

MINUTES

May 16, 2023 at Noon

Public Art Advisory Commission

Studio, Muscatine Art Center, 1314 Mulberry Avenue

Present: Brad Roeth, Thalia Sutton, Carolyn Levine, Jim Elias, Bob Allbee, Melanie Alexander

Absent: Kelsie Stafford

Guest(s): Paul Minicucci, Mayor Brad Bark, Ryan Lee of Hoffmann Inc., and Chris Hasken of Hoffmann Inc.

Melanie Alexander, City staff liaison to the Public Art Advisory Commission, called the meeting to order. With guests Mayor Brad Bark and two representatives from Hoffmann Inc. present, members of the Public Art Advisory Commission introduced themselves.

Minutes from the January 17, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Jim Elias motioned to approved 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 Public Works Director ran a process to obtain bids for creating the concrete base. Bids were due on May 12th with only one proposal being submitted. The proposal was much higher than anticipated, and Public Works is currently reviewing options for re-bidding the project.

The document outlining Public Art Recommendations was reviewed by commission members. The document had been presented at the January meeting, and Alexander made some minor adjustments based on feedback from the group. Two additional changes were recommended: (1) add to recommended action steps, "Finalize the application process for gifts of public art," and (2) under themes/subject matter, add "agriculture" to farming. With these recommendations being made to the document, Thalia Sutton made a motion to adopt the recommendations. Brad Roeth seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Alexander provided the update that the Public Art presentation to City Council is now scheduled for the in-depth on June 8, 2023 at 6 p.m. Members of the commission are invited to attend and are to let Alexander know if they wish to address Council. The background and information in the document adopted at the May 16th meeting will be part of the presentation to Council. Alexander will share slides with the group in advance of the presentation. There may be follow up on some of the active public art projects as well.

Artist Janet Hoopes submitted a concept for a third section of mural adjoining the Fairport Fish Hatchery mural at Hershey and Houser. The group discussed the concept and its relevance to the existing mural as well as concerns pertaining to the Fish Hatchery lettering as following under City code related to signage. The concept of imaginary fish created by children, while a fun project, may be problematic for the viewer of the biologically correct fish and mussels represented in the Fairport Fish Hatchery mural. The group would consider a resubmission, but the artist should be aware that there are no funds for covering the labor associated with painting the mural.

Mayor Brad Bark presented the concept for the World's Largest Watermelon (40 feet long, 16 feet high, 8 feet wide) with a suggested installation on the Muscatine riverfront. Donations to the project, as well as in-kind gifts of labor, have been secured so there is no fabrication or installation cost to the City of

Muscatine. The Muscatine Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the concept on May 3rd with unanimous support pending site selection. During the May 11th City Council in-depth session, Mayor Bark presented the concept, and councilmembers were favorable. The location near Millennial Park was shared and discussed, and this appears to be the location recommended by City staff following preliminary reviews of four possible locations on the riverfront. Representatives from Hoffmann Inc. explained the fabrication and installation needs and process. On May 17th, Mayor Bark will test the impact on the view of the river by temporarily installing 16 feet tall pvc. City staff plans to discuss the selected site during a meeting also scheduled for May 17th. Members of the Public Art Advisory Commission voiced multiple concerns ranging from safety and durability of the paint to the unknown maintenance costs and the lack of public engagement in advance of making the decision. There was discussion regarding the process, and the unusual sequence used to move this project through the process. Other concerns were also shared, and Mayor Bark and representatives from Hoffmann were given the opportunity to respond. Members of the commission were favorable to the angled orientation of piece relative to the river as well as the tilting of the sculpture itself so long as this position did not cause additional safety concerns.

Jim Elias made a motion to support the installation of the watermelon pending site review by City staff with a recommendation that the process also include an opportunity for community engagement, the addition of interpretive panels to connect to Muscatine's agricultural past, a commitment from donors to cover maintenance costs incurred in the future, and submission by artist Johan Umana of design work for the painting of the watermelon as well as a list of paint products to be reviewed by members of the Public Art Advisory Commission to help ensure the longevity of the mural application to the structure. Thalia Sutton seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous support.

The City's Nominating Committee will meet at noon on May 30, 2023. Paul Minicucci is intended to replace Bob Allbee on the Public Art Advisory Commission. The change of commission members will begin in the new fiscal year on July 1, 2023.

Brad Roeth motioned to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.