

MINUTES
PUBLIC ART COMMISSION
Thursday, November 20, 2008
Palo Alto Civic Center
250 Hamilton Avenue
Council Conference Room
6:00 p.m.

Commissioners present: Terry Acebo-Davis, Erik Bakke, Nancy Coleman Elise Griffin
DeMarzo, Ally Richter, Einar Sunde, Larisa Usich
Staff present: Linda Craighead, Staff Liaison, Director Arts & Sciences
Darlene Katsanes, Program Asst., Arts & Sciences
Council Liaison: John Barton

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Sunde.
ROLL CALL

OLD BUSINESS

FOLLOW-UP TO RETREAT – Commission reviewed the strategies developed by each retreat subcommittee.

Current Art – Subcommittee members DeMarzo and Richter want to explore rental of the permanent art collection to residents. Work is in progress on uploading images and condition reports into the collection database. Subcommittee has a goal of mapping art walks and updating the outdoor sculpture map. One important long term goal is to have an adequate art storage facility for the permanent collection in place. Commissioner Richter would like clarification of the partnering between the Art Center Foundation and the City. Chair Sunde stated that he may try to contact Jeannie Duisenberg, President, Palo Alto Art Center Foundation and ask her to come to a meeting. Subcommittee would like to create an intern maintenance crew of high school students to assist with the maintenance needs of the collection. Another strategy is to create an endowment fund for collection maintenance. Commission DeMarzo commented that New York won't take donations of sculpture unless there is an endowment in place to maintain the work. Sub-committee would like to explore adopt-a-sculpture options. Sunde stated that he believes that there are some sculptures in the City collection that are poorly sited.

Partnerships/Financial – Subcommittee members Acebo-Davis and Richter reported they have a priority of seeking sustainable relationships with a variety of groups. Funding resources include but are not limited to the City of Palo Alto, grants, community organizations, corporate, rentals, earned income, and events. Bakke reported that they intend to explore funding sources with the goal to identify and develop traditional and creative funding resources for exciting public art projects. Partnerships include but are limited to nonprofits, corporate, community and neighborhoods, educational/academic institutions, individual artists and artist organizations, regional municipalities, sister cities, national/international resources and various forms of media. They would like to develop creative strategy for the bike rack project using public and private funds. Craighead commented that the City has a list of all the neighborhood associations. Barton stated that some neighborhood associations are active groups while others are not as active. Chair Sunde said the subcommittee would like to make a presentation to some of these groups.

Communications – Subcommittee members Coleman, Usich and Bakke reported their goal of increasing awareness of Palo Alto public art and the Commission, and also intend to increase the engagement of the public and art professionals with public art projects in Palo Alto. Another goal is to support development (fundraising) for Palo Alto Public Art and initiatives of the Palo Alto Public Arts Commission. Priorities of the subcommittee include creating an identity for the Public Art Commission which would consist of a

positioning statement, visual brand expression, messaging and theme. Coleman reported that they would like to have an electronic template in place to facilitate production. They also would like to publish a communications guideline, and refresh the Public Art Commission website.

Commissioner Coleman has identified a design firm, Lunar Design that is willing to work on the visual brand pro bono. The subcommittee would be responsible for pulling together a creative brief of the Public Art Commission for Lunar Design to work from. Chair Sunde questioned whether the City has any rules about having work performed for the Commission pro bono. Craighead will check with purchasing and the City Attorney's office about this. Craighead said that if there is a general consensus from the Commission that Coleman can approach Lunar Design. Commissioner Acebo-Davis wants to have other design firms choices to consider. Coleman said the creative brief would state the Commission's goals, positioning preferences, and mandates. Commissioner Usich suggested that once a creative brief is developed there could be a RFP process asking design firms to respond. Coleman said that since time is of the essence she would like the subcommittee to develop a creative brief as soon as possible. One question is who would have the rights to the design. Barton cautioned that Coleman would need to have had no financial relationship with Lunar Design for the last year to not have a conflict of interest with Lunar. Coleman commented that it has been at least 1-1/2 years since she's been involved financially with Lunar. The Commission reached a consensus that Lunar Design could work on the visual brand pro bono. Next step: Craighead will research pro bono issue.

