



## CHATTANOOGA PUBLIC ART COMMISSION OCTOBER 2020 | MINUTES

Thursday, October 15, 2020, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ZOOM Video Conference

**PRESENT:** Ellen Simak (Chair) Vernisha Savoy (Vice Chair), Megan Ledbetter, Rachel Reese, Sara Tolbert and Lindsey Willke

**ABSENT:** John Brown, Charlotte Caldwell, Justin McBath Ric Morris, and Virginia Anne Sharber

**STAFF:** Kat Wright (Interim Public Art Director)

**CITY ADVISORY:** Jermaine Freeman (Mayor's Office) and Harolda Bryson (Legal)

- I. Announcements-Public Art Director Search: Jermaine Freeman
  - A. 54 applications received, some appear to be duplicates.
  - B. First round of interviews will be conducted in the next few weeks.
  - C. The PAC Commission Chair and Vice Chair will be invited to serve on the hiring committee.
- II. Welcome and Call to Order: Ellen Simak

\*A QUORUM WAS NOT INITIALLY ESTABLISHED. STAFF OPTED TO GO TO ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION RATHER THAN REVIEW ITEMS FOR VOTE AS OTHERWISE LISTED ON THE MEETING AGENDA.

\* AUGUST / SEPTEMBER MINUTES WERE NOT INITIALLY VOTED FOR APPROVAL AS WELL.

### REVIEW & DISCUSS

- I. **Upcoming Partnerships & Proposals**
  - A. East Lake Street Painting (Trust for Public Land + ELLA Chattanooga + Street Plans)
    1. The Commission was anticipating to review their final proposal with final designs prior to the Commission meeting via email; however, no such information was provided to Staff nor was a proposal received to review at today's meeting.
    2. Due to the materials they hope to use, it may not be possible to immediately paint the street with temperatures below 50 degrees should they present a proposal for December.
  - B. Bessie Smith & Blue Goose Hollow Artistic Marker (PAC + Bessie Smith Cultural Center + RISE Chattanooga)

1. National Call for Artists / RFP closed on August 28. The Artwork Selection Panel was conducted on September 9.
2. Staff reviewed the internal and external stakeholders as a part of the Selection Panel.
3. The Panel was charged with selecting 3 semi-finalists to develop concepts before the Commission is awarded. Based on the robust talent who submitted applications, the Panel felt very strongly about advancing 4 artists as semi-finalists and contributed financially to the artist stipends for concept development.
4. Staff announced Willie Cole, Rondell Crier, Ayokunle Odeleye and Bernard Williams as semi-finalists and reviewed images of work samples.
5. Staff conveyed the location of the marker at Blue Goose Hollow.
6. Staff also relayed that the project's Creative Strategist, RISE Chattanooga, is producing an oral history video to inform the semi-finalists' concepts in lieu of an onsite visit due to travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19.
7. Staff, RISE, and the BSCC will conduct a virtual site visit on October 28 with the video, urban planning efforts information, site photos and other associated details to aid in the semi-finalists' concept development.

## II. City Creators Program

- A. Staff addressed each Creative Strategist, their project assignment, and current project status to inform how the Commission intends to address their grievances concerning issues related to project deferrals and the Public Art Director search process
  1. Daniel Johnson: non-local (based in Mississippi), does not have an assignment. Staff mentioned that they conduct informal virtual meetings bi-monthly to address challenges and instill camaraderie among the cohort in which he actively participates and offers a different perspective as a non local strategist to the conversation. Staff would like to engage him in program policy recommendations based on his expertise, but that has not yet materialized.
  2. ELLA Chattanooga: returning Creative Strategist (piloted the initiative in East Lake last year). They will continue on as the advisor for the East Lake YFD Artistic basketball court and the East Lake Park functional / artistic seating project, which was the second most desired public art project in their engagement study. The YFD Center's construction is delayed as bid responses came way over budget. They will rebid the construction project in early December. Best case scenario for the public art installation is now January 2022. The East Lake seating project will commence in late Spring as Staff has more capacity.
  3. Katie Hargrave: assigned to Chatt-town Skate Park. Property acquisitions have been problematic for the City to advance some capital construction projects forward in a timely fashion. The skate park is such a project as Open Spaces conducted a feasibility study which identified a location for the park on the

Tennessee Riverfront that Hamilton County does not entirely want built there. The City owns the property, but Hamilton County manages the property, so it poses a challenge. Katie is working with Open Spaces in determining how best to regroup and re-engage the community as the public art piece of the project remains a very long way off without a location for the skate park solidified.

