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MAYOR

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**Public Art Commission**  
**July 6, 2023, 6:00pm**  
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 6:05 pm.**
- **Roll Call PAC:** Norene Gachignard, Janine Liberty, John Andrews, Hannah Gathman, James Bostick & Gwen Rosemond. Absent: Carly Dwyer-Naik.
- **Meeting Minute Approvals**
  - o **May 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes-** Janine pointed out a spelling error in the first paragraph in the Barrio Mural notes, and would also like to enter into the record her ideas from the May 16th meeting that we weren't trying to subject the artist to an arbitrary bureaucratic process, but rather an attempt to create a more consistent baseline for all artist proposals. Chelsea will edit the last minutes and send them to Julie to post. Janine entertained a motion to approve the minutes with those specific edits. Norene made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, John seconded. Hannah abstained. Motion approved.
- Julie has been working with her colleague Kate Newhall-Smith to specifically articulate when projects like the Barrio Mural need to come to the PAC, why they are reviewed, when they need to be reviewed, ect. A flow chart will be sent to the commission as soon as Tom is able to sign off on it, so the commission should find this information a lot clearer and less seemingly convoluted. This should help visually streamline the process for everyone involved.
- **2024 Fiscal Year Plan-**

Julie has sent out a new Fiscal year plan and budget to the Public Art Commission members based on the budget used from last year. The top 3 in blue are annual projects that Julie assumed PAC wants to continue and that aren't taking funding from the public art budget. Downtown activations, artist's row PAIR selection, & public arts inventory updates.

Green are active or current projects that are wrapping up or in progress including the Charlotte Forten park project, the Forrest River splash pad project, and public art policies, procedures and Guidelines.

Orange are potential projects that we can fund this year, the murals, the Art Slam, the five art boxes that were slated for decommissioning, conservation of art boxes might not be needed this year, so money can be saved in that capacity. Next would be the public art projects from the community which are the individual projects we review in September and in March. While there is extensive sign blight in Salem, the majority of our public art projects do not have signage, and nothing that identifies them as part of our formal public art program. Julie suggests a sticker or an emblem to put on our funded projects going forward. She suggests advocating to use our \$10,000 in our conservation and maintenance budget if there are no other large conservation and maintenance tasks this fiscal cycle.

The three in the red are future projects that are out of our hands, as we are missing pieces in order to accomplish right now. The light orb installation however, could potentially be worked with but Julie cannot find a viable placement for the piece. She has tested at least 8 different locations, and they have been shut down for one reason or another.

Janine is curious about the light orbs, and why they haven't been hung up. Julie explains that the city is worried about vandalism with the heavy traffic of downtown, or hanging them in a less trafficked area which could also lead to vandalism, as well as the ability to be hung up high enough to be safe. Janine asked about donating them to the CLC to use on their property. Julie suggests that they would be beautiful on artist row if we could figure that out.

Jim asks for a description or images of the lights. Julie describes them as white orbs varying in size from a basketball to a large bouncy ball or about about 14in to 20in in diameter. They are programmable lights in any color and can also be set to music. They can be up year round.

Norene asked about the probability of hanging the orbs up around OTH. Julie thinks that the historic commission and the SRA would take issue with that but she is happy to ask. Norene asked about hanging them in a zigzag pattern outside of Old Town Square as well. The installation of the orbs would cost somewhere around \$6,000-\$8,000.

John asked about the Hatch Shell at the Salem Willows. He commented that it might not be in the parks phase two plan, but they have been attempting to get more adequate lighting in that area for a while now. The Jazz Festival, Salem's Heritage Days, and North Shore Band concerts all use that space. Julie commented that this lighting is more ambiance lighting than safety lighting, but she will bring up that location to her superiors.

Gwen asked once again why we are unable to use the lights in Artist's Row. Julie explained that they felt that the orbs would hang down too low in that area that vandals would just be able to smack the orbs potentially damaging them, or be able to hit them with something. Also the roofs are in such disrepair that the city doesn't want to risk further damage by attaching the orbs to them. Potentially when the roof repairs are done, we might be able to figure out a way to have them incorporated.

Julie had originally thought about the orbs incorporated on the harbor walk, strung from the light poles,

but we would need to pay to have additional poles installed because you can only have so many between runs. Only 10 can be linked together without an additional power source (we have 40), so we would also need to pay to have additional outlets installed. That location however was approved, but we do not have the budget right now to make that work.

Hannah also likes the ideas of the Hatch Shell at the Willows. Similarly, she likes the idea of the orbs down the pedestrian mall as it gets the most traffic. However she knows that 40 orbs would be sufficient for the Hatch shell, but not for the mall.

John suggests nudging Michael at parks about the orbs, as he knows there is some budget there.

Norene asked for additional comments on Fiscal Year 2024.

