

**Public Art Board meeting
August 25, 2011**



Members present:

Robert Todd, Chair
Julie Calhoun-Roepnack, Vice Chair
Honor Moor
Jennifer Gordon
Mark Koven
Sharon Trammel
Nancy Sokolove

Staff present:

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

Guests presents:

Kitty Love, Downtown Master Plan Cultural Arts Implementation Committee

Robert called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

1. Approve June minutes

Sharon motioned to approve the June minutes, Mark seconded, all approved and the motion passed unanimously.

Robert asked for a consensus to add two items to the agenda: Old Business & New Business.

2. Welcome new board members

Robert welcomed Jen and Gwynne to the Board.

3. Board training presentations

Megan discussed the new online board orientation sessions and demonstrated how to access them via the department's website. New board members should view all six modules and take the quiz within three months of assuming their post. All board members are encouraged to watch the presentations annually as a refresher. The presentations are available at:

<http://www.ashevillenc.gov/departments/ParksRCA/default.aspx?id=13242>

4. Increasing board size

Robert stated that the Mayor has suggested raising the number of board members from 9 to 11, reflecting interest from the community. This is something that is open for discussion, but does not have to be determined today. An alternative would be to have “halo” board members who aren’t official but are community liaisons. Diane added that it was approximately one year ago that we increased the board number from 7 members to 9.

Gwynne asked if this would make The Public Art Board the largest board within the City. Diane said it would be the largest in the department, as the Rec Board has 9 and Greenway Commission has 7. It would be among the largest boards in the City. Honor said she was open to adding two members as the Board’s definition is morphing. The Downtown Master Plan Cultural Arts Implementation Subcommittee members want greater participation in arts and this would be a possible opportunity for some of those members. Jen agreed, since the Board is looking at having a larger scope. She felt Asheville is a big arts community with several underrepresented groups. Sharon felt we are currently underrepresented when it comes to performance artists.

Julie added that the Board has undergone large changes very recently, including changing its purview to include things like performance art, and growing to 9 members. She felt we want quality members over quantity, and more people could just be more opportunity for people not to show up. Gwynne and Nancy thought we might want to wait a little more time before making this decision, because of these recent changes.

Mark said he would like for the next members, if we do expand, to be non-arts professionals. This would increase diversity of members. He gave some examples of other cities’ arts boards, which often have several non-arts professionals. This would bring in a new perspective from taxpayers and those who don’t necessarily know a lot about arts but care about the community. Mark said he’d also like to look at adding more diversity when it comes to gender, race, etc. He also agreed that we so recently grew to 9 members, that we might want to wait before adding more. As the board gets larger, it can get harder to make decisions and maintain momentum. Mark felt that now the Board is very cohesive, attendance is much higher than in previous years, and he’s happy with where things are headed.

Robert would prefer to use the Mayor and City’s interest in adding more board members as a general support for arts and push for more funding. Mark wondered if more applicants truly equaled more interest from the community at large, or just a few individuals.

Mark said there’s been a lot of arts-related activity recently, with the Mobile Art Lab, and funding, and now the Board really seems to have more to do. Robert said that’s true, but funding is still pretty limited. He’d like to see the Board do more advocacy for funding, given the increasing interest. Jen said having the Mayor push for this would be a good point of leverage regarding funding.

Julie said her main reservation is that the board struggled to get a quorum for many years. She is excited about the interest and enthusiasm, but more people could equal more attendance problems. Sharon said the public perception of the Public Art Board is that there haven't been many projects in recent years. She noted that the Cultural Arts Department does a lot, but that's not the same as Public Art Board. Diane said maybe there haven't been a lot of highly visible public projects, but there have been a lot of process, foundational work. Sharon agreed but said the public needs to see visible projects. Diane added that without funding, those high profile projects are difficult. Julie added that in the past we've had funding available, but members didn't show up for a vote. So we lost it.

Mark said he'd rather work with people on an unofficial basis before immediately adding them to the Board, rather than just letting people jump straight on. Robert suggested taking more time to consider this. Honor suggested adding some diversity considerations in the future, if the Board does want to expand.

