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MAYOR

Salem Public Art Commission
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Public Art Commission
December 20, 2022, 6:30pm
Meeting held remotely via zoom

MEETING MINUTES

Note: All proposals, presentations, and/or documentation to be reviewed and discussed at this meeting can be viewed online at the following link: <https://bit.ly/SalemPACProposals>

- **Meeting called to order at 6:36 pm.**
- **Roll Call PAC:** Norene Gachignard, John Andrews, Janine Liberty, Kurt Ankeny Beauchamp, Gwen Rosemond in attendance. Absent: Carly Dwyer-Naik, & Catherine Bertrand.
- **Meeting Minute Approvals**
 - o November 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes- Norene entertained a motion, Janine made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, Kurt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Open Spaces Discussion with Tom Devine**

City planner Tom Devine is seeking input from the community about the Open Space and Recreation plan. This is a planning document that helps guide programs, policies and investments for parks, recreation areas and open spaces. The last plan was updated in 2015, and the State requires that the plan be updated every five to seven years in order to maintain eligibility for certain grant funding from the State for park improvements. The input that Tom gets tonight will be brought back to the MAPC and the Open Space advisory group as part of the action plan.

The 2015 plan included “Include public art as a part of any park or facility renovation or expansion. Previous examples would be the Harbor Connector Path and Sculpture Garden, and the Forest River Park Art and Nature Center. Looking forward to the 2023 plan, Tom asks “how can we be intentional about incorporating art and culture into our open spaces and how do we want to represent that in our 2023 plan?”

The 2023 objectives proposed are

- Integrate public art into park design
- Incorporate accommodations for public events to activate key parks and open spaces
- Promote partnerships with local art community

Tom asks for comments from all PAC members.

John Commented that there is no lack of creators, want or talent, but rather a lack of monetary influences. Our contributions to public art in public spaces is dependent on funds available to this commission.

Norene commented that returning seating to the Willows hatch shell would bring back more people and be less of a liability.

Janine is interested in all public parks and open spaces to have electrical or plug in spaces for more interactive public art, or infrastructure for short term stages which would allow for a better use of space.

Kurt added that a visual thinker, a visual artist and a person who is deeply immersed in performance based art in the design process as early as possible, because they are going to see things that others may not, which will lead to a better project in the end.

Julie suggests integrating objective three into both objectives similar to what Kurt was saying. Hiring local artists as a specific partnership, and integrating them into the design. Talking to local groups or performers and incorporating them into the process of identifying what elements in the park would be beneficial to performers. Finding tangible ways to partner with the community on both objective one and two.

Tom advised that the minutes and discussion including the PACs comments will be posted on their website, and he thanked PAC for their comments.

- **Making it Public Sculpture review-**

Julie reviewed the 15 submissions submitted by the December 15th deadline. Without going too deep into details, a broad review of the submissions showed amazing caliber. Julie is calling for volunteers for the review committee and Janine, Gwen and John volunteered. John recommended Katie Neiman from Parks, and the signature parks gentleman- Michael. Julie would like to find an architect on the board as well as an important representative group as well. Kurt recommended looking for someone from the PEM, John recommended Trevor from PEM who has brought in “stickwork” and other various works which he suggests might form a nice partnership. Janine suggested someone from SSU or someone from the North Shore CDC. John suggested maybe a student from the CTE program (John will get contact information for the director Mario). Julie suggested a landscape architect that she has contact for.

Julie introduced an idea between herself and John about the public potentially voting on their favorite piece and location, in order to get more community involvement. Their idea would have the review committee bring forward 3 finalists and present them to the public to decide on location and piece. If this feels like something the PAC is interested in, Julie would like to incorporate this into the call. Julie wants to assure that she is willing to take the time to incorporate a robust input process, and present plenty of announcements to the community.

Kurts concern in this process is the nine different possibilities for art and locations.

Julie will bring this to the DPS to get all sites vetted by them, but she doesn't think this would be too big of a lift to figure out.

Janine wants the PAC to consider offering the choice of the piece of art with the idea that we are planning to move this around annually to new locations after the first year, which would keep the public engaged longer.

Kurt seconds Janines idea but warns to not underestimate that most people are visually illiterate when given an open concept.

John would like to use some of the leftover administrative funds from this grant to give \$300 or so to the remaining three finalists to get a more formal plan to get a better idea of what we are getting and where we are going.

A preliminary review with this sub group we are creating will take a look at this proposal and Julie will review the proposal with NEFA to make sure that this is supported.

Kurt asked if there was a possibility of PAC setting up a lawn sign or stake in the ground saying where the sculptures have gone, and or more information about the process of submitting their own sculptures to the PAC. Julie said she loved the idea of a lawn sign and hopes that they don't get stolen. She will see if she can get some made by Gorilla pretty cost effectively.

- **Sculpture Garden Review**

St. Annes Park which PAC had previously identified as an area that they would like to see the rotating sculpture garden go to has been determined to not be City property, as it belongs to the church. PAC is in need of finding a new location. Julie had talked to The Department of Public Services and they had recommended Leslie's Retreat as a contention for this year's rotating garden. It's a "strip park" essentially, with a dog park on the end of it and they are trying to encourage more use of the space as a walking path, and a biking path. Kurt, Janine, Gwen and Norene had expressed interest in that area. John stated that there are cameras and security in that area.

Kurt asked about lighting, plug ins or solar powered lighting for the sculptures and Julie said it's something she will inquire about. This could also be an ask for next year's sculpture garden budget.

- **Fire from the Sky**

This is the piece that PAC loved from the sculpture garden submissions, but it didn't seem to fit the curatorial lens that PAC was moving forward with. Julie got more information about this piece, and had emailed that information to all PAC members for their review. Her ask is if the PAC would like to see if the piece comes to Salem after all and if so, if you are willing to allocate \$1000.00 of the downtown programming budget to the selection of this additional piece.

Janine recommends tabling this conversation until after the Making it Public grant is chosen, so that we don't run into overcrowding issues or an over saturation at other parks.

Norene asked if this would be owned or a loan.

Gwen would also like to wait until after the other sculptures are placed to make sure that these sculptures are complementary.

Julie confirmed that this would be a loan just as the other chosen sculptures. The sculpture garden is going to go to Leslie's Retreat. Because of the call that was given for the Making it Public project, the piece would not be colliding with the future project as Charlotte Forton Park is part of the Downtown.

John also supported tabling this conversation until January.

- **Meet the PAC Night**

Norene and Julie shared their experiences with the "Meet the PAC Night", and Julie was able to talk to about 30 or so people, but most people were there to enjoy the holidays- not interested in deep conversations about the intricacies of city government. Norene suggests that the next meet the PAC night be coupled with a major event such as an unveiling of the sculpture garden, and in good weather. Janine suggests combining with other local arts and culture events, it may be more successful. Julie stated that this was the original intention of the Meet the PAC night, but In this case the timing of the holidays was off.

- **Public Comments-**

None

- **Adjourn-** Norene motioned to adjourn. Moved by Kurt, seconded by Gwen. **Meeting Adjourned at 7:47 pm.**

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