

Public Art Board February 24, 2011



Members present:

Julie Calhoun-Roepnack, Chair
Kenn Kotara, Vice Chair
Honor Moor
Mark Koven
Robert Todd (arrived 4:30)

Staff present:

Megan Shepherd, Special Projects Coordinator
Diane Ruggiero, Cultural Arts Superintendent
Jenny Bowen, Cultural Arts Specialist

Guests present:

Julie called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. No quorum was present until 4:30 p.m.

1. Approval of January Minutes

Honor requested changing the claim that the Livingston Street Center is the City's first LEED-certified building to be clearer (it's the City of Asheville's first, not Asheville's). Kenn moved to approve the January minutes, pending the requested changes. Mark seconded, all approved and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Vote on Vice Chair

Kenn motioned for Julie to serve as Vice Chair. Mark seconded, all approved, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Vote on Chair

Kenn motioned for Robert Todd to serve as Chair. Julie seconded, all were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Ceremonial Passing of the Gavel

Robert accepted the gavel. Honor thanked Julie and Kenn for her service and time.

5. Art on Transit Program

Diane stated that the Art on Transit program launched one year ago. The original intent was to have the buses wrapped for one year and then seek funding to have them rewrapped with new designs. However, we are not in a good funding position. We did not

receive out \$75,000 public art allocation this year, and we lost the Sponsorship Coordinator position that helped seek funding opportunities.

Diane did a condition assessment of the wraps, which are holding up well (they are supposed to last 5 years), but have sustained damage from hitting objects. She showed some images of the damage and discussed the possibilities:

1. Leave them alone
2. Repair the wraps (\$2500 or more, would require another bid)
3. Remove the wraps completed (no cost—this was included with the original price)

Diane recommended we not pursue option #1, since the wraps' poor condition does not reflect well on public art or the City. Her recommendation is to remove the wraps. This might even trigger a public request to support this again. However, there is some funding if staff decides to pursue option #2. She asked the board for their advice.

Kenn asked about the original costs. Each was \$4200. Julie asked if hitting objects will be a perpetual problem even if we replace them. Diane thinks it will, though this doesn't seem to be a problem in other cities with similar programs.

Honor suggested approaching sponsors for funding, such as Mission Hospital. Their logo could be included in the wrap design. Diane explained that since the Sponsorship Coordinator position has been frozen, there is no staff time for cultivating new sponsorships and we are struggling to maintain current ones.

Kenn felt the poor condition would not look good for attracting donors. He would like to see pricing for replacements, but generally supported removing the wraps. Julie agreed that it reflects poorly on public art. Ken suggested the advertising possibilities for business or artists wanting to promote their services, but felt that wraps in poor condition or dirty would be a hindrance to acquiring advertisers.

Diane added that there's been a change in transit system management and that has led to some changes in the relationship with public art. Kenn asked if bus cleaning is a budget issue. Diane said she would ask if the buses are on a regular cleaning schedule. Julie commented that it appears there have recently been more bus accidents than in the past. Diane explained how the city contracts for bus driving services. Diane encouraged the board to get back to her with any other thoughts and offered to show them the buses.

Honor felt it was disappointing to see the wrap's deterioration and that the program will be discontinued. Julie added that it was always intended as temporary art and we weren't expecting them to last forever.

6. Urban Trail Subcommittee Update

Kenn said that the Urban Trail Committee met at Grace Pless's home recently. He attended and presented the new subcommittee guidelines. They were agreeable to the new structure, including Kenn serving as the new Chair of the subcommittee. They discussed having a seven-member group. He explained the proper channels to communicate with City and City Council and they were agreeable. He made it clear that he was only on the Public Art Board, and thus Chair of the Urban Trail Committee, until June 2011.

Regarding the donor bricks, we now have a list of which ones are present, and which ones are missing and must be replaced. Diane said the City will pay for those. There are 17 missing bricks, and a need for 4 new ones.

