

The City of Knoxville: Public Arts Committee

Public Arts Committee Meeting: September 3, 2015

Meeting was called to order at 4:01 PM at the Knoxville Museum of Art.

Attendees Present:

Bart Watkins – Committee Member
Bill Lyons – City of Knoxville, Deputy to the Mayor
Chuck Morris – Committee Member
Doug Gordon – City of Knoxville, Law Department
Erin Donovan – Committee Member
Faris Eid – Committee Member
Janice McClelland – City of Knoxville, Purchasing Department
John Powers – Committee Member
Judith Foltz – City of Knoxville, Office of Special Events
Liza Zenni – Staff Liaison
Mark Heinz – Committee Member
Mike Fowler – Committee Member
Rachel Perkins – Committee Administrator
Rick Emmett – City of Knoxville, Downtown Coordinator
Sara Pinnell – Committee Member
Susana Esrequis – Committee Member

Approval of the Agenda: Mike moved to approve the agenda. Chuck seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Approval of August Minutes: Mike expressed concern about the Cradle of Country Music Park RFQ that was discussed at the August meeting. He stated that he is in major disagreement with the idea that the site should be developed after the artwork, and he feels that both the artwork and the site should be developed together. Liza asked Mike how he feels the current RFQ should be altered. Mike stated that he would like to see two separate RFQs issued. Liza asked the committee if they would like Liza to consult with Joe Walsh, the Parks and Recreation Director. The committee encouraged Liza to contact Joe and to ask for his experience issuing RFQs for park landscaping. Sara stated that at the August meeting the committee was focused on the art, but she feels that since Mike has the most experience working on a project of this scale, Mike is the most qualified to lead the discussion. Mike stated that the selected artist can still lead the discussion, as long as there is regular collaboration with the site designers and other stakeholders. Liza will be in contact with the committee regarding the RFQ before the October

meeting. Mike moved to approve the August minutes as written. Sara seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Janice McClelland: City of Knoxville Purchasing Department

Liza introduced Janice McClelland to the committee. Rick Emmett encouraged Janice to attend a meeting and inform the committee of the challenges presented by a large selection committee. Janice explained that a few summers ago, a procurement stalled for several months because the large committee could not arrange a time for every member to attend. Now that we are past the summer months, Janice feels better about the prospect of getting all the committee members together. Also, Janice said that any committee member who misses a meeting may not vote. Janice encouraged committee members to think carefully before joining a selection committee and she added that serving on the committee is a major time commitment. She outlined a typical RFQ process for the committee: 1) the purchasing department will issue the RFQ; 2) applications are vetted and then presented to the selection committee; 3) the committee scores the applications and creates a short list of applicants who will visit Knoxville and meet with the committee and other stakeholders; 4) the committee meets with the final candidates and selects the winning candidate. Liza encouraged the committee to become more comfortable with the process by issuing RFQs for a few smaller mural projects before the Cradle of Country Music Park project. Janice also informed the committee that the identities of selection committee members are private until a decision is made and a contract is signed. She explained that the privacy protects the committee members from being bombarded by candidates.

Committee Meetings Schedule

Liza stated that a few committee members have difficulty attending meetings at the current scheduled time and she asked the committee if they would consider an alternate date. Rachel will e-mail the committee and ask for feedback regarding possible alternatives.

Public Art Locations

Committee members Susana Esrequis and John Powers shared images and ideas for public art in their assigned districts. Sara, Mike, and Elizabeth also developed ideas for their districts and will share them at the next meeting. The committee agreed that there are numerous excellent

potential locations for murals and sculptures around Knoxville. The committee will continue to consider the various locations and work to narrow down a list of sites for potential murals.

