

Public Art & Cultural Commission
January 24, 2013



Members Present

Jaan Ferree
Sharon Trammel
Guillermo Rodriguez
Honor Moor
Jennifer Gordon
Robert Todd
Gwynne Rukenbrod
Leslie Klinger
Julie Calhoun-Roepnack

Staff Present

Debbie Ivester, Assistant Director
Abigail Riley, Special Projects Coordinator
Jenny Bowen, Cultural Arts Administrator
Basil Punsalan, Cultural Arts Administrator
Alex Carmichael, Temporary Special Projects Coordinator

Guests Present

Jackie Stepp, Asheville Police Department

Robert called the meeting to order at 4:05pm.

1. Welcome New PACC Member: Guillermo Rodriguez

Robert welcomed Guillermo Rodriguez as the newest commission member. Guillo serves as the Bele Chere board chair. He sat on numerous city boards in the past, and he understands how they operate. Robert said he is happy to have Guillo as part of the Commission.

2. Approve October Minutes

Gwynne moved to approve the minutes. It was seconded by Leslie. All voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Urban Trail #15: Market Place

Robert welcomed Jackie Stepp from the Asheville Police Department (APD) to speak to the concerns surrounding the Urban Trail Station Market Place sculpture that sits on the bench on Walnut Street. Jackie said the bench raises issues for the City, surrounding businesses, vendors, the Urban Trail Subcommittee, and APD. There are many calls to APD regarding the bench and the transients that hang out there. The issues that surround this particular bench are nuisance behaviors, civil disturbances, panhandling (more aggressive than in other areas of the Central Business District), fighting with weapons, intoxication, and suspicious persons. Most calls come

from the neighboring businesses. In addition to the calls, APD conducts surveillance of area periodically. There is a higher call volume from April to September. There were 28 calls in June 2012 and six in December 2012. Jackie said the issue is a safety concern for visitors on the Urban Trail because most of the homeless and transient population in Asheville have substance and abuse issues, which is the type of person this bench attracts.

Gwynne asked why this bench has this problem. Jackie believes it is due to the wide sidewalk. The bench sits off the sidewalk, surrounded by a brick wall where people can keep their dogs and backpacks. In addition, they hang out in groups of two to six people. The bench is in a good area to hold that many people. More issues come from the bars on the opposite side of the street because the transients engage with the intoxicated patrons from the bars at night.

Sharon said that she had a business on the corner of Lexington and Walnut Streets. That area has always had this problem. It is indicative of how busy that area can be. The drinking and the transients cause tempers to flare. She had personal experiences with these issues.

Jaan said the Urban Trail Subcommittee is in full support for whatever the City decides to do. She suggested moving the sculpture to the other side of the street to accommodate the layout of the Urban Trail. She urged staff to be aware of the Urban Trail's flow as it is being relocated. Jackie added the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street is narrower, and evening access might be an issue because of the bars.

Jackie said the City and APD are looking at the larger issue of all benches downtown. They are working with the Asheville Downtown Association and other City departments to address the issue.

Leslie asked how the area is lit at night. Jackie said APD conducted a lighting assessment one month ago with David Foster in the Public Works Department. The area is lit very well.

Sharon asked if there is a possibility to add security cameras directed at the bench. Jackie said she would rather the bench be reassessed for redesign and strategic placement.

Gwynne asked for clarification on the need for the bench to the sculpture. Debbie said the bench is convenient but not mandatory. There is a possibility the sculpture could be mounted on something that is not seating. The current suggestion is to redesign the display to become part of the piece.

Gwynne asked about funding for the redesign. Debbie said the project is a priority due to the public safety issue. Funding can be reallocated if necessary in the current budget year. If the situation is not resolved before the end of the current fiscal year, it will be allocated in the next year's budget.

Jackie said the issue of bench will still exist, even if the art is moved off the bench, but once the art is removed, APD can better assess the bench situation. Guillo agreed that there are two separate issues here: the art work and the bench. Debbie added these conversations are taking place to preserve the integrity of the work.

Julie added that the businesses might be interested in helping with the costs of the project.

Robert clarified there is no action item to be taken. He asked staff to describe the next steps. Debbie said the Urban Trail Subcommittee has already provided a suggestion. Staff will submit a call-for-artists, and the Commission will have the biggest role in the call-for-artists review.

Sharon asked if the sculpture would be taken off line in the interim. Staff prefers not to take the art off display until necessary. A bench divider is intended to be temporary until the bench issue is taken care of. It will be a six month process from the call-for-artists process to implementation.

Jenifer said the donators of Guastivino's Monument are still angry. She asked if staff could produce information for the donors on the current situation. Debbie talked to Jaan about the issue, and it will be an item on the agenda at a later date.

Robert said the Commission would need to evaluate and identify relocation considerations. Debbie said that would be part of the process in place before the call-for-artists is announced. She hopes to arrive at a satisfactory solution for the location.