4. 2CREATE (Artist team of Anna Carll and Claire Vassort): assigned to East Chattanooga Satellite City Services Facility. This is a project that is also struggling to find a location. As PAC became more familiar with the project, we learned that the intent was to have the facility serve more as a Early Learning facility for Head Start. Not too long afterwards, however, the City did not obtain the real estate they desired. It was then that the City began to explore potential sites in Dalewood. Despite their ability to remain unhampered by obstacles, the construction project has not moved forward, and the team is not officially under contract with PAC for a project. PAC has attempted to pivot the team to other departments, like the Family Justice Center, who received a grant to conduct art classes for their clientele, but that effort did not materialize.
  5. Josiah Golson: assigned to Lynbrook Park as a continuation of his engagement efforts to inform phase 1 of the park design. Phase 1 should be completed by the end of the year. The public art project will be part of phase 2 of the park's design, but Parks does not yet know if they have received funding for phase 2 of the project.
  6. RISE Chattanooga: assigned to the Bessie Smith & Blue Goose Hollow Artistic Marker project, and also the two other forthcoming MLK corridor projects: MLK Underpass Activation with Norfolk Southern railroad and the MLK Neighborhood Association, and a larger tribute to Bessie Smith public art piece. Staff conveyed that RISE has extensive expertise in community engagement, and it is Staff's responsibility to make sure their practice conforms with PAC's standing operating procedures throughout all three projects.
  7. Erika Roberts: most experience with City of Chattanooga capital construction projects serving as the Creative Strategist for Brainerd YFD Center mural and the forthcoming Avondale YFD Center mural slated for installation in November.
  8. City Artist Jules Downum: Staff reminded the Commission of "The Rolling Surprise" event, in which Jules collaborated with external and internal stakeholders to conduct earlier in the Summer. It was a COVID-19 safe event that, unfortunately, was pulled by the Administration from occurring a day prior to the event. Jules has spent time since then with CDOT and Open Spaces to create an event recovery plan and guidelines for the City to implement once it is safer to do so. Staff conveyed the challenges cross collaboration among multiple departments may pose in advancing the guidelines.
- B. Staff turned over the meeting to Chair Simak to discuss with the Commission how best to respond to City Creators concerns.

1. The Commission relayed that the email Chair Simak received which acquainted her with concerns from the Creatives were not sentiments held by all.
2. Staff relayed that while project delays / deferrals are common in capital construction projects, it can be unsettling to Artists who are not familiar with the experience, as the timeline for their scope of work is also impacted. Staff maintained that while it can be difficult not to personalize the matter, it is by no means a reflection on how the Administration values Artists and their expertise.
3. Staff also conveyed that they have attempted to transition Creative Strategists where possible to other departments and project opportunities, but it has been difficult to make other departments aware of Creative Strategists as resources during this challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic and stay at home orders.
4. Staff further stated that as the Public Art Director position was initially posted nationally with an inaccurate salary. Though it was remedied, the error caused further unrest among the cohort.
5. Staff cautioned that there are two distinct grievances, as one relates to the Director search, and the other their individual projects which need to be addressed independently of one another.
6. The Commission inquired of Staff for their recommendation in which Staff mentioned the Creatives need an opportunity to be heard. Staff has done their best advocating for the Creatives, and recommends the Commission hear their concerns directly promptly.
7. The Commission questioned how many Commissioners should be present at this meeting in which Staff deferred to Legal in attendance to confirm what is permissible within current State law.
8. Legal conveyed that traditionally only 2 Commissioners need to be in attendance for the meeting to be subject to public meetings, but would research further to see if this meeting would be an exception. Legal and Staff would explore this further and communicate to CPAC on the matter.

## UPDATES

### I. **Active Art in Capital Projects**

#### A. Avondale YFD Center Mural Implementation Phase

1. Virtual concept design presentation is scheduled for October 26.
2. The Avondale YFD Center Construction Advisory Committee, a central group of stakeholders on behalf of the community, have not been actively involved in promoting the project's digital engagement strategy, as was originally anticipated.
3. Erika Roberts, the assigned Creative Strategist, has had to schedule personal interviews with members of the Advisory Committee to ensure participation resulting in a delay of information for The Artist SEVEN to begin his concept development.

