

Public Art & Cultural Commission
August 23, 2012



Members Present

Robert Todd , Chair
Jennifer Gordon, Vice Chair
Honor Moor
Sharon Trammel
Julie Calhoun-Roepnack

Staff Present

Abigail Riley, Special Projects Coordinator
Diane Ruggiero, Superintendent of Cultural Arts
Basil Punsalan, Cultural Arts Administrator
Jenny Bowen, Cultural Arts Administrator

Guests Present

Bruce Waller, Momentum Shifters

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

1. Approval of June Minutes

Honor commented that she would like to be engaged in the conversation outside of the meeting regarding the new Community Engagement Subcommittee. Jennifer asked her to set up a meeting after Labor Day.

Jennifer moved to approve the minutes; it was seconded by Sharon; and all approved. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Introduce Basil Punsalan

Diane introduced Basil Punsalan, the new part-time Cultural Arts Administrator. Basil worked on the festivals team as a temporary employee. Basil is a musician, which Diane thinks will bring a different aspect of cultural arts to the division. Members will be seeing emails and other documentation sent by Basil. Robert welcomed Basil to the new position

3. Community Art Challenge Grant

Diane presented the guidelines of the Community Art Challenge Grant. Staff is on target and timeline to begin implementation. She asked the Commission members to help with the wording of the guidelines because she felt the current wording did not convey the intent of what staff is trying to accomplish and achieve.

The projects can only be implemented outside. Organizations cannot present projects that utilize the interiors of City-owned buildings. Diane said this criterion could change in the future. For the first funding cycle, interior projects will not be accepted.

Diane stressed that community engagement is key, and its demonstration by the community is pertinent.

Jennifer asked if there were criteria for what “community engagement” means. Diane said the application allows the organization to define it. She will expect the applicants explain how they will engage the community without having staff decide for them.

The grant will fund artists’ fees, travel, insurance, materials, supplies, and other items that will facilitate completion of the project. Funds cannot be used for debt, school, fundraising, and other similar activities.

There is currently \$25,000 allocated for the grant, but Diane has had discussions with a private funder who wants to donate extra funds. Because the exact number to be donated by the private funder has yet to be determined, the language of the guidelines will speak to having more than \$25,000 available. Applicants will be able to apply for up to \$10,000. This allows for at least three organizations to be awarded. Once applicants have been awarded the grant, they have three months to raise the matching funds. Diane felt that the grant recipients would have an easier time finding matching funds after the grant was awarded because it shows that the City endorses the project. After the three months of raising matching funds, the recipients will have nine months to complete the project. The grant will be funding projects that will make Asheville more attractive and provide working opportunities for artists in Asheville.

The call for artists will be published nationally, but special consideration will be given to artists with the 15 counties of Western North Carolina. Jennifer asked if there will be language in the guidelines that reflect this, and Diane said there would.

Sharon mentioned that the guidelines do not specifically say that the project has to be installed in Asheville. Diane answered that because the project must be installed on City owned and operated property; this takes care of that requirement. Sharon suggested adding that projects must be implemented in the City of Asheville.

Honor asked if applicants would need approval for the use of City property before submitting applications for the grant. Diane said that the proposal for space is a part of the application.

Jennifer asked if there are areas where applicants will not be permitted to use. Diane said that she has been discussing those areas with Nikki Reid, the Real Estate Manager for the City. There will be a list published of the areas that will not be permitted for use such as police stations and medians. Staff will encourage applicants to discuss their location ideas before submitting the application.

Sharon asked for the publication date of the application. Diane said it would be within the next week, per the original timeline.

Sharon asked if a project would be allowed on Beaucatcher Overlook. Diane answered that if the property is under construction or a part of a project that has not been finished, the property would not be permitted for use.

Diane continued that three webinars would be offered as a training session and meet-and-greet for applicants. The Call For Entry System (CaFE) is the system that staff will use to collect applications. It was also used as call for Easel Rider instructors and artists for the bus wraps. The Department tried to issue a call for artists with using CaFE, and this process did not work as well. A part of the webinars will be training for the applicants to use CaFE.

Jennifer asked how the panel to determine the awards would be selected. Diane said that Commission members would be a part of determining that panel in the future. She is looking at a five-member panel with one Commission member and a majority of art professionals. Diane suggested that this is something the Community Engagement Subcommittee could be involved in.

Diane encouraged members to discuss the guidelines among themselves and others to give her feedback and insight on the best language to use going forward.

Jennifer asked if artists will need to include an image list or a portfolio along with their applications. Diane said that it will most likely be both. A list of dimensions, collaborations, and materials of previous projects will be important.

Robert asked if projects will be temporary or permanent. Diane said that will be one of the considerations in the approval process. Robert asked if that would be stated in the guidelines. Diane said that would be a part of the application.

Diane emphasized that the grant application an artist submits will be a part of their plan to implement the project. Knowing the artists' methods behind engaging the community and funding the project will help staff to measure the progress of the project.