Jen moved to table the board growth for six months until we develop a cohesion within the Board. This includes expanding subcommittees to increase public participation, and to increase diversity among future members. Nancy seconded. All approved and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Definition of Capital Improvement Projects

Diane gave an overview of the City budget and budget terminology so that everyone was on the same page. Within the City, money is defined in two different ways. Some is operational. Some is capital. The operations budget is for day-to-day expenses, such as salaries, program operations budget, marketing, licenses, taxes, supplies, etc. The capital budget is reserved for large-scale projects that are an investment with a lasting value. The 1% for Public Art funding comes through the capital budget. Some cities' arts money comes from bonds; however Asheville does not currently do bonds so that is not a funding option. Rather, capital funds must be spread out over time. Thus, there's not a lot of readily available money for big projects.

She noted that last year, the City expanded the definition of public art to include performance and temporary art. However, that definition does not match the definition of public art regarding capital.

Regarding copyright of art, Diane said we wouldn't want to purchase a copyright because that is the property of the artist, which is lifetime plus 70 years. What the City does instead is ask for copyright permission, which is the right to reproduce the artwork in photos, marketing, etc. These things don't directly make money. Ownership of the artwork is not ownership of the copyright.

Mark asked how the two types of budgets are funded. Roderick said that the capital budget is a percentage of the operating budget. It varies year to year. They both come out

of city revenues such as taxes. Jen asked who determines the definition of public art for the 1% allocation. Diane said it's standard accounting law. Infrastructure must be a physical asset with a minimum 15-30 year life that will have lasting value.

Diane said contributions and grants don't adhere to the capital definition, so those could pay for impermanent art. Roderick said that if we want to bring in a temporary exhibit, we'd have to request more from the operating budget. Roderick added that during budget negotiations, there is an opportunity for City Council to move funding around between these funds. If the Public Art Board wanted to make a recommendation to move funds allocated to capital (for maintenance, for example) to operations (for a temporary exhibit), they can make that request. There's no guarantee, however. While moving money between accounts is possible, City Council can't just add money unless it comes from elsewhere.

Mark asked if a performance was turned into a documentary or photo exhibit, if that would be considered capital. Roderick said no, because there's no lasting value. It must be tangible. Otherwise the bank won't permit it. The accounting office makes the determination for what is capital and what isn't.

Robert was interested in finding ways to work with these funds to support the new scope of the Board. For example, diverting some of this funding to operations (not for salaries or supplies, but specifically for projects). Nancy asked if we should go to Council with a specific use in mind for the fund transfer request. Roderick said the Board would want to designate certain projects as part of a "game plan".

Diane added that if not all the operations budget is used, it doesn't get reduced the next year. We start with a flat budget from the previous year.

Julie asked which budget maintenance comes from. It comes from capital since it supports capital projects. Mark asked if, given the increased interest in the arts, the Mayor has also requested an increase in staff in addition to an increase in board members. Roderick said the Department is trying to make cultural arts more of a priority, because City Council isn't going to increase staff head count.

No motion was made, but Robert summarized that the board discussed asking City Council for a funding transfer, but also adding more operations funding as part of strategic planning that could potentially include increased staff time/capacity.

Mark suggested using the term "impermanent" to describe anything outside of a fixed asset, instead of "performance" or "temporary."

6. Public Art Maintenance and Acquisitions Plan

Diane explained that the 1% allocation is divided into funding for maintenance and acquisition, both of which have a plan.

- The maintenance plan: in July 2008, the Department commissioned a conditions assessment for all public art pieces (except for those in storage or temporarily off exhibit). Diane showed the current maintenance plan based on that report. She explained that some items have been moved up in priority, such as the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, because the whole park is being renovated. Another example was when the Flat Iron piece was hit by a car a few years ago and had to be moved up in priority. Diane emphasized that the costs listed in the plan are estimates. Many of the pieces have not been maintained well because there was no maintenance funding until a few years ago. So, this plan is subject to change. Once projects come off the maintenance list (i.e., they've been repaired), they go on the cleaning rotation list. Diane will update the board about once a quarter regarding this maintenance plan.

Sharon asked if the cleaning day will still happen. Diane said yes, after Labor Day. Mark asked who reviews the list. This work is done by staff and the conservators.