4. The exterior mural wall prep is also experiencing delays in pricing and moving forward.
5. Staff adjusted the project timeline to provide more time for concept development. It remains a limited window of time to do so with just three weeks to develop 3 exterior mural concepts and 1 interior mural concept.
6. The selection panel will meet to approve the final designs on November 2, followed by a special CPAC meeting on November 5 for final approval to allow for installation to commence November 9.

#### B. Artists Work Grants Program Update

1. Staff mentioned that they would be speaking to interested individuals during tomorrow's ArtsBuild Community ZOOM session. Early registration numbers show approximately 70 will attend.
2. Staff reviewed the program timeline and application procedure.
3. The session will be recorded and there are a number of applications already in progress.
4. Staff relayed that City departments have submitted a number of artwork sites for applicants to consider as locations for their projects.
5. Next grant round submission deadline will be in late February 2021.

#### C. Chattanooga Hotel Artworks Condition and Transfer

1. Staff provided background on this collection at the hotel for the Commission.
2. While works have been there in some capacity since the early 2000's, PAC executed a temporary exhibit contract in 2018 with the hotel that is not entirely inclusive of inventory on the property.
3. As the temporary exhibition concluded in early December, PAC recognized that some works were missing, and Staff is working with Legal and Insurance on how best to move forward.
4. Artworks were transferred to Memorial Auditorium so they can be stored in a climate controlled space, which PAC does not currently have access to within the City.
5. An MOU with the Tivoli Foundation will be forthcoming for a one year period with an option to renew for up to 5 years.

## ITEMS FOR VOTE

\*A QUORUM WAS ESTABLISHED WITH THE ADDITION OF COMMISSIONER WILLKE..

### I. **December Commission Meeting Date**

- A. Staff mentioned that the Christmas Holidays typically interfere with the attendance in the last Commission meeting of the year.
- B. Staff relayed that December 17 appears to be the date for the next Commission meeting and Staff inquired if that date was problematic for the Commission to attend in order to establish a quorum.
- C. The Commission proposed moving to December 10.

D. CPAC August / September minutes were passed.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE Meeting Date moving to December 10.**

**II. ArtSpark Business Sponsorship Program**

- A. Staff provided a brief overview of the program.
- B. The item was not voted on as the sponsorship program listed Commissioner Tolbert on the Artist Roster within the program, and she is not able to vote on the matter as a current Commissioner.
- C. Without Commissioner Tolbert's participation; however, a quorum was not established to vote on the matter.
- D. Staff took the opportunity to inform the Commission that voting on matters should occur via Commission meetings, and only via email in cases of extreme urgency and emergency.

**VOTE: DEFERRED UNTIL SPECIAL CPAC MEETING ON NOVEMBER 5.**

**III. Rossville Blvd. Corridor Traffic Control Box Program**

- A. Staff provided an overview of the BLVD, an organization who works in conjunction with ELLA Chattanooga.
- B. The organization surveyed Rossville Blvd. businesses who would like to see blight removed along the corridor and beautification added.
- C. The BLVD Traffic Control Box Artwork program will enhance the area which serves as an important corridor between Downtown Chattanooga with the extension of art.
- D. The program shares distinct similarities with the ArtSpark program, but the boxes are outside of the Downtown footprint, and as the organization has a smaller budget for the overall project the artist stipends for commissioned boxes will be slightly less.
- E. They have been in consultation with River City Company on how best to conduct their own program.
- F. Seven box locations were presented to the Commission. Box locations were approved by the Chattanooga Department of Transportation prior to the Commission meeting.
- G. Staff shared the project timeline in which the call will begin on November 1st.
- H. Staff requested a Commissioner sit on the Artwork Selection Panel in late January.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE the Rossville Blvd Corridor Traffic Box Program.**



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

Thursday, November 5, 2020, 11am-12pm  
ZOOM Video Conference

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

**ABSENT:** Ric Morris, Virginia Anne Sharber, and Sara Tolbert

**STAFF:** Kat Wright (Interim Public Art Director)

**CITY ADVISORY:** Cate Irvin (CDOT), Harolda Bryson (Legal)

- I. Welcome and Call to Order: Ellen Simak
- II. Verbal Roll Call for virtual meeting requirement
- III. Staff turned over the meeting to Legal to remind of Commission policy and procedure.
  - A. Items for vote should only be discussed via public meeting and not via email.
  - B. A more formal review of policy and procedures will occur at the first Commission meeting of the year in which new Commissioners are in attendance.

