and inclusion of a telephone for short outgoing calls.
- S. Commissioner Sharber mentioned that as she is on the Board of CDS she will recuse herself from voting. Staff mentioned that should she recuse, the Commission will not have a quorum. Staff then countered that due to CDOT ultimately having jurisdiction over a tactical urbanism project, the Commission's approval is less stringent as there is not an artistic element to evaluate.
- T. The Commission opted to vote on the project for a matter of record.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE the Porch Hardscape Painting Project with Commissioners Willke and Sharber recusing themselves.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION:

I. TPL + East Lake Hardscape Painting Project

- A. This project is not at a formal proposal stage yet, but Trust for Public Land (TPL) is desiring an early October installation, which is before the next formal Commission meeting. As such, Staff wanted to present it to the Commission at its conceptual stage so that the full application including designs could be voted on via email or a Special Meeting could be conducted if need be.
- B. TPL has done extensive engagement with the East Lake community, ELLA Chattanooga and the City to improve public connection in spaces within the community.
- C. ELLA Chattanooga's Creative Strategist report indicated there was interest in intersection murals from the community. Staff reviewed 4 intersections near East Lake Park
- D. TPL is working with Street Plans, a firm based in Florida, to conduct engagement with ELLA Chattanooga specific to the intersection murals' designs, as well as implementing the mural designs.
- E. Typically their designs are simple color palette designs, which do not involve an artist in its design development.
- F. Staff conveyed that TPL desired to include the community in the implementation, which will need to be in accordance with COVID-19 safety considerations.
- G. Staff reminded the Commission that policy does provide for an informal vote via email if a project does not require City funding, so long as it is presented at a conceptual level beforehand to the Commission as an intended partnership.
- H. Discussion ensued regarding the matter to clarify the policy.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO PARTNER with TPL at the conceptual level of their hardscape painting project in East Lake which will allow per policy an informal vote via email of a proposal which fully details the project specifics as well as the intersection mural designs for final review by the Commission.

II. Bessie Smith & Blue Goose Hollow Artistic Maker

- A. Project has been in PAC's work plan as a partnership with the Bessie Smith Cultural Center (BSCC). PAC has a number of Commissioners involved as the artist is not procured through the City, but the BSCC.
- B. RFQ was issued by BSCC to recognize the Black history in Chattanooga by highlighting Bessie Smith's contributions, and also commemorate her life in Blue

Goose Hollow which was once a flourishing Black neighborhood of 1,400 people displaced by industrial development.

- C. The call is both sculptural and interpretative in nature beginning with a concept design competition and a stipend of \$1,000 towards concept development.
- D. Overall project budget is \$42,000 with an eventual artwork donation to the City to include in PAC's permanent collection.
- E. RFQ Deadline is August 28.

III. Artist Work Grants Program

- A. The Artist Work Grant (AWG) Program is continuing in its development. PAC will be convening the AWG Committee to review the guidelines and plans for launch in the next two weeks.
- B. PAC has been meeting regularly with grant partners ArtsBuild and SETD to develop grant guidelines.
- C. Chair Simak has agreed to serve on the AWG Committee, but one more Commissioner is needed. Staff recognizes that it may be a conflict of interest for many of the Commissioners to serve on the committee if they intend to apply for the grant, but opened the floor for someone to volunteer who is not applying.
- D. Staff conveyed the timeline for the Commissioner's consideration. Commissioner Ledbetter agreed to serve on the committee.
- E. City Council will likely approve the budget allocation (City's funding to the grant program) on September 22. Grants will be hosted on ArtsBuild's website and their existing grant portal.

UPDATES

I. City Creators Program

- A. Staff shared a project wrap up on the Brainerd Youth and Family Development (YFD) Center Mural, which is the Woodmore Manor Neighborhood Association / Art In Neighborhood project. The work is titled "Brainerd Vision & Legacy" by Brandon Donahue.
- B. Staff provided a project status on the Avondale YFD Center Murals. The project is slightly delayed in conducting its mural information session, because PAC thought it best to consult with the Avondale YFD Advisory Committee who has been key during the construction of the new Center in what engagement approaches may work best for their community going forward.
- C. Several members of the committee are on the artwork selection panel.
- D. Staff discussed how the committee felt that a digital engagement strategy may not be effective for the community due to issues of digital inequity and less familiarity with digital platforms.

- E. With the understanding that in person events of 10 or more are not permissible at this current time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, PAC proposed to the committee that they wait to do engagement and proceed with the project until it is safe to engage in person.
- F. The committee expressed their confidence in PAC conducting engagement virtually. Staff provided an overview of the engagement strategy and project timeline.
- G. Staff relayed that the initial delay has impacted when the final design could be presented to the Commission in a regularly scheduled Commission meeting. A special meeting to review the final design will need to be conducted.
- H. Commissioner Savoy agreed to serve on the selection panel in the place of former Commissioner Shaun LaRose who has relocated and is no longer a Commissioner.
- I. Staff provided an overview of the City Artist project “The Rolling Surprise” which unfortunately could not be executed due to safety concerns via the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff shared what they learned from the experience and possible ways to avoid a similar situation in the future.
- J. Staff shared the City’s COVID-19 digital resources which provide more context as to risk level, event planning and associated considerations.
- K. The City Artist is working with CDOT to develop a recovery plan to conduct events and the guidelines to do so safely.



**CPAC SPECIAL MEETING:
SEPTEMBER 2020 | MINUTES**

Thursday, September 17, 2020, 10am-11:45am
ZOOM Video Conference

PRESENT: Ellen Simak (Chair), Charlotte Caldwell, John Brown, Megan Ledbetter, Justin McBath, Virginia Anne Sharber, Sara Tolber and Lindsey Willke

ABSENT: Vernisha Savoy (Vice Chair), John Henry, Ric Morris and Rachel Reese

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

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

ITEMS FOR VOTE

- I. **Riverfront Asphalt Activation Design Proposal from River City Company (RCC)**
 - A. Staff reviewed the project proposal in which RCC has been in consultation with CDOT throughout the process and CDOT has approved the design.
 - B. The proposal is part of the ONE Riverfront Planning Project where RCC seeks to create temporary street visual elements as an opportunity to solicit feedback and input on a more permanent design in the future during “Open Street Sundays” which begins October 11, 2020.
 - C. “Open Street Sundays is a program in which RCC will close Riverfront Parkway to vehicular traffic on Sundays in October to allow for more space for pedestrians to visit the Riverfront area and comfortably cross the street from the Chattanooga Green to Ross’ Landing.
 - D. This special meeting is held to allow for the installation to occur before “Open Street Sundays” launches.
 - E. Staff provided an overview of the design which has been informed, and will be implemented, by muralist Alex Loza.
 - F. The design spans 230 feet in length and 25 feet across and will use exterior acrylic latex paint with a non slip additive in its implementation.
 - G. RCC intends to have two teams of ten individuals assist in the implementation who will be wearing face masks to reduce the likelihood of COVID-19

transmission.

- H. The activation is expected to last two months and RCC will work with the Downtown Chattanooga Alliance Ambassadors to pressure wash the elements off.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE Riverfront Asphalt Activation Proposal and Design.