Robert asked if the parking lot is part of the Lanzius property and if contact had been made with them. Jackie said there are currently property line questions, but APD is working with Lanzius.

Robert asked if there is a problem with the Urban Trail Stepping Out piece. Jaan and Debbie said there isn't a problem there. Robert added that Jaan would be taking the lead with Debbie.

4. PACC 2012 Annual Report & Presentation to City Council

Robert introduced the annual report and the Commission will have to present it to Council in March. Debbie said the annual report is submitted to the City Clerk. It is a culmination of all the items the Commission worked on in 2012. The presentation will be March 12, and Robert will be making the presentation. Robert encouraged all commission members to be there.

Gwynne asked for the "c" to be taken out of her name.

Jennifer moved to approve the annual report. It was seconded by Guillo. All voted to approve it. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Chair & Vice Chair Term of Office

Robert said the appointment and renewal of members is on a fiscal year schedule, but the terms of officers are currently on a calendar year schedule. Due the need for aligning these terms and schedules, the current terms for the Chair and Vice Chair need to be extended until June 2013.

Gwynne asked if Robert and Jennifer were agreeable to the extensions. They agreed.

Guillo moved to extend the terms of Robert as Chair and Jennifer as Vice Chair until June 2013. It was seconded by Sharon. All voted to approve it. The motion passed unanimously.

6. 2013 Creative Sector Summit

This is the third year of the Creative Sector Summit. It expected to be a two-day event, with the second day focusing on the City-related components with council and commission members from the City and County. The Commission's role is to represent the City. As artists, Commission members might be going on the first day, but Robert would like to see members be at the second day as well.

Debbie said the Asheville Arts Council is the lead organization, and Kitty Love has been working with staff on it. Debbie will keep everyone updated as the timeline progresses. She asked if there were members willing to help staff with the Summit and serve on the review panel for the 2014 National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grant review panel.

Gwynne asked if the process for applying for the grant could be evaluated and changed because the current process does not facilitate receiving the grant. It is not a conscious formation of a community project that the National Endowment for the Arts wants to see and award. If the process continues as it has in the past, it will never be funded.

Gwynne proposed that organizations pitch their projects and then work as a team on one of those projects. The approach taken in the past should be evaluated because there are organizations whose projects should be receiving the grant, but the current process hinders that.

Jennifer said Gwynne would be an ideal candidate to help facilitate a new process. Gwynne thought there might be a conflict of interest.

Debbie clarified that both the City and the Asheville Arts Council want to arrive at a more community-based process. She and Kitty have drafted the call for proposals, and it is more clear and concise than in previous years. Debbie welcomed more discussion and input on the process.

Jennifer agreed that it needs to be a collaboration among numerous organizations.

Robert asked what Gwynne means that the process has been the wrong approach. Gwynne thinks staff needs to look at the Downtown Master Plan in order to fund the implementation of this strategy and then ask who has a proposal (as a group) to achieve an overarching strategy instead of having arts organizations compete. She wants to look at what the City is trying to accomplish and agree on the strategy from the existing plans and asks arts organizations what their ideas are for accomplishing those plans and strategies. Utilize five to seven arts organizations as part of a collaborative proposal.

Honor urged a diversity of arts organizations, such as performing arts, and include those organizations in the process.

Debbie said there is a shift from the previous structure of the grant process to a new structure. She urged the conversation to begin as soon as possible. Debbie suggested inviting Gwynne into

that discussion. Gwynne said that she wants to make sure there is no conflict of interest because Hand Made in America will be applying for this grant.

Jennifer said she does not want her on the review panel but to have the conversation with staff and the Asheville Arts Council on how the process needs to work.

Robert said from the conversations from last year's grant process there was a desire to work with the applicants in order to guide them on how to get this grant. He said the organizations need to be given the tools to getting this grant.

Jenny Bowen asked who administers the grant. Gwynne said the City administers it. She added there needs to be a capacity to manage the grant in the organization who receives the grant.

Julie asked what the responsibilities are for the member who is appointed to the review panel. Debbie said if the concept shifts from previous years, there would not need to be a review panel. However, Debbie will have that conversation with Kitty.

Gwynne added that the North Carolina Arts Council used Handmade In America as case study for the grant.

Jennifer moves to appoint Gwynne as the Public Art and Cultural Committee member to assist in the development of this year's Creative Sector Summit. It was seconded by Julie. All voted to approve it. The motion passed unanimously.

Robert asked for clarification on the motion. Jennifer said she was not suggesting to appoint a member to the review panel. This was to appoint a member to provide direction in the development of the process.

Robert asked if other members would like a role in the development of the grant process. Jennifer and Julie volunteered.