Regarding the Urban Trail brochures, the Urban Trail Committee would like to see them widely distributed. Kenn explained to there that there is limited funding for distribution or larger printing. They loved the design but had difficulty downloading and printing them from the website. They are almost unreadable, since there is little contrast. Diane said we'll work with our graphic designer to improve the printable version. One issue is that older residents have technical difficulties printing and downloading so we need to make it as simple as possible. Also, the Chamber says they are too large to keep in their racks and require a smaller size. Kenn offered to call the Chamber representative to discuss possibilities.

There were similar concerns regarding technical challenges with the audio tour. Staff at the Chamber didn't have any problems downloading it, however. Grace had some concerns about the text of the audio tour and wanted to see if it could be changed. Kenn said there had been a large time for comment and many people were involved. It can be changed, but only if funding and staff time is available, which isn't currently the case. Kenn felt that at some point in the future, we need to assess the brochure and audio tour to see what's working and what isn't. He clarified that there isn't any incorrect information on the audio tour, Grace just would like some things expanded upon.

The subcommittee formation is as follows:

- Composition: 7 people
- Terms of Office: One-year term, automatically renewing unless there's a problem.
- Selection of Officers: Chair is Kenn Kotara
- Meeting times and guidelines: it will be run according to the same guidelines as PAB or City Council. Visitors will be seated separately. Megan can help them reserve spaces. They talked about the week before this meeting, Thursdays at 4pm. Or, two weeks before so it could be put on the PAB agenda.
- Staff Support: TBD
- Purposes, Responsibilities & Powers: TBD

7. Retreat Follow-up

Julie felt it was a great retreat. Robert asked how board members would like to proceed.

Kenn reviewed the current 3 subcommittees and suggested creating a new one (or altering the education committee) dedicated to creating the vision for the Board. Mark, as Chair of the education subcommittee, felt the education subcommittee's role was to take the vision forward but not develop it itself. Kenn asked Diane to provide examples of mission/vision statements of public art programs from around the country. She agreed to gather this information, and board members said they will help look for this information as well. Honor felt that everyone does need to be part of this conversation, but it requires leadership.

Honor discussed the role of board members as advocates for public art and the Public Art Board. She's currently also serving on the Downtown Master Plan Cultural Arts Implementation Committee, which feels the Public Art Board may need to be restructured to fit with them. Honor has experience with advocacy and volunteered to coordinate putting members in touch with City Council members several times each year. However, she stated that we need a focused reason to take up their time. Julie agreed it was a good plan. Robert felt advocacy/partnerships may become a potential subcommittee.

Jenny reported that she looked up the AB Tech restoration program regarding maintenance and found it may not be a good partner since its scope is limited to decorative restoration. Mark asked for the staff's definition of "maintenance needs." Jenny said it's getting a conservator back in to reassess the condition now that all public art works are on display. The conservator would recommend a maintenance plan. It should be a yearly cycle. Diane suggested the board form a subcommittee on maintenance that could train others how to strip wax from bronze & reapply. This could be a team of volunteers that could also assist with condition assessments.

Kenn felt that the AB Tech program could provide volunteers and suggested the idea of an annual cleaning day. Jenny felt this would be a good way to bring people on board to support our public art.

Robert suggested making the acquisitions committee an acquisition/maintenance subcommittee. Jenny felt this might make sense because there's a lot of pre-maintenance questions that come up in the acquisitions process, such as building materials. Diane said the acquisitions committee's purpose is spelled out clearly in the public art policy and it's more of a pre-PAB jury. Mark supported the idea of a maintenance subcommittee. Diane said it could overlap with the Urban Trail subcommittee, education subcommittee, and others. Diane explained that if the board requests it, staff can sit on the subcommittees.

Honor felt that developing a timeline might be useful, to schedule advocacy activities, event dates, art clean-up days, and more. Robert said he'd like to see the following subcommittees that the Board has discussed in place by April:

- Acquisitions (current)
- Urban Trail (current)
- Education (current)
- Partnering

- Advocacy
- Maintenance
- Visioning

8. Old Business

Move of Conversation Piece #IV. Diane presented images of the Livingston Street Center lobby and the piece, with measurements. A portion of the ceiling is pitched and Kenn suggested rotating the sculpture so its highest point fits in this pitch. Diane liked the idea.

