



City of Muscatine

PUBLIC ART ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

Thursday, December 14, 2023

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

A.



Present: Paul Miniucci, Thalia Sutton, Brad Roeth, Jim Elias, Carolyn Levine, and Melanie Alexander (staff liaison)

Alexander noted that no staff liaison is present from Parks and Rec as the position has not yet been filled. She also noted that the expected guest, Joshua Baker, was no longer able to attend. He had been scheduled to share information regarding the concept of designated graffiti walls. Elias moved to approve minutes from August 17, 2023. Roeth seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

2. **OLD BUSINESS**

Alexander then updated the committee on the installation of the Zenith sculpture at Mulberry and Second. The City's Public Works department plans to light the sculpture in spring 2024.

Members of the Advisory Committee shared feedback and comments from others. There was discussion regarding future public art in planned roundabouts as well as more broadly in the community. Funding of the sculpture was also discussed. Alexander thanked the members of the Advisory Committee who were able to attend the reception at Contrary Brewing with Nathan Pierce.

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

Following up on the application submitted by the Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine, Alexander shared that she had connected CFGM staff with University of Iowa resources to move the project along. One meeting has been held involving CFGM, University of Iowa Grant Wood Art Colony Director, artist Drew Etienne, and Alexander. CFGM staff need to determine their process for moving forward on the project. Public Works has indicated support for the project, and the City's Community Development Office is involved.

Alexander updated the Advisory Committee on the bicycle statue donations from MPW. Placement and approval is working its way through relevant city departments and there is no expectation of further involvement from the Advisory Committee at this time.

The need for a Public Art Master Plan was discussed. The City's Community Development Office will begin the process of developing its new Comprehensive Plan. The city's existing

Comprehensive Plan is from 2013. The Community Development Office plans to fold in public art as part of the community engagement around the development of the new Comprehensive plan.

Advisory Committee members discussed what documents to prepare or present when the opportunity arises. Alexander noted that some communities have Public Art under the umbrella of Community Development while others place it under Parks and Rec. The longer term goal is to demonstrate that public art funding contributes to a vibrant community with benefits related to worker retention, public pride, tourism, creativity, economic success, etc.

In the absence of the planned guest, Alexander shared some of the information and materials Joshua Baker previously provided regarding the designated graffiti wall concept. Baker met with the City Administrator, Parks and Rec, the Police, and Alexander to present the concept. The Advisory Committee discussed the implications of a public space vs a private site and word art vs graphic art. City Code has specific regulation regarding signage. Elias had previously explored a community art space in an alley and volunteered to follow up with the businesses and building owners on the block where Sunrise Gallery had been located. Minucci discussed the difference between tagging and graffiti and successful initiatives to build youth buy-in, using his previous experience in other communities as a model. Sutton brought up a similar youth/school-lead retaining-wall graffiti project at Central Campus in Des Moines from some years back and its positive influence on placemaking and youth engagement.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

Responding to a request from a local corporation, Alexander asked members to share recommendations of sculptors who worked in metals.

The group discussed the creation of a public art map or other type of document to capture and share what is know about various sculptures, murals, and other public art installations. Sutton intends to work with Alexander to create such a map for Muscatine. Levine also expressed an interest in helping.

Alexander was also contacted by MuscaBus regarding ideas for public art at their enclosed stops. The group discussed several ideas as well as concerns regarding the lack of funding. One affordable option may be the creation of vinyl-sticker images to install on the shelters and/or the buses. The Advisory Committee was excited by the idea and welcomed further work on a proposal.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Thalia Sutton, acting secretary