Janine would like to discuss the signage idea specifically about the seahorse. Julie informs us that the seahorse would be part of the PAC signage, as well as the Naumkeag portrait, the ripple steel piece, the Forrest River things, ect., would be included in the collection. Then we would also have a template and a price that we could include in future projects. As for this year, we have tapped out our budget for 2023.

Hannah wants to voice her support for the downtown programming fund and public activations, and is interested in previous activations. She is also on board with the signage piece.

John brings up that city council is done with signage downtown, and suggests calling it placards instead of signage. Julie came up with the term “public art labeling campaign”.

Julie is looking for direction for what we would like to see prioritized in this upcoming budget, and in the next meeting she will have an actual draft budget for PAC to approve. To answer Hannah’s question, a few years ago the PAC was hopeful to spend money on programming and activations in the downtown area. The Mayor then provided us with access to a programming fund for us to curate with \$15,000 that we receive every year (this is the third year). Previously there was the “Hip Hop Open Mic Slam” with Lynn Music Foundations, and the winter activations with “Merry & Bright”, and the “Salem So Sweet” programming, plus our own programming. If this is still something that PAC wants to work with, this funding is still available to us. These activations cannot be permanent activations, but they do have to be programming and activity related items in the downtown area. Julie is looking to see how specifically we are willing to spend this money, and if you have ideas now, she would be happy to incorporate it into a more specific budget.

Jim mentioned that the things that have a call for art seem too close together. Julie suggests changing it for a space of 2 months from call and release to review.

Janine asked about our most successful projects as an idea of what to invest in again in the future or what to change. Julie thinks the most successful was the call for performers in CF Park and Derby Square, and ones that were paired with larger events. Julie suggested that the open mic nights didn’t go over so smoothly, as they created a lot of issues, but programming and a call for artists has been more successful partnering with community art projects and window murals as part of Salem So Sweet. This cannot be funding to stream an event, but rather an additive to an existing program.

Hannah likes the idea of sponsoring a stage at an event, and that she feels that it's important to fund local music as it is to fund public art.

John feels fortunate in the past few years with the extra funding through Mayor Driscoll's DTP funds, and the ARPA funds, but is concerned about the legitimacy of the funding with our new Mayor seeing that there have been some changes already, and that the DTP funds aren't a guarantee to be continued. John alludes to his comments from previous meetings about the cost of living increase post Covid, what it means to be a creator in this time, and our collective argument of paying artists a livable wage for their work.

Janine comments that PAC has a strong track record of the impact that PAC is leaving with the community. Marshaling her thoughts, she would like to know of the possibility of splitting the funding into one really large call from proposals, and then using the rest towards additional programming that already exists. For the call for proposals, she really liked the parameters that were set for the Patten Park project. Her idea is to set something similar for performers with parameters.

Julie's states that there is already a mechanism in place for the individual artist proposals for temporary public art, which got us the temporary ballads on Artists Row. Julie recommends that we could expand that program, take part of the budget from the activations fund and part of the public art budget and put out a call for proposals from Salem artists for public art or public activations. Since the mechanism is already there, we could expand the call that has already been put out to include not just visual public art but performance public art. Julie asked the PAC for their recommendation for earmarked funds from each budget.

John thinks that there are other things that we can steer people towards and say that we acknowledge that this is just particle funding for projects, but here are some additional options that you have for funding, but here is what you can ask us for.

Julie clarifies that it seems PAC is interested in moving forward with downtown activations with at least a portion of that funding going towards a call for artists. John's suggestion is 50/50 for funding. Hannah agrees.

Julie understands that PAC would like to use \$7,500 from the downtown activations fund towards a call for proposal, and then \$7,500 towards identifying specific programming of our choice. That could be one or two different activations from that other \$7,500. Specifically speaking of the DTA fund, so the \$7,500 would be half of the activations fund that we have, that would go to activations of our choosing that we program in conjunction with other events, and the other half would go towards a call for artists. Then there would be an additional pot of money that would contribute to that call for proposals from the public art fund that would go to support the actual visual art and public art installation portion of the budget. So the \$25,000 budget that we have is a separate budget from that \$15,000.

To clarify: PAC has 3 separate pots of money: 1. Downtown activations 2. Public Art 3. Conservation and Maintenance.

Janine suggested putting a pin in this programming conversation for now, and go through the other list of priorities and work backwards from there. Julie agreed.

Last year, for the rotating sculpture garden we spent \$8,000. Julie proposes \$10,000, however it is up to the Commission. The individual project for arts cost \$2,500 last year. The art box project continuation Julie suggests that we could possibly paint all 5 of those boxes for \$2,500. and then \$10,000 is suggested going towards the labeling project. She assumes that we would still like to support the Salem Arts Mural Slam that is a super fun event that we are able to directly impact. We have been paying folks \$500 per board. We have 12 artists that participate, and we need some wiggle room for materials. This project all in including the people choice award all in is \$7,000 earmarked.

