

# Public Art Board

## March 24, 2011



### Members present:

Robert Todd, Chair  
Julie Calhoun-Roepnack, Vice Chair  
Kenn Kotara  
Honor Moor  
Mark Koven  
Jaan Ferree  
Sharon Trammel  
Nancy Sokolove

### Staff present:

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

### Guests present:

Julie called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

### 1. Welcome New Board Member

Robert Todd introduced new board member Sharon Trammel. Sharon expressed her enthusiasm for the arts and stated she is glad to be serving.

### 2. Approval of February Minutes

The February minutes were approved unanimously.

### 3. Role of the Public Art Board

Roderick Simmons discussed the possibility of expanding the Public Art Board's purview to include cultural arts. Until now, any arts-related items that come to the department that don't specifically deal with public art go to the Recreation Advisory Board. This has happened recently with an Asheville Area Arts Council partnership agreement and an Asheville Arts Museum NEA grant partnership proposal. Because the Recreation Advisory Board has no arts professionals, they are not the most qualified advisory board to make recommendations on these matters. Roderick felt it did not make sense to create a new board dedicated to cultural arts, when the department already has a board composed primarily of arts professionals.

Robert and Mark agreed that this does make sense, but wanted more specific information on what items would come before the Board. Since the Cultural Arts division is quite

large, they felt it would be helpful to have a clearly defined set of parameters. Diane gave a quick overview of the Cultural Arts division, which includes festivals, the WNC Nature Center, cultural arts programming, as well as public art. There was some discussion over if WNC Nature Center issues would best be addressed by the Public Art Board, since it is not arts-related (except in certain cases, such as new playground equipment). Board members also discussed if festivals would fall under their purview.

Honor discussed some of the concerns of the Downtown Master Plan Cultural Arts Implementation Committee (she serves as liaison from the Public Art Board), which has been meeting monthly to discuss a similar issue. It is the opinion of that Committee that Asheville needs a new Cultural Arts Commission that would be affiliated with the City's Economic Development Department, not Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts. This might obviate the need for the Public Art Board. However, Roderick and others felt this would not be ideal because that Commission, as part of the Downtown Master Plan group, would only focus on the downtown area, whereas the Department has arts projects throughout the city. Also, while the arts do have an economic impact, the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts Department will still oversee cultural arts for the city and will still need the recommendations of an advisory board.

While the Board supported the idea of expanding their purview, they asked Diane for an overview of the Cultural Arts division so they could better understand what types of issues might come before them. Honor, Robert, Mark and Jaan agreed to form a subcommittee to look at this. Diane said she will be in touch with a date.

#### **4. Sub Committee Planning**

Robert reviewed the list of subcommittees identified in the public art retreat. These include:

- Acquisitions (current)
- Urban Trail (current)
- Education (current)
- Partnering
- Advocacy
- Maintenance
- Visioning

He suggested focusing on the maintenance subcommittee and asked Diane and Jenny what this might entail. Board members expressed interest in holding an "Art Maintenance Day" wherein volunteers would help clean and protect the pieces. Diane laid out a possible plan. The first step would be to contact the arts conservator to come back and new a new assessment. The 2008 Conservation Assessment was not complete, because not all pieces of artwork had been installed at that point, and the assessment did not give a full financial breakdown and detailed maintenance plan. The Department would be able to pay for that new assessment.

The second step would be to bring in the conservator for a training of how to clean the pieces. Diane felt that, at this point, it made sense to only work on the brass plaques. The pieces of artwork have different, more complicated requirements. Volunteers would attend this mandatory training to learn how to strip wax, reapply, and clean the plaques, which is a considerably time-consuming and technical process. Kenn, as Chair to the Urban Trail Committee, said those Committee members are eager to see some cleaning/repair on the Urban Trail pieces. Board members felt it would be important for Urban Trail Committee members to volunteer at the Art Maintenance Day, in whatever capacity they are able.

Board members discussed how strong the need was for this event. Though cleaning the brass plaques is not a top priority for the Department, staff and Board members felt it sent a good message to the community and would increase the public's awareness and sense of ownership for public art. Board members discussed June as a good time to hold this event. It could be a wider event, with the Mobile Art Lab present, refreshments, and partnership with the Arts Council and other organizations.

#### **5. New/Old Business**

Mark thanked everyone who attended his art exhibition opening, where the Mobile Art Lab was also present. He informed the Board of upcoming shows and events.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.