**ITEMS FOR VOTE**

- I. **ArtSpark Business Sponsorship Program**
  - A. Staff reviewed the program components which will follow the same policy as previous ArtSpark iterations.
  - B. Staff reviewed how the Artist Roster was devised in that they were all Artists who were awarded a Commission in previous ArtSpark rounds.
  - C. The exception to this is the request to add Artists Hollie Berry, Michael Mehaffey and Carrie Pendergrass on the roster, who all scored favorably when they applied in previous ArtSpark rounds, but box availability was limited at that time to award them a commission.
  - D. The roster serves a starting point for businesses who would like to pursue the opportunity, but don't have an Artist in mind. Artists can roll onto the Artist Roster once a year pending River City Company and Commission approval.
  - E. Staff reviewed the timeline for a business to participate in the program, which is

approximately a 5 month process to implementation.

- F. Staff noted that Commissioner Sara Tolbert was awarded a Round 2 ArtSpark commission before she rolled onto the CPAC. As she is now serving as a Commissioner, she may not be included on the artist roster, while on the Commission, and for a year after her term concludes according to CPAC policy.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE ArtSpark Business Program with the addition of Hollie Berry, Michael Mehaffey and Carrie Pendergrass to the Artist Roster.**

## **II. Avondale YFD Center Mural Final Design**

- A. Staff provided an overview of the community engagement strategy, which included an online survey, coloring pages, interviews, and facilitated virtual sessions with Creative Strategist Erika Roberts.
- B. Staff shared some of the completed coloring pages and responses to the survey to inform the Commission of recurring themes expressed throughout the engagement.
- C. Common sentiments included: children, love, bold colors, a representation of the bold embodiment of the Avondale community, etc.
- D. The information that came back inspired Erika to write a poem, “Positivity Prevails” which Staff shared with the Commission.
- E. It was further relayed that the commissioned artist SEVEN found this poem to be very influential as he developed his concepts focused on love, unity and positivity.
- F. Staff shared the final design for the exterior mural, which was informed by the broad cross section of those who attended the virtual concept presentation. The overwhelming majority was impressed with SEVEN’s focus on love for one another depicted in the design, and the embodiment of those that the Center serves in the visual representation.
- G. The figures in the mural are from photos SEVEN took of individuals in the Avondale community with the exception of the young baseball player, which is a manipulated rights-released stock photo.
- H. Staff deferred to Vice Chair Savoy, who served on the Artwork Selection Panel, for her takeaways on the community review session.
- I. Staff confirmed that SEVEN’s artistic practice was definitely challenged from the feedback he received from a wide variety of stakeholders.
- J. Staff also relayed that the community expressed interest in lighting the exterior mural to mitigate vandalism, but the Avondale YFD Center construction budget will not provide for this costly expense.
- K. The exterior mural wall will not be concrete, but an abuse resistant cement board.

- L. Staff conveyed that SEVEN will test an anti graffiti coating on portion of his design to see if it blurs his artwork should the Commission recommend it.
- M. Staff presented the interior mural design and its location within the building.
- N. Staff conveyed that the interior design was not heavily informed by community feedback. Interest appeared to be focused on the large scale exterior opportunity.
- O. The interior mural design features an array of hobbies and activities one would do within the YFD Center, also emphasizing the fact the Center is a hub for education and skills development.
- P. The design also takes into account the wide variety of individuals who utilize the Center.
- Q. Staff extended praise to the Artist SEVEN for his ability to distill different feedback into the final designs.
- R. Staff confirmed that the interior mural is funded by YFD Administration from Avondale YFD Center's programming funds.
- S. Installation should begin next week provided the exterior wall prep is completed.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE** the Avondale YFD Center Exterior Mural Design with the recommendation that SEVEN perform a patch test of anti-graffiti coating onto his design to see how it will impact the design.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE** the Avondale YFD Center Interior Mural Design.