

MINUTES
PUBLIC ART COMMISSION
Thursday, June 19, 2008
Palo Alto Civic Center
250 Hamilton Avenue
Council Conference Room
7:00 p.m.

Commissioners present: **Ron Cooper, Terry Acebo-Davis, Karen Frankel, David Negrin, Einar Sunde**

Staff present: **Linda Craighead, Staff Liaison, Director Arts & Sciences**
 Darlene Katsanes, Program Asst., Arts & Sciences

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Cooper.

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Minutes of April 17, 2008 approved as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT – Commission reviewed the financial report.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Betty Gifford, 1990 Cowper, Palo Alto stated that the controversy over the California Avenue sculpture project has renewed her interest in public art and led her to revisit the definition of public art. Public art provides emotional relief, is large, interactive, colorful and cheerful. She dislikes the artwork on Page Mill Road that is constructed of corten steel by artist Fletcher Benton. One fine example of public art in Palo Alto is the Centennial Wall which has a sense of community. Public Art should have public impact. She queried where the Commission's guidelines are located. Gifford complained that she could not find the April minutes online. Gifford stated that we all live in a very noisy cluttered environment and that public art compounds that feeling. She questioned what the City has in their art collection that isn't being currently exhibited or rotated. She talked about The Color of Palo Alto and she feels her privacy has been invaded by having her house photographed.

Ellen Wyman, 546 Washington Avenue, Palo Alto stated that she did not start out to oppose the art on California Avenue. She said that she has conducted an informal opinion survey on California Avenue asking 33 business owners and 22 shoppers if they prefer to retain a fountain at the California Avenue location, or would they prefer to see the fountain replaced by a sculpture. Wyman stated that 11 to one are in favor of retaining a fountain on California Avenue. She said that the community wants a fountain at the fountain site because it acts as a gathering place. It's essential that Council and the Commission get feedback from the public on public art.

Chair Cooper commented that the Commission takes into account the public's opinions.

NON-ACTION

CALIFORNIA AVENUE SCULPTURE PROJECT

Craighead commented that the City Manager's Report (CMR) which was scheduled for Council was removed from the agenda by Council after they reviewed the opinion survey from Ellen Wyman and had questions. Since then Craighead and commission subcommittee met with CAADA about the project and concluded that CAADA is impressed by Beasley's art. They want a sculpture by Bruce Beasley that includes a water feature. CAADA is willing to help raise money to contribute to the water feature on Beasley's sculpture, and if they are unsuccessful with raising monies they will be satisfied with a stand alone sculpture without a water feature at this site. Their deadline for fundraising is mid-July.

Commissioner Frankel stated that the public needs to know that the Public Art Commission is prepared to pay from their budget over a three year period for an artwork by Bruce Beasley. It is estimated that the

budget for a water feature by Beasley will cost approximately \$45,000 to 65,000 more. Craighead reported that she has recently received a revised bid from the lowest bidder that had increased and includes the possibility of replacing the fountain pump.

FILAREE

Craighead reported that artist Gene Flores is willing to work with the Commission to redesign a base for the artwork.

YOUTH ART AWARDS 2008

Commissioners Acebo-Davis and Sunde reported that this year they decided to acknowledge more students with youth art awards and honorable mentions. They commented that it was a huge undertaking to select awardees because there was so much great artwork to choose from. They opted to award ten artists \$50.00 each instead of purchase artwork. The students awarded are:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

Excellence Award

James Shi – 4th Grade – Juana Briones

Anna Dieck – 5th Grade - Walter Hays

Honorable Mention

Maya Rollerson – 1st Grade – Fairmeadow School

Abigail Black – 1st Grade – Escondido School

Joseph Lai – 3rd Grade – Hoover Elementary

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

Excellence Award:

Vivian Bullard – 8th Grade – Jordan

Emma Marriott – 8th Grade – Terman

Honorable Mention:

