

## **MINUTES**

March 8, 2024 at Noon

### **Public Art Advisory Commission**

Studio, Muscatine Art Center, 1314 Mulberry Avenue

**Present:** Carolyn Levine, Thalia Sutton, Jim Elias, Rich Klimes, Melanie Alexander

**Absent:** Brad Roeth, Paul Minicucci

**Guest(s):** Nadine Brockert

Melanie Alexander, City staff liaison to the Public Art Advisory Commission, called the meeting to order. Councilmember Nadine Brockert and Parks and Recreation Director Rich Klimes were introduced.

Minutes from the December 14, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Jim Elias moved to approve the minutes, Thalia Sutton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Klimes provided an update on the proposed location for the two large bicycle sculptures offered by Muscatine Power and Water (MPW). The Parks and Rec Commission selected the location of the riverfront between the Mississippi Mist water feature and the Mississippi Harvest bronze sculpture. MPW intends to cover the expense of the concrete base and manage the installation of the two bicycles.

Alexander and Jim Elias met with Joshua Baker, the Muscatine citizen who proposed a community art wall. The plan is to develop an event to occur sometime between August and October and take place in the alleyway between Mississippi Drive and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Iowa Avenue and Sycamore. This would involve businesses such as Sherwin Williams, the Brew, and Fresh Home. Elias has been in touch with these business as well as the building owners. The idea is to have a week to 10-day painting period involving local and regional muralists who would submit their mural plans in advance for approval. The business and building owner would need to approve the mural plan for their space. The muralists would have time to work on their projects during the week with a weekend event inviting the public to watch them work. Elias is also attempting to contact an additional building owner to see if their building could be used for a “doodle wall” where anyone could paint for those few days. After the event, the doodle wall would be repainted a solid color. The concept is similar to sidewalk chalk events that involve pre-selected artists or groups with the public being able to watch their progress and cover select areas with their own creations. Rules for both the public doodle wall and the murals will need to be developed. The area would be monitored for inappropriate content, and anything on the doodle wall could be painted over at any time. The Muscatine County Arts Council is a potential partner for the event. Funding will need to be secured, and an event grant through Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce and Industry should be pursued. Additional grants as well as sponsors will need to be secured. If the event is successful, the same alleyway may be used the following year with the some of the previous year’s murals being painted over or a new alleyway location could be identified. Muralists will need to be aware of City code pertaining to signage. Elias and Alexander were encouraged to continue to work with Joshua Baker on the concept which does allow for participation by local artists.

Alexander provided an update on the concept of working with local cultural organizations and other groups to create vinyl installations on the windows of MuscaBus shelters. The Transit Supervisor is waiting for a response for a cost estimate. The Muscatine Art Center, the Muscatine County Arts Council, and Global Education to promote the “Susie Clark” book have expressed interest in taking on a shelter, pending cost estimates.

The Fairport Fish Hatchery submitted an addition to its mural on Houser Street near Hershey Avenue. Alexander presented the three concept drawings created by artist Janet Hoopes. Hoopes completed the previous two mural projects for the Fairport Fish Hatchery. Through the Community Development Office, up to \$500 is available to the Fish Hatchery to help cover the cost of paint and sealant. The continuity of the look and theme was appreciated by members of the Advisory Commission. Some suggested that the Fish Hatchery look into selling prints of the mural drawings. Klimes noted that Hoopes may want to contact the Parks and Rec Office regarding mowing in the area of the proposed mural. The completion timeline is fall 2024. Carolyn Levine motioned to approve the concept drawings as presented. Thalia Sutton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Sutton has volunteered to help put together a list with images and information of various public art installations within the City limits. The list would include murals, sculptures, and landmarks. Klimes shared the memorial inventory kept by Parks and Rec. This type of inventory would work for the current purposes of the Public Art Advisory Commission. At a later date, a print or electronic guide may be developed. Alexander will provide Sutton with photographs taken by Muscatine Art Center staff of various items. It was suggested that crowd sourcing of locations of the public art installation could be accomplished using online resources including Pokemon GO. Elias volunteered to assist Sutton.

The Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine and the Community Development Office are working on the Mulberry Avenue project. One component of the project is to install pavement murals in crosswalks near Jefferson Elementary School. The group is waiting for the State of Iowa to approve the street mural and the Request for Qualification to obtain an artist.

Alexander reminded the group that Public Works had planned to install lights for Zenith in spring 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.