

## **MINUTES**

August 17, 2023 at Noon

### **Public Art Advisory Commission**

Studio, Muscatine Art Center, 1314 Mulberry Avenue

**Present:** Brad Roeth, Thalia Sutton, Paul Minicucci, Jim Elias, Melanie Alexander

**Absent:** Carolyn Levine and Kelsie Stafford

**Guest(s):** None Present

Melanie Alexander, City staff liaison to the Public Art Advisory Commission, called the meeting to order.

Minutes from the May 16, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Paul Minicucci moved to approve the minutes, Thalia Sutton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Alexander provided an update on the public art installation for the roundabout at Mulberry and Second. The signed contract with artist Nathan Pierce had a completion date of March 2024, but Pierce reported faster than expected progress and anticipates installation in fall 2023. The Public Works Director has shared that work on the foundation is planned to begin in September 2023. The group discussed working with the City's Communications Director to draw attention to the project. It was suggested that a reception be held at the library to allow the public to meet Nathan Pierce when he is in town for the installation. Alexander will share updates via email.

The Public Works Director is looking at installation of the watermelon around September 7, 2023. The Advisory Commission discussed the final concept drawings forwarded by Brad Bark on June 15, 2023. The group noted that the final concept drawings do not align with the proposal evaluated at the May 16, 2023 meeting. At the core is the addition of the lettering not shown in the original submission. The group finds that this addition diminishes the aesthetic value of the piece and is concerned that the final concept drawing, marked as confidential, has not been made public. There are concerns around the lack of transparency and public input, especially given the size and location of the structure.

Jim Elias made the motion, noting the difference between the proposed concept for the watermelon and the final version, to recommend that future applications for gifts of public art to the City of Muscatine follow the adopted process, including the use of the application and the correct sequence for obtaining approvals. Brad Roeth seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Advisory Committee discussed the proposed gift of two bicycle sculptures (14' x 23') created by MPW for RAGBRAI 2023. Locations and safety concerns were discussed. One suggestion was to use the two sculptures as bookends for a section of trail.

Sutton made the motion to recommend accepting the gift of the two bicycle sculptures, pending location agreement with the Parks and Recreation Department and other City leadership and putting in place in reasonable safety measures including signage. Roeth seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Advisory Commission discussed the Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine's application to paint colorful "murals" within the crosswalks of five to seven intersections in the area around Jefferson Elementary School. Alexander shared that some City departments are already part of the project, and at this time, there are no known local or state codes or policies that would prohibit the project. The

application states that Jefferson students and the local neighborhood are to be involved. Members of the group shared their support of this project as a placemaking initiative.

Elias moved to recommend the painted crosswalks projects pending public safety review and compliance with city and state codes and provided that the project involves students and neighbors as stated, that the project is publicized in advance of being implement, and that the specific intersections are shared with decisionmakers (Public Art Advisory Commission, appropriate City departments, and City Council) when that information is available. Minicucci seconded. Motion carried.

Alexander discussed the need for a public art plan and intends to make contact with the University of Iowa to find out if students could be involved. Alexander will also seek an estimate from a professional firm. Later this fall or winter, a follow up presentation to City Council will be made to seek their direction of these options.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.