Chrystal Chern – 7th Grade - JLS

Patrick Ruehl – 7th Grade – JLS

Samantha Chang – 8th Grade – Jordan

HIGH SCHOOL:

Excellence Award:

Charles Yang – 9th - Gunn High School

Sara Chun – 11th - Palo Alto High School

Melanie Minor – 11th - Gunn High School

Molly Reuter – 11th - Gunn High School

Russell Chou – 12th - Gunn High School

Meagan Steinkamp – 12th - Gunn High School

Honorable Mention:

Yelena Kasionova – 9th - Palo Alto High School

Aubrie Lee – 10th - Gunn High School

Anastasia Ionkin – 11th - Gunn High School

Meg Powell – 11th - Palo Alto High School

Kristina Cho – 12th - Gunn High School

Justin Herron – 12th - Gunn High School

Kelsey Liu – 12th - Palo Alto High School

Jonathon Popovich – 12th - Gunn High School

Yu Zhang – 12th - Gunn High School

Next steps: Commissioner Sunde suggested that the Commission discuss increasing the budget next year from \$500 to \$1000.

ARTIST SERIES – Chair Cooper reported that the subcommittee met to discuss the artist series and decided to postpone the series because during summer less people are available to attend. Cooper recommended beginning the series in fall. The following artists are scheduled for the series: Fletcher Benton, Bruce Beasley, Greg Brown, Marta Thoma, Michael Szabo, and Joey Piziali. Cooper will notify artists about the postponement. Commissioner Sunde queried whether the website links to the City website, and if there are announcements posted on the website about upcoming Commission events. The Commission agreed that the website needs to be updated and a few paragraphs added each month about events and projects.

Next steps: Commission to reset dates for Artist Series and discuss updating the website.

CIVIC CENTER LOBBY EXHIBITS – Chair Cooper thanked Commissioners Acebo-Davis and Sunde for selecting and installing the current exhibit of artwork from the Art in Public Places Permanent Collection. Commissioner Sunde commented that he is aware of an easier system for artwork installation that would make the installation process Civic Center Lobby Exhibit more user friendly.

Next steps: Commission to review Civic Center Lobby calendar and begin discussion on alternate methods of installation at this space.

CIVIC CENTER PLAZA ART INSTALLATION – PHASE II, SAMUEL YATES – Craighead reported that Yates has installed new signage on the plaza. He is working on plans for the unveiling. Yates is creating a postcard announcement for the unveiling event. Commissioner Frankel asked that Yates be given a stipend of \$400.00 for speaking at the unveiling event scheduled for August 5.

Next steps: Agendize Frankel’s request for a stipend for Yates on the July agenda.

PUBLIC ART FOR SAN FRANCISQUITO CREEK STORM WATER PUMP STATION – Craighead reported that Sobel is currently involved in the fabrication of the artwork. The pump station is under construction and the wall that will contain the artwork has recently been constructed.

Next steps: Commission Sunde volunteered to take images of the building.

MITCHELL PARK SCULPTURE PROJECT – Craighead reported that the artist has completed the frame of the artwork and is providing the metal “skin” to the exterior. He is more than 50% complete with the project. Installation date for the artwork is projected to occur in mid to late July.

FOR YOUR CALENDARS

The Commission reviewed the list of upcoming calendared events.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Craighead announced that Council Liaison Barton sends his apologies for missing this meeting.

Chair Cooper announced that he and Paula Kirkeby attended the event where Fletcher Benton received a Lifetime international award at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art recently.

Commissioner Negrin announced that there will be a lecture on Chihuly at the Los Altos Library.

Commissioner Frankel has curated an exhibit at Lucille Packard Children’s Hospital at Stanford.

Craighead announced that Nathan Oliveira’s The Painted Bronzes opens at the Art Center on Sunday.

Commissioner Frankel announced downtown San Jose has a public art exhibit in the Civic Center Plaza.

ADJOURNMENT – Chair Cooper adjourned the meeting at 8:25 pm.