Julie asked how much it will cost to move the piece, but Diane said the bid won't go out until June or July and we won't know until then. When it was moved from New Orleans to Asheville, it cost \$1500. Staff will do much of the preparation work to save on cost. Money from the maintenance budget will be used to fund the move. The piece is in good condition but will be cleaned by staff.

Kenn asked if anyone contacted the Ida Kohlmeyer estate to ask about her wishes regarding the piece. He would like to see staff and the Board consider the artist or his/her estate when considering moves. Diane said we do not usually contact the artist, but we are happy to notify them the piece is being moved.

Robert asked if this piece has always been an interior piece. Diane said she has done some research and many of Kohlmeyer's pieces were intended for the outdoors, but ones similar to this one are indoors, which provides protection. There's no evidence it would be able to withstand our environment. Robert asked if sunlight through the windows will be a problem, but Julie said it's enamel, so she doesn't think it will fade. Diane thinks the windows have UV filters.

Julie said she would vote for the move with the understanding that if a better suited place opens up, that would be considered. When the piece was acquired, there was no site designated.

Honor asked if there's a data collection system on the building to count how many people are entering. There is a door counter. There will also be a greenway nearby leading to more traffic.

Robert noted that this piece has been controversial since its acquisition and wondered if there's an opportunity in a press release (or otherwise) to give some background on Kohlmeyer's story. Mark asked if there will be a placard to accompany the piece. There will be, on the cinderblock to the left. There will also be lighting specifically designed for this piece.

Kenn moved to support moving the Kohlmeyer piece to Livingston St Center. Mark seconded, all approved and the motion passed unanimously.

Board vacancy. Megan reminded the board that the deadline for applications is March 2. If applicants don't get the one available position, they will be considered for the 3 openings in June.

9. FY2012 Budget

Diane explained the budget process for FY 2012 and said she is submitting a request for the full \$75,000 allocation. She gave a breakdown and invited board members to comment.

She explained that previously, the allocation was divided: we got a \$50,000 allocation for maintenance and \$25,000 for new acquisitions. Now, all funding is lumped in the same pot.

Julie was interested in funding for the Riverbend Park project. Diane asked if board members would rather match the funding for Riverbend Park, or put funds toward the Artist of the Year/Gateway project. There isn't enough funding to focus on both.

Board members discussed the likelihood of the City allocating funding and their role/strategy as advocates for it. The budget allocation will be in July, so the Board would only have 3 months to advocate to City Council. Honor felt they should first speak to Gordon Smith, their City Council liaison, before taking any action.

Mark recommended using the matching funds for the Gateway Project as leverage with City Council. If we don't get that allocation, then we move forward with Riverbend Park. Robert suggested reaching out to Wal-mart or the developer for additional funding. Mark asked if there's a possibility for Wal-mart to be a sponsor and have its name associated with the artwork. Diane explained this is permissible according to City regulations, but staff does not currently have the resources to seek or support sponsorships.

Mark asked who is most likely to be swayed in Council. Staff recommended starting with the Finance Committee. He asked Diane to suggest a plan for who to approach and how.

Diane said there's also been a request for public art at the WNC Nature Center. Staff is encouraging the Friends of the Nature Center to work with the public art program to acquire a new piece, instead of purchasing stock pieces. The City would put funding aside and challenge the Friends to match it. It would go with a spider-themed playground. Mark asked where the funds would be allocated from. \$5,000 would come from the \$75,000 allocation, if it is awarded. With the Friends match, total funds would be \$10,000.

10. New Business

Diane said that the City of Asheville provides funding for one board member to attend the Americans for the Arts conference, which will be held this year in San Diego from June 15-18, with a public art pre-conference on June 15-16. The City will cover the

registration fee (\$550), but not travel expenses or other tours. She asked for interested board members to let her know. Early registration ends in April.

Meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.