Walnut Street Garage

Liza welcomed Bill Lyons to the meeting and shared with the committee the results of a recent brainstorming session for the Walnut Street Garage. Several committee members attended the brainstorming session on August 31, including Chuck, Mark, and Susana. Chuck shared his idea for the garage: a mosaic photograph made up of other images. Knoxville residents would be invited to submit photographs based around an idea or theme, and those photos would make up the larger image. Chuck suggested the large image could be General Knox or another Knoxville icon. He hoped that the public component would bring people to Knoxville to see their image on the garage. Liza asked Bill to explain his vision for the garage and the history behind the project. Bill stated that the Downtown Design Review Board reviewed and approved the garage project. Mark was part of the committee and felt that the approval process was rushed due to the fact that it took three hours to get through the full proposal. The Design Review Board has implemented new policies to avoid rushed projects in the future. The final garage includes an enormous blank wall, to which the owner later added a painted grid to enhance the site. Bill lives near the garage and after walking past it regularly, he began to imagine the painted frames as empty picture frames and he felt it would beautify the garage if the empty frames were filled with pictures. He was especially drawn to the idea of historic photographs of old Knoxville. He presented the idea to Mayor Rogero and invited key stakeholders to help identify photographs for the garage and to identify the materials to be used to install the images. Bill wants to invite limited public input: the city will present 3-4 sets of photographs to be voted on by the public for inclusion on the garage. Bill also emphasized that the installation will be temporary because it is possible that the lot next to the garage will eventually be developed. Bill has been working with Allen Sign to determine the cost of installing a temporary vinyl attachment to the garage. Allen Sign estimates that each panel will cost \$10,000-\$15,000, at a total cost of approximately \$60,000. The building owner will contribute \$20,000 to the project. Bill also encouraged the committee to consider the State Street Garage as a possible alternative space for a permanent installation like the one Chuck suggested. Bill feels that it will be good for the city and the committee if the Walnut Street Garage temporary artwork can be installed quickly. Chuck asked what the timeline is for the project – how long does the city anticipate the vinyl will be displayed? Rick

stated that the vinyl typically has a lifespan of 3-5 years. Chuck stated that he is concerned that the vinyl will begin to age in 3-5 years and he is worried there will not be a plan to take down the installation when it begins to age. Chuck stated that he wondered if there isn't a better alternative – can it be art? Chuck also wondered how the photographs will look to scale. He stated that old photographs are often grainy and busy-looking. Several committee members asked if a painted mural would be possible instead of the vinyl. Liza stated that the most expensive murals in Cincinnati are no more than \$60,000 – the expected cost for the vinyl project. Sara asked if the committee should be more involved since there are public funds involved. Sara also wondered if this location should be a priority, versus any of the other locations the committee is currently considering for public art. Bill stated that the funds are not coming from the public art fund and it is not a public art project. The garage is privately owned and any design must be approved by the building owner. Bill added that he would like input from the committee about the layout for the photographs and selection of the photographs. Chuck asked if the frames need to be included in the design. Bill stated that he felt the middle frames could be ignored, and possibly all of the framework, but any design that is created will need to be submitted for approval from the Downtown Review Board. Chuck stated that from a designer's perspective, he would ignore the frames completely and develop a layout with no restrictions. Liza emphasized that the committee is enthusiastic about the project and willing to provide input about the design. Liza asked Bill what the next steps are for the project. Bill stated that the building owner and the Downtown Review Board will need to approve the final design. He added that the budget is still being developed and the city will need to work with sponsors to make up any gap in funding. Bill hopes to have the project completed in early 2016 to help celebrate Knoxville's 225th birthday – he emphasized that the city is eager to complete the project. Liza thanked Bill for explaining his vision for the project and offered the committee's continued input and support for the project.

Conflict of Interest Policy

The committee ran out of time to discuss the new Conflict of Interest policy presented by Doug Gordon. The committee will review and vote on the new language at the October meeting. The new suggested policy and comments from Doug are listed below:

“(f)(1) A member sitting on the committee may compete for a commission or purchase over which the committee has approval authority but that member may not vote or deliberate on the commission or purchase or attend any meetings where such commission or purchase is to be deliberated by the committee, and the commission or purchase may be awarded to the member only upon a two-thirds vote in favor of the award by the committee when a quorum is present.

Please note, this conflicts with:

(f)(2) No committee member or relative of a committee member may submit for public art projects for which the committee has approval authority or administrative responsibility. For the purposes of this section, “relative” means a person related to the committee member within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity, or a person living in the same household as the committee member.

I suggest taking out the words “committee member or” and adding the underlined text, so it reads:

(f)(2) No relative of a committee member may submit for public art projects for which the committee has approval authority or administrative responsibility unless that committee member does not vote or deliberate on the commission or purchase or attend any meetings where such commission or purchase is to be deliberated. For the purposes of this section, “relative” means a person related to the committee member within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity, or a person living in the same household as the committee member.”

Future Meetings:

- A. The next regular meeting is Thursday, October 1, 2015 at 4:00 PM.
 - a. The meeting will be held at the Knoxville Museum of Art boardroom.

Meeting adjourned at 5:13 PM.

Excused Members:

Duane Grieve
Elizabeth Wright
Jeffrey Lockett
Marcus Hall
Melinda Meador