Diane wanted the applicants to formulate their own budget, and she did not include a budget worksheet in the application. In past grant experience, particularly the Grassroots grant; applicants cannot fill out the budget worksheets correctly. Jennifer expressed her concern for not including a budget worksheet. Diane said that staff would present applicants with some format to present their budgets. Jennifer emphasized that some form of budget guidelines would be helpful.

With the Commission's goal of geographic diversity in mind, Diane asked the Commission members to consider emphasizing projects outside of the central business district within the guidelines.

Jennifer asked if there was a way to identify locations that have a need for public art as opposed to limiting certain areas. She suggested setting up certain geographic locations for the projects. Diane's concern with that suggestion was if there was a lack of applicants for those locations. In

place of eliminating certain districts, Diane suggested giving priority to projects within certain districts.

Jennifer said that she would not like to eliminate projects within the central business district because she knows there are many artists that would like to implement projects within that area. However, she agrees that projects within other areas are needed.

Julie added that the Commission did make it a priority to consider placing public art in areas outside of the downtown area, and she agreed that it was beneficial to add language encouraging projects outside of this area.

Diane and Jennifer agreed that the community engagement aspect of the project would help to shape the locations of the projects. Diane continued that it would be a question for the future award cycles to choose projects in different areas than previous grant cycles.

Sharon asked if Carrier Park was considered City property. Diane said that it is a City park. All parks within the City would be considered viable options for projects.

Robert suggested that the wording in the guidelines and application pertaining to the geographic locations of the projects could read “where public art is not as prevalent.” He also suggested weighting points based on the geographic location because there could be a creative place within the central business district that needs more public art.

Diane added that she is on the agenda for the Neighborhood Advisory Committee’s first meeting to bring this project forward to those members to achieve collaboration to get more communities and neighborhoods involved in the process. Diane will email members with more information about that meeting.

Julie suggested working with the Greenway Commission. Diane said that Commission moved to the Transportation Department, but she would work with other committees to get on their agendas for this initiative.

Jennifer moved to approve the Community Art Challenge Grant Guidelines as amended; Julie seconded; and all approved. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Grassroots Arts Program Grant Update

Diane reminded the Commission that the City is the provisional county partner for the distributing grant funds. The City was given approximately \$50,000 in the past year, ten percent of which was retained to offset the grant administration overhead. Applications were made available in the spring, and the five-member panel convened in June. Gwynne served as the Commission’s representative. The scoring criteria were based on five categories with scores ranging from zero to five. If an applicant scores a two or lower, the applicant is to be considered in the funding discussion. Because there were so few funds in this cycle, the panel made the decision that any applicant scoring below a three would not be considered. Once the North Carolina Arts Council makes their announcement regarding the projects to be funded, Diane will

send out a press release. All organizations that will be awarded the grant have been notified. The funds will be distributed quarterly, and the final check is held until final report is received by the City.

Sharon asked how the applicants were scored and the score determined. Diane said there were five criteria and five judges. Four of the five judges were arts professionals. Brenda Mills was the only member of the panel who is not an art professional, but she was qualified to be a judge based on her experience with grants administration for the City. The criteria included uniqueness of the project and the capacity and financial status of the organizational applying for the grant. The scores were averaged for each criterion among the judges. Diane stressed that the process was open to the public with a representative there from the North Carolina Arts Council to ensure all rules were followed.

Sharon asked why some applicants had a projected budget and others did not. Diane said the organizations had projected budgets, but she did not include those in the packet given to members because those organizations would not be receiving grant funds.

Robert asked if the applications of the Montford Park Players and the Asheville Design Center were the same projects for which they had applied to the NEA grant. Diane said the two projects were not the same. The application of the Montford Park Players was to offset the costs of marketing and the application of the Asheville Design Center was for the completion of the mural at Triangle Park.

Honor asked if the budget would be growing in the future. Diane said that \$50,000 was a significant amount this year due to recent budget cuts. The Legislature had cut \$300,000 from the North Carolina Arts Council's budget, but none of those cuts affected the grants programs. Diane encouraged the members to listen to what the candidates are saying about the arts because that has an impact on funding for grants like the Grassroots Arts Program Grant.

Jennifer said that she had heard the North Carolina Arts Council would reopen the application process to allow more minority organizations to apply for funding. Diane had not heard that, and she was not expecting them to reopen it.

5. Public Art Maintenance Plan Changes/Updates

Staff had to make changes to the maintenance plan. Diane said that as opportunities have arisen, changes need to be made.

US Cellular Center Renovation & Urban Trail Station #3 (Appalachian Stage)

Appalachian Station, the sculpture outside the US Cellular Center, needs to be moved due to renovation to the façade of the building. The architects said the sculptures need to be removed while the work is being completed. Diane said that she is working on getting an estimate on the cost of removal and installation of the station. The expectation is the pieces will be reinstalled in February or March 2013, and she is allocating approximately \$15,000. The timeline will depend on the timeline of the Southern Conference basketball tournament. When the station is reinstalled the placement will shift, but it should not be noticeable.