7. Assistant Director Report

Staff Updates

Debbie updated the Commission on the Cultural Arts Superintendent vacancy. The position is frozen through June 30. Staff determined it can support the mobile art lab at the same level in 2013 as it did in 2012. It will be managed by Jenny Bowen. If more staff is needed, volunteers can be developed. Basil Punsalan's position is part time, but is temporarily expanded to full time. His extra hours will be dedicated to public art maintenance and repair. He will also work with the mobile art lab if needed.

Park Murals

The Magnolia Park mural is complete. Debbie showed the original concept and how it changed through public input from the Montford neighborhood. It is vibrant, exciting, and seen by a lot of children. The neighbourhood is happy with it. Julie Armbrewster was the artist.

Sharon asked if the mural was coated with anti-graffiti coating. Basil said it was. Debbie reminded the Commission that it is designed to be temporary because the building facade will be replaced with future construction. The city will be responsible for the maintenance.

The Triangle Park mural led by the Asheville Design Center and using the North Carolina Arts Council Grassroots Grant is almost complete. Molly Musk is the lead artist with other volunteers and artists. Debbie said the goal is to have it complete by June 30 due to the grant funding timeline.

Gwynne said there are historic photographs in the pieces. The people who use the park are proud of it, and she thinks they will keep it clean.

Robert asked if there will be an event to unveil the project. Basil will contact the Asheville Design Center to find out more information and update the Commission.

Robert added there is already activity in the park that has not been there before. He would like to see an event. Debbie said that an unveiling event is most-likely possible.

Public Art Report

Debbie distributed a public art maintenance, repair, and acquisition report to keep members informed. She will produce the information and report monthly on the progress. The projects in the report are going to get longer, and the Commission will have a stronger role in that.

The renovation of the US Cellular Center has been delayed until after the Southern Conference Basketball Tournament. Design work, including the floor, will begin in March. Basil and Al Kopf will have specific dates in the coming weeks.

Staff assigned to developing the new artwork on the public parking garage next to the Aloft Hotel is redeveloping the scope of work for the artwork.

There are four new projects through the Capital Improvement Plan in which for new artwork will be acquired: 1) WNC Nature Center's entrance gate, 2) Beaucatcher Greenway, 3) Town Branch Greenway, 4) Clingman Forest Greenway. This is the most new art acquisition the City has seen since the completion of the Urban Trail. Debbie reported this to Leigh Ann Wilder from the NC Arts Council who said her organization can help build this message for other areas of the state.

Honor asked about the lengths of the greenways. Debbie will bring forward more information at a later meeting on the greenways and the Department's new River to Ridge Initiative.

Honor asked how to obtain more funding in order to implement more public art on greenways. Debbie said that additional budgets are not needed; the artwork is in the scope of construction of the greenways. The funding is built into the project's budget. Additionally, dollars are being allocated from the public art budget. The art components of the greenways will not be determined until construction design is complete.

Julie asked if the architect on the two greenways, Site Works Studio, is local. Robert said that it is, as he has worked with them. Steven Lee Johnson used to be on staff with the Department. Stewart Engineering is out of Raleigh, and Haizelip is out of Georgia. Guillo added that Stewart worked on greenway projects in Durham.

Guillo said he has seen a one percent for public art in projects, and he developed a program in Durham. Debbie added that the percent for public art has been a City policy for awhile but this year is the first where it is being implemented. Guillo added that it is easier to implement public art when it is built into the planning process.

Gwynne asked the status of the Community Challenge Grant, as she and Julie felt connected to it. Basil is the designated staff member for that grant, and he is currently working on the Grassroots Grant. Staff is currently considering the administration of the Community Challenge Grant.

Julie asked for Basil's title. He is an Event Specialist with a focus on cultural arts administration.

Gwynne stated her interest in moving the grant program forward.

Robert thanked Debbie for all her work on public art. Debbie said that Al Kopf, Sandra Travis, Basil Punsalan and Jenny Bowen have all been working hard on these projects in the absence of a Cultural Arts Superintendent.

8. Old Business

Continue Sub-Committee discussion at 10/25/12 PACC meeting at 2/28/13 meeting

9. New Business

Robert introduced finding a new day and time for the Commission in order to get Council representation at the meetings.

Honor spoke on Sharon's behalf due to her absence. She said Sharon suggested looking at the times everyone is currently available. Honor added she has never seen a City Council Liaison attend a meeting during the four years she has been on the Commission. She feels strongly about having a new liaison or a new time the current liaison can attend. Communication from the members to Council is important.

Julie said that Carl Mumpower was the Commission's liaison before Gordon Smith. When his time on City Council ended, Councilman Smith was the only Council person willing to serve as the liaison. Julie added the last time she saw Councilman Smith he was not receiving information about the Commission. Debbie said he had not been a part of the distribution list, but that was remedied.

Robert will reconnect with Councilman Smith before the next meeting to see what will work for him.

10. Adjournment

Robert adjourned the meeting at 5:33pm.