John asked about the possibility of only funding 5-6 sculptures for the rotating sculpture garden this year as in years previous, it had been hard to find a place for so many sculptures. John would like to take some money away from that budget and allocate somewhere else. Julie shared that she partners with a curator from the Flying Horse Sculpture Show at Pingree which gets very high caliber sculptors to participate in the show, but it's not an open call. She pays the curator for her assistance which is a stipend of \$850-1000 for her time as well. So we could potentially get one additional sculpture as we would pay each artist \$1000 for the loan of the incredibly high end sculptures for one year, but we could put out an open call for sculptural submissions, but it's more of a lift to make that happen. If PAC is comfortable with us continuing the same pathway, or wants to change the process, this would be the time to discuss. John states that he is happy with our current process. No other comments.

Jim asked about the location by the North River. Julie reminds that the idea is a rotating sculpture garden, so having the garden live in one space for two years, and then shifting elsewhere, but it is all up to us.

Julie is taking the budget down to \$6,000 for the sculpture garden, for 5 sculptures and the stipend for the consultant. Julie gives us options of the use of the saved money, we can either put it towards installation of the orbs as it is the only unfunded proposed project at the moment, or put it towards increasing the investment in the initial public art proposals (mini grants), or keep a small slush fund for any last minute things that pop up.

Norene asked about having a table at the Farmer's Market, and Haunted Happenings to promote the work of the PAC, as well as gain more public awareness. John asks about raising money for the PAC. Julie informs us that we do not have a non-profit arm so we would be unable to raise money without a 501. Hannah clarifies that you can generally sell items but the City would need to agree to say that the funds are then earmarked for this commission. As long as we could have someone agree to manage a table, would there be anything that we could sell to gain revenue? Julie confirms that we still have some signed images of the seahorse. Julie will earmark \$3000 for experiential marketing, leaving \$1000 for a slush fund if something was to come up.

Hannah asks for clarification over the downtown activations funds. We have \$15,000 in DTA funds, Julie's recommendation is that we take \$7,500 of that \$15,000 and earmark it to be associated with the call for proposals that we would put out at the same time as the mini grants for public art of \$5,000, which would become one big pot of money going out together in one call. And then the other \$7,500 would be for the

things that we intend to do such as hiring someone to do something like we did with Salem so Sweet and the winter activations at OTH and the Lynn Music Foundation.

Instead of the Winter and Spring performance activations for \$10,000, Julie would recommend that we change that to \$7,500 and call it performance/activations mini grants. And then individual public art project proposal mini grants so there is consistency there and we know that there is that call for artists that is going out. If we wish to fund the Salem Arts Fest community art project we can because we would have \$7,500 available.

Projects that the PAC would like to fund include: performance and activation mini grants, art boxes, the placard project for the public works, the rotating sculpture garden, & Mural Slam. If PAC agrees, Julie will take this information and refine the calendar and budget, and bring it to the PAC for approval for the July meeting.

Julie will be away for the next scheduled meeting, and as she would like to be there, she would like to reschedule the next meeting for Thursday the 27th of July. That date works for a majority of the Commission.

- **Project updates:**

**Charlotte Forten Park:** Moving forward full steam head, the call was released on the 5th, the deadline is on the 16th at 11:59pm. Please feel free to share that call; a link to the call was shared in the meeting memo. Share it far and wide if you could.

**Rotating Sculpture Garden:** "Singing Rainbow" has been approved for the Willows, we got Dig Safe's permission to install it, but the artist has fallen sick, and has been in and out of the hospital, we don't know when/if the sculpture will be installed but Julie is still working towards it.

**Mural Slam:** It went great! The new murals are now on display on Artist's row. All 5 unclaimed murals from last year have been donated to Collins Middle School for display.

**Lynn Music Foundation event:** The open mic component did not go as planned, so in the future we will not be able to incorporate open mics in future events per our legal departments direction. The last event was canceled due to heavy rain.

**Public Art Community Art Project:** "For the Record" was a great success and well received. It is still being displayed on Artist's row, and they will be until they are no longer suitable for display.

**Call for PAIR:** Julie will be launching the call next week. Hannah would like to get Claudia's feedback on the program to see if there are any suggestions on how the program should be tweaked. Julie has gotten previous PAIR feedback and is willing to do the same with Claudia.

**History Alive:** Has been awarded the October bid for OTH activation. Her proposal will be made public next week, on how she will be activating this space in Oct. Otherwise, the City has requested Kristina to move out of that space to begin the process of cleaning it out, purging it, and getting ready for possible renovations for broad use of the community.

**Charlotte Forten Park Activations:** There were some problems with the contract that got delayed, and they are trying to renegotiate the contract, trying to not have to go out to bid, but it was delayed through no fault of the applicant.

- **Other Business-**

None

- **Public Comments-**

None

- **Adjourn-** Norene entertained a motion to adjourn. Moved by John, seconded by Janine. **Meeting Adjourned at 7:45 pm .**

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