Urban Trail Station #12 (Guastavino's Monument)

Approximately nine years ago, the sculpture and the plaque for Guastavino's Monument were removed due to construction, and it has not been located. The City needs to determine if the property on which the monument should sit will be sold. During this time, the monument will not be reinstalled. Once Council determines what will be done with the property, plans for an alternate location will be determined.

Julie asked if the monument was insured. Diane said the City is insured, but the costs will be coming from the operating funds. Julie asked if it had been stolen. Diane speculated that it was misplaced, not stolen. Diane added that the monument pieces were not commissioned; they were purchased from a catalogue.

Jennifer stated that she had lunch with L.B. Jackson, a family member of the original donors. She said that the donors wanted to know what would happen to the monument if the land is sold. Diane said these conversations are on-going, and it is the job of staff to make consider all options presented and make the best decision. She is confident there is a suitable location near the Basilica that will honor Guastavino.

Sharon commented the organization buying the property might be amenable to including the monument on its property. Diane said that once an organization does build in that area, attitudes might change as to that being the best place for the monument.

Jennifer added that her conversation included questions regarding redesign of the monument. She had been in conversations with the family member, the Urban Trail Committee and others regarding the changes to the monument. She asked for a timeline for the reinstallation of the monument. Diane clarified that this Urban Trail station is not a part of the land sale. The City will have the public art discussion once the final outcome of the area happens to be. She added that the City and the Cultural Arts Division is committed to reinstalling the monument in a suitable location by the end of the fiscal year.

Robert asked if the monument could be erected near the Appalachian Station when it is reinstalled at the US Cellular Center. Jennifer said that a donor plaque would be helpful. Diane said there have been cost restraints in the past years that inhibited reinstallation of the monument. Jennifer said her issue was in regards to giving information to L.B. Jackson regarding the funds they donated for the monument. Diane said that she did not expect the Commission members to take on the responsibility of having those conversations. She urged members to have concerned parties talk to her and Roderick regarding those issues. Jennifer appreciated getting that information regarding the channels of communication in which to guide interested persons.

Diane summed up that staff is waiting for Council's decision on the piece of property. She will come back in the future to the Commission to let members guide the process.

Robert asked if the façade of the US Cellular Center will be dramatically different. Diane did not know. He added that people like to dance with the sculptures, and the entrance to the Center helps to facilitate that. He commented on its popularity.

6. September Meeting Date Change

Diane asked the Commission to entertain the idea of rescheduling the September meeting. She will be out of town on the current date of that meeting. She suggested moving the meeting to Tuesday, October 2, 2012 in order to allow Councilman Gordon Smith to attend the meeting.

Julie said that she had a conversation with Gordon Smith. He told her that he was not able to come to any of the Commission meetings on Thursdays due to an appointment conflict. Honor said that having a Council member at the meetings seemed to be an ongoing challenge. She added that it might behoove the Commission to get an appropriate day and time from Gordon Smith in order to accommodate his schedule. Diane said that she would have that discussion with Councilman Smith.

Julie added that the day was originally moved from Tuesday due to the complications with City Council meetings.

Jennifer moved to change the regular meeting time for the Public Art & Cultural Commission from September 27th to October 2nd. It was seconded by Honor, and all approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Diane said that she would get the new date out to the public.

7. Subcommittee Updates

Maintenance Subcommittee

Diane provided the members with a list of supplies that will be needed for the Urban Trail plaque cleaning. It is the City responsibility to provide the training, tools, and safety measures for volunteers to clean the plaques. The conservator will be with the volunteers on the first day of cleaning in order to train everyone. She estimates that a team of two members can clean one plaque every hour. If it is raining, the cleaning will be canceled. The dates for the plaque cleaning are September 15, 22nd, and 29th.

Julie asked if the conservator would be needed for all three sessions. Diane said that she would only be at the first date of cleaning.

Julie asked how many total plaques there are. Diane said 30. Sharon said this means that there need to be approximately five teams of two people.

Robert said that some of the plaques are not in dire need of cleaning. Diane said that the conservator recommended cleaning all the plaques in order to have all the plaques on the same cleaning schedules.

Diane said there were numerous ways in which to clean the plaques, but this method is the safest and easiest for the volunteers.

Sharon suggested that Asheville Green Works might be able to provide volunteers.

Honor suggested that everyone from the Commission bring one person to volunteer. She added that if everyone recruited five volunteers, the cleaning could be accomplished in one day. Diane said she would need to have that discussion with Public Works to see what would need to happen with the sidewalks.

Robert thought it might be a lot of work to accomplish in one day. Diane said that from a technical standpoint, one day might be easier. Everyone decided to complete and start the plaque cleaning in one day, September 15th with September 29th as the rain date.

Robert gave the floor to Bruce Waller who said the Young Professionals of Asheville could also volunteer to help clean the plaques. Diane added that she will work with Marsha Stickford, the volunteer coordinator for the City.

8. Division Update

There was no division update.

9. Old business

There was no old business.

10. New business

There was no new business.

11. Adjournment

Robert adjourned the meeting at 5:34pm.