New Art – Subcommittee members Sunde and Bakke have goals of expanding the database of potential artists, identifying and prioritizing sites for new and temporary public art projects, and have categorized types of art. General and longer term goals include planning to determine range of educational and other events to take place during the introduction of new work and projects. They intend to identify or commission a major artwork as a destination piece of art for Palo Alto. Subcommittee plans to establish a specific site, set up selection process, and budget for a rotating short term display of artworks as part of establishing a program for temporary or short term projects. They have discussed potential partnerships and collaborations. Subcommittee would like to increase coordination between the Commission and other departments of the City.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Ronna Devincenzi thanked Commission for begin interested in the California Avenue location and all the work over three years to bring an artwork by Bruce Beasley to California Avenue. She urged the Commission to keep the momentum going. The Szabo installation was very successful. She knows that there is a three member bike rack subcommittee that she would like to speak with. CAADA is interested in adding bike racks to California Avenue.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Minutes of October 11, 2008 and October 16, 2008 approved as corrected.

FINANCIAL REPORT – Commission reviewed the financial report.

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

Elizabeth Ames, Public Works; Pete Hazarian, Police Department; Sandra Brown, Police Department; Judith Wasserman, ARB representative; Michael Ross and Patty Haight, RossDrulisCusenbery Architecture was present at this meeting. Michael Ross, Principal, RossDrulisCusenbery Architecture gave a presentation on the opportunity for public art at the new Public Safety Building. Ross gave a short history of project which spans over 13 years. He stated that the art plan is to deemphasize the building and emphasize the open spaces. Ross suggested available zones of opportunity for public art in the pedestrian plaza. He suggested that the artwork could be proposed by an artist whose creative vision includes the following themes: technology-based, conceptual, narrative and social history, environmental/ecological and landscape/spatial. Artwork can be sited at one site or multiple locations at the building project and be

created by one or more artists. Ross stated that the value of diversity could be brought to the building through the perspective of a culturally diverse artist. Ross would like the artwork to create a sense of place in the building. RossDrulisCusenbery is interested in engaging the Public Art Commission in a conversation about the art and taking it from there.

Craighead commented that a committee needs to be formed that will include three Public Art Commission subcommittee members, Police Department representatives, Community members, and RossDrulisCusenbery Architecture staff. Elizabeth Ames introduced past Public Art Commissioner Judith Wasserman, a current ARB representative, who has volunteered to serve on this committee. The budget for public art is 1% of construction costs which is approximately \$350,000. Commission discussed the timeline for having an artist involved in the early stages of the project.

Next step: The goal is for the committee to meet in mid December to discuss and develop RFP. A subcommittee was formed: Commissioners DeMarzo, Richter, and Usich.

ACTION

ARTIST SERIES

Commissioner Bakke proposes three artists talks for the artist series for 2009. The first would be the solo speaker David Huffman; the second the solo speaker Bruce Beasley; the third would be a panel of four speakers-- final list to be determined. All three dates of the series will be held at the Palo Alto Art Center – February 5, March 5, and May 28. Bakke will introduce the artists and moderate the panel. Craighead commented that the speakers and dates should be finalized soon so that the postcard can be mailed after January 5th.

Motion: Move to allocate a total of \$2000 for speaker fees (\$1200); a card (\$500) and refreshments (\$300).

MOVED: Bakke; Seconded: Sunde AYES: Unanimous

DAMAGE TO CALIFORNIA AVENUE, CALIFORNIA NATIVE

Craighead asked the Commission to allocate \$2139 to repair and reinstall the bricks at the California Avenue, California Native site. Commissioner Richter stated that this installation should be on the maintenance care list to be reviewed every 10 years.

Motion: Move to approve this budget for repairing for bricks.

MOVED: Acebo-Davis, Seconded: DeMarzo: AYES: Unanimous.