- The acquisition plan: Diane said this is also a living document, subject to change. It has changed recently as different city departments have approached the Cultural Arts division with funding for various public art projects.
 1. 51 Biltmore. The Streets department is looking for outdoor artwork over the entrance to the parking garage on Aston St. They have funding for it.
 2. Rankin Parking Deck. \$10,000 funding available for murals.
 3. Bus Depot. Sharon, Robert, Mark are on the subcommittee handling this project and will be meeting soon. We don't yet know what the funding is.

Other projects:

1. Broadway/Cauble. This is the Public Artist of the Year project for a neighborhood greenway/gateway project. This project is part of Reed Creek Greenway Phase II.
2. Riverbend Park. Located near the Walmart on Swannanoa Rd. This is in the floodplain so is a challenging project. This is one of the first opportunities to have public art outside of the downtown footprint.
3. Shiloh Community. This project also helps achieve the geographic diversity goal.

Diane explained that it will take several years of collecting allocations to have enough funding for these projects. The allocation includes staff time, fees, site prep, and other costs in addition to the actual cost of commissioning the piece. Diane said it's hard to say what this "admin" percentage will be without knowing what the site prep will be, if studies are needed, etc. The goal is to give the artist as much money as possible.

Jen asked why artists or volunteers can't function as the project manager. Diane said only staff can be in charge of City money. Also, project goals should be those of the City, not the artist. Roderick added that Risk Management makes that determination and it varies

by city; it's something we could look into but we'd have to work with Legal and Risk Management.

Mark moved to endorse the maintenance and acquisitions plans, with the understanding that these are fluid numbers. Honor seconded it. All approved.

7. Committee Updates

Urban Trail: In Jaan's absence, Diane said that updates are moving forward.

- Station #23 (On the Move) is being repaired and a digital sound system is being installed. Repairs should be completed by tomorrow.
- Station #2 (Crossroads): We will start to maintain the pigs and turkey statues on an annual basis. Currently the piglet is off-exhibit and the turkeys are loose, so they will be repaired.
- Station #9 (Catwalk): The mouse sculpture will soon be reinstalled.
- Historic Hilltop station: The plaque has been missing for some time; we reordered it and will install it when it arrives. It is difficult to secure this plaque.

Education: Mark is working with UNCA to connect with schools in Asheville that would like to participate in this subcommittee. In the interest of time, a discussion of this item has been tabled to the September meeting.

8. Committee Structure

For the benefit of the new members, Robert described the current subcommittees and subcommittees the board has discussed forming:

- Partnering Committee: reaching out to other organizations.
- Advocacy Committee: more of a focused group that would work on a particular issue, such as working with the Mayor for more funding.
- Maintenance Committee: helping with organization of this plan & soliciting volunteers.
- Visioning Committee: the big-picture committee to think of new ideas

9. New Business

The Board's official name change is on the City Council agenda for Sept 27. Board members are encouraged to attend. It begins at 5:00 p.m.

Honor suggested the board get together socially with Gordon since several members have not met him yet.

Mark said there's a panel discussion at the Art Museum on Sunday at 3pm and encouraged all to attend.

Mark asked for an update on the URTV grant process. URTV was a program jointly funded by the City and County for public access television. URTV folded when both

pulled out. However there's still interest so the City and County are offering a 3-year step-down grant to organizations who can use new technology to make public access television happen in the community. Nine proposals were received. Diane said the process is managed by the City and County Finance Committees, though Diane is working to see if the issue can come through the Public Art Board first. Robert would need to formally request this to City Council. Board members felt this was extremely important. Mark, Jen, Gwynne offered to meet with Diane to move this forward.

Diane reported that the City is now the Provisional County Partner for the State Arts Council grassroots grant. The Asheville Area Arts Council was previously the Designated Partner but lost that status this year. Grants are due in September and awarded in October, so the deadline is tight and changes in the process would be difficult to make this year. Diane will organize grant application workshops. Diane noted that Designated County Partners can keep 50% of money. Provisional Partners can keep 20% (10% for administrative costs, 10% for programs). The Asheville Area Arts Council can apply for the grant if they wish.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.