

The City of Knoxville: Public Arts Committee

Public Arts Committee Meeting: April 2, 2015

Meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM at the Knoxville Museum of Art.

Attendees Present:

Bart Watkins – Committee Member
Bill Dockery – Guest
Doug Gordon – City of Knoxville, Law Department
Erin Donovan – Committee Member
Gene Burr – Guest
Jeff Lockett – Committee Member
Judith Foltz – City of Knoxville, Special Events
Liza Zenni – Staff Liaison
Mark Heinz – Committee Member
Melinda Meador – Committee Member
Mike Fowler – Committee Member
Rachel Perkins – Committee Administrator
Sara Pinnell – Committee Member
Trudy Monaco – Guest

Liza welcomed the visitors and introduced them to the committee.

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

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

Tennessee Open Meetings Act

Doug Gordon presented information about the Open Meetings Act. Doug explained that Tennessee's Open Meetings Act is among the broadest in the country and favors the public. The law is an attempt to make public what is going on at government meetings. Doug explained that it is important that meetings of all governing bodies shall not be conducted in secret. Doug asked the committee, what does the Public Arts Committee discuss and what is its mission? Liza stated that the committee helps to appropriately place works of public art in locations around the city with input from the public. Doug stated that all meetings, e-mails, and phone conversations of two or more voting committee members can only take place if the public is informed and given the opportunity to be present for that meeting. On-site inspections are the singular

exception to this rule. Doug emphasized committee members should be careful to discuss items related only to the on-site inspection and nothing else. All regularly scheduled meetings must be posted to the city website and the agenda must also be posted. Special meetings must include information about why the meeting is being held and the public must be given adequate notice (preferably at least one week). Liza asked if non-voting members are allowed to speak to committee members outside of regularly scheduled meetings. Doug stated that non-voting members can discuss any topic with voting members, but that two or more voting members may not speak to each other about anything that could potentially come before the committee. Doug stated that all votes must be public and recorded in the minutes. The minutes should also be posted in a timely manner to the city's website. Liza thanked Doug for his thorough explanation of the Open Meetings Act.

Mary Vestal Park: Sculpture Donation

Liza shared that on March 23, she accompanied Melinda Meador and Susana Esrequis for an on-site inspection of the sculpture, "No Place Like Home" by Joe Babb and Alan Finch. At the February 3 Public Arts Committee meeting, Gene Burr presented images of the sculpture and shared that a community member was eager to donate the piece to the city's public art collection. The piece is intended to be installed at Mary Vestal Park and will replace a previous sculpture created by Joe Falsetti. Melinda stated that after viewing the sculpture in person, she found the piece charming and she liked it very much. There are images carved into the stone that convey the "No Place Like Home" theme. Melinda feels it is perfect for a park. Liza shared the following letter from Jason Brown, endorsing the sculpture: *"In my opinion as a professional sculptor and educator, the sculpture entitled "No place like home" by Joe Babb and Alan Finch would be a good addition to Mary Vestal park. I think that it is a public artwork of high quality, especially in terms of craft and material form. It seems both durable and low maintenance (vandal resistant). I recommend that the Knoxville Public Art committee accept this donation. The stone & steel sculpture will be a good addition to the Vestal park. I have always liked that piece. It is virtually vandal resistant and honestly I'm not worried about kids climbing on it. Sadly, so few children use Vestal park these days."* Sara stated that her initial concern was the sculpture might be construed as playground equipment and that could be a liability. However, after hearing more about the piece, Sara feels the location makes it clear that it is not play

equipment and she is not concerned. Bart asked if there will be a plaque. Gene stated they intend to have a plaque that recognizes the artists, the donor, and also the previous sculpture by Joe Falsetti. Mike feels it is a great piece and it is very impressive in person. Sara asked if there will be a dedication ceremony. Gene stated there will be a dedication – ideally when the surrounding park improvements are completed. Sara stated that she was ready to vote. Liza asked if the committee would vote to gratefully accept the gifted sculpture, “No Place Like Home”, for location in Mary Vestal Park. All committee members voted YES to accept the sculpture. There were no opposing votes. Gene expressed his thanks to the committee for accepting the donation.

Grant Updates

Liza shared that the committee’s application to the Bloomberg Public Art Fund was denied. There were 230 applications and only three cities will ultimately be chosen. The committee’s applications to the National Endowment for the Arts and East Tennessee Foundation are still pending. Liza will submit a second NEA grant application for a piece for Suttree Landing Park later this month.

Bringing Tap Back Update

The Tennessee Clean Water Network has received applications for their Bringing Tap Back initiative that features water stations with artistic designs. The committee will review the submissions in collaboration with Patience Melnik, Director of Environmental Health Programs for the TCWN. The review will take place either at a special meeting later this month or at the next regularly scheduled Public Arts Committee meeting on May 5.

State Street Garage RFP (Request for Proposals)

Liza shared the draft version of the State Street Garage RFP and asked the committee for feedback. Several committee members offered suggestions in the wording of the RFP, including opening the submissions to work that is ‘suited for the site’ rather than created specifically for the site. Liza will request assistance from committee members to distribute the RFP to a wide network across the country. The committee hopes to receive proposals from regionally and nationally recognized artists.

Bart motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mark seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM.

Future Meetings:

- A. The next regular meeting is Thursday, May 7, 2015 at 4:00 PM
 - a. The meeting will be held at the Knoxville Museum of Art boardroom.

Meeting adjourned at 5:08 PM.

Members Absent:

Chuck Morris
Duane Grieve
Elizabeth Wright
Faris Eid
John Powers
Marcus Hall
Susana Esrequis