NON-ACTION

LYTTON PLAZA

Barbara Gross spoke about the repositioning of *Digital DNA*. The current plan is to site the sculpture closer to Emerson Street in a more obvious location. Commissioner Acebo-Davis brought up the plaque or donor board. Gross stated that a plan for a donor board has not been identified yet. Commissioner Bakke and Chair Sunde questioned whether the Commission wants an opportunity for an additional public art treatment on this plaza by creating an RFP to solicit an artist to suggest creative options to enhance the plaza now or at a possible future date. There is an approximately \$3,000.00 in funds from the Percent for Art in City Projects budget that the Commission may want to add to. Le Levy recommended waiting to see how the plaza is built before assessing this. Commissioner Acebo-Davis questioned how the sculpture will be moved. She would like to be present at that time to assure that the sculpture is handled properly. Commission questioned who will pay for the move, storage and reinstall of *Digital DNA*? Gross stated that she thought it wasn't their responsibility. The Public Art Commission believes that these costs should not come from their budget. Bakke reported that he had spoken with artist Adriana Varella and she prefers that the sculpture not be installed on a pedestal. Craighead queried whether the Commission would consider moving the sculpture to another site. Commissioner Bakke wants to keep the *Digital DNA* on the plaza and commented that the sculpture is part of the community. Commissioners Acebo-Davis and Coleman like the new proposed location for the sculpture. The general consensus of the

Commission is that the new location is preferred to the previous location in the back of the plaza.

CALIFORNIA AVENUE PROJECT

Craighead reported on the motion from the Council meeting on November 10. Council liaison Barton received thanks for the Commission for his eloquence in support of the project at the Council meeting. Council has voted to appoint Bruce Beasley as the project artist at the Mitchell Park Library/Community Center remodel. Percent for Art in City Projects budget for this project is approximately \$400,000. Council recommended that the California Avenue Fountain Project process be modeled after the process used at Mitchell Park for the Szabo sculpture where the community votes on the fountain design. The replacement of the current fountain with an off the shelf fountain is not an option. Commissioner DeMarzo stated that she disliked the Council dictating the art selection process for another project. She's stated her concern that the Commission will be in the same position with the community opposing an artwork by Beasley. Craighead stated that Beasley will work with the project architect to create an artwork for the project. Commissioner Acebo-Davis stated that the Commission should support the City having an artwork by Beasley. The Commission needs to be prepared to standup to community scrutiny regarding their aesthetic decisions. It's an opportunity to educate the community, and a great opportunity to have an artist such as Beasley in the collection.

Subcommittee for California Avenue Fountain Project was selected: Commissioners Acebo-Davis, DeMarzo and Sunde.

Subcommittee for Mitchell Park was selected: Commissioners Acebo-Davis, Bakke, and Coleman.

Council liaison Barton left the meeting at 9:10 pm.

HOLIDAY PARTY

The Commission discussed plans for their Annual Holiday Party. They decided to host their party on January 15, 2009 instead of during December. Craighead stated that staff will check into whether the Art Center auditorium is available for the party. The Commission intends to hold a short special meeting prior to the party.

BILL BLISS MEMORIAL ART PROJECT

Subcommittee reported on their recent meeting with Laura Thompson, Bay Trails, and Bonnie Bliss to discuss this project. Another meeting in December is needed to discuss the RFP. Commissioner Richter suggested that the Commission may want to consider adding additional funds to the project budget. Commissioner Usich stated that Mrs. Bliss did not want the art to be overtly a memorial project. She said that Bonnie Bliss is not opposed to the artwork reflecting Bill Bliss's lifetime dedication to bicycling.

FILAREE

Craighead announced that there is a community meeting scheduled on December 2 to review the placement of *Filaree* at Greer Park. Chair Sunde volunteered to attend this meeting.

CIVIC CENTER PLAZA ART INSTALLATION

Craighead reported that the voting for The Color of Palo Alto will close on December 5th.
Next step: Subcommittee to meet with Yates to determine the wrap-up and project de-installation.

ADJOURNMENT – Chair Sunde adjourned the meeting at 9:57 p.m.