

The City of Knoxville: Public Arts Committee

Public Arts Committee Meeting: January 8, 2015

Meeting was called to order at 4:06 PM at the Knoxville Museum of Art boardroom.

Attendees Present:

Liza Zenni – Staff Liaison
Bart Watkins – Committee Member
Jeff Lockett – Committee Member
John Powers – Committee Member
Marcus Hall – Committee Member
Mark Heinz – Committee Member
Mike Fowler – Committee Member
Susana Esrequis – Committee Member
Lisa Duncan – Dogwood Arts: Art In Public Places
Rachel Perkins – Committee Administrator

Liza welcomed Lisa Duncan from Art in Public Places and called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda: Mark moved to approve the agenda. Jeff seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Approval of December Minutes: Mark moved to approve the minutes. Mike seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

A. State Street Garage Sculpture

Liza informed the committee that she spoke with Rick Emmett about the different possibilities for public art at the State Street Garage. Rick stated that the \$36,000 available to purchase the existing Isaac Duncan sculpture could also be used to purchase a new site-specific piece, to be commissioned by the Public Arts Committee. Liza also shared that some of the absent committee members had shared their feedback with her. Sara e-mailed Liza and stated that she felt the piece was nice, but it does not work well in its current location. Sara felt “the garage sign totally blocks your view to the sculpture area until you are virtually on top of it. There is another sign on the garage itself which makes the standing sign redundant.” Liza asked the committee members to share their feedback about the sculpture.

Mike agreed with Sara’s feeling about the existing sculpture. He stated that he likes the piece, but it doesn’t have the ‘pop’ it needs to stand out from its location. Mark stated the garage acts as the ‘front door’ to downtown. Many visitors to downtown use the garage to attend movies

and it is the most convenient garage in downtown. Mark said he feels that something really special could be done with public art in that location. Jeff stated that he has no misgivings about the committee working to commission a new piece. John asked when the piece is scheduled to come down. Lisa Duncan stated the piece will be deaccessioned in March. John asked if it would be possible for the piece to continue to stay in the location while a new piece is commissioned, and if Isaac might be interested in participating in a new call to artists. Lisa stated that a new piece is scheduled to be installed in the space in March, and Art in Public Places plans to rotate a new piece each year if there is not a permanent piece selected for that site. Lisa offered to speak with Isaac to see if he would allow the piece to stay in that location while the committee works to select a new piece. Lisa asked the committee to support Dogwood's Art in Public Places program by purchasing this piece.

Liza stated that she feels there is a subtle but important difference between have a piece that is created for the site and selecting an existing piece that might look good in that spot. Mike agreed and said the advantage of an artist creating a site-specific piece is that it allows the artist to respond to the entire space and create a piece that is representative of that area. Mike feels the location is a special place for art.

Liza stated that the committee will be commissioning large projects in the future, like the Cradle of Country Music Park project, and it might be good for the committee to cut its teeth on a smaller project with a budget of \$30,000-\$50,000.

The committee decided to table the discussion until the next meeting because not enough members were in attendance to call a vote.

John and Marcus asked Bart to confirm if Dogwood was still open to feedback from the committee regarding the Art in Public Places exhibit. Bart and Lisa Duncan confirmed that Dogwood welcomes the committee's feedback on the Art in Public Places submissions. Duane, John, and Marcus will represent the committee and will review all submissions on January 29 at 12:00 PM at the Dogwood office. After the review, the approved submissions will be sent to the juror for selection in the 2015-2016 Art in Public Places exhibition.

B. Grant Updates: Our Town, Bloomberg, Burning Man, East Tennessee Foundation

Liza shared her progress on the NEA Our Town grant. The application is due on January 15, and the request is for \$200,000 to support the selection process and artist fees. Liza stated that the committee will be putting out an RFQ in the late spring and selection should begin in October. John asked if those dates were dependent on funding from the NEA. Liza said the timeline is not dependent on the NEA results. Liza asked John how much time artists typically had to design a proposal in response to an RFP. John stated that 2-5 months was the average, with most RFPs giving 2-3 months. Rachel suggested the committee should search the Americans for the Arts' Public Art Digest to learn more about timelines for RFPs and RFQs for similarly sized public art projects.

The application to the Bloomberg Public Art Challenge for the public art component of the Big Ears Festival was submitted on December 15 and finalists will be notified in mid-February if they will be invited to submit a full application.

Liza informed the committee that Burning Man had turned down the committee's request for funding for Preston Farabow's Iron Pour at Volunteer Landing as part of the 2016 Big Ears Festival. Liza also shared that the committee's Letter of Inquiry to the East Tennessee Foundation was successful and the committee has been invited to submit a full application. The deadline is Friday, February 6.

C. Future Grant Opportunities

Liza told the committee there are two small grants available with deadlines in February that could be used to fund a mural project: the Gannett Foundation and the PeyBack Foundation each fund up to \$5,000. Liza also shared two upcoming NEA grants that are available: Art Works and Challenge America. Liza explained that the Challenge America grant only funds up to \$10,000, but it is typically seen as a gateway to other NEA funding opportunities. The committee can only apply to one of the two NEA grants, and the application may not be for a project that has already been submitted for NEA funding. Liza recommended that the committee apply for funding from the Challenge America grant for the Suttree Landing Park project. The deadline is April 16.

D. Mobile App: Public Art

Liza received an e-mail from Chip Barry, with the City of Knoxville, sharing Nashville's new mobile app for public art. Liza asked the committee if a similar project could be successful in Knoxville. Several committee members expressed concern at the lack of signage for the existing collection. John stated that apps can be costly and they require frequent updates. He asked if the city had someone who could work on developing an app. Liza said that she contacted Judith Foltz to learn more about the Christmas in the City app that was developed by the City's Office of Special Events. Judith shared that a staff member in the office had experience developing apps and did most of the work for them. John suggested that students at UT or Pellissippi could work to develop and maintain an app as part of a service-learning project. Mike stated that he felt the committee should start identifying potential future public art locations in the city. The committee expressed agreement, and Liza stated that a map had been developed by Jon Gustin that shows the location of the existing public art and could be used to help the committee identify future locations for public art. At the next meeting, Liza will bring the map and the committee will work to identify locations and begin to develop a long-term vision for public art.

Future Meetings:

- A. The next regular meeting is Thursday, February 5, 2015 at 4:00 PM
 - a. The meeting will be held at the Knoxville Museum of Art boardroom.
- B. Select PAC representatives will meet Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at 11:00 AM to discuss Suttree Park Landing with members of the South Knoxville Foundation East Tennessee Community Design Center.
 - a. The meeting will be held at the Emporium Center.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Members Absent:

Chuck Morris
Duane Grieve
Elizabeth Wright
Erin Donovan
Faris Eid
Melinda Meador
Sara Pinnell