

MINUTES
PUBLIC ART COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, August 17, 2017
City Hall Community Meeting Room
250 Hamilton Ave
7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: **Jim Migdal, Ben Miyaji, Hsinya Shen, Loren Gordon, and Nia Taylor** (joined the meeting at 7:03).

Commissioners Absent: **Mila Zelkha, Amanda Ross**

Staff Present: **Elise DeMarzo**, Public Art Program Director
Nadya Chuprina, Public Art Program Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Migdal called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS – Staff requested to move Non-Action Item 6 forward. Chair Migdal granted the changes.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – David Carnahan Deputy City Clerk made a recruitment announcement for the Architectural Review and Historic Resources Boards, and Planning and Transportation Commission with the application deadline on September 19, 2017 at 4:30 pm. Le Levy of the Friends of Lytton Plaza spoke to the commissioners in support of deaccessioning of Digital DNA and its removal from its current site on Lytton Plaza. Levy asked the Commission to consider the site for the display of temporary public art installations and to incorporate lighting to enhance visitor experience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 20, 2017 PAC Regular Meeting Minutes **Moved:** Ben Miyaji, **Second:** Jim Migdal. **All in favor.**

STAFF COMMENTS: Staff updated the commissioners on the maintenance project of *Confluence*, a permanently installed sculpture by Michael Szabo on California Ave. plaza. The artist and his crew conducted a detailed 2-day treatment to inspect the bronze sculpture, remove dirt and built-up in the drain, clean surfaces of any stains & oxidation, work on the patina, wax the surfaces and apply a hydrophilic coating for UV protection. The water flow was then tuned-up. Staff also reported on the repair of the neon light sculpture Excel at the Palo Alto Art Center.

NON- ACTION:

6. **Downtown parking garage** - Staff provided an informational update on the upcoming downtown parking garage and public art process for the project. Public Works Senior Engineer Holly Boyd presented slides with renderings of three preliminary design options for the future parking garage. All three options share the same height and footprint, but vary significantly in their response to context, materiality, and streetscape character. The estimated public art budget is \$159,000. Public Art Program Director Elise DeMarzo spoke about the artist selection process and encouraged the

Commissioners to serve on the selection panel. There are 35 qualified artists in the prequalified pool for this project. Staff intends to assemble a selection panel in September to begin the artist selection process. The Commissioners noted that each of the presented design options presented great opportunities for the integration of public art, including the wall paneling, windows, stairwell and pedestrian walkways adjacent to the new garage.

ACTION:

1. **Highway 101 Bike/Pedestrian Bridge** – Staff updated the Commission on the project development, presented an overall rendering of the bridge design and summarized the artist selected process. The selection panel comprised of 7 stakeholders and arts professionals chose five artists to give presentations about their previous work and their design development process. One of those finalists dropped out of the project, and the remaining four made presentations to the panel January 25, 2017. Mary Lucking was selected the finalists as the highest ranked artist. Staff presented the conceptual design for the functional artwork integrated in the overlook area of the bridge facing the Baylands. Inspired by the wetlands, Lucking proposed creating sculptures for the overlook that can double as creative seating. Three cast aluminum pieces will have a brushed finish and sculpted texture that will make them visually engaging and interesting to touch. Due to the scale of the project and the limited art budget, the opportunities for public art integration are limited. Some funding is available to put toward an artist designed railing at the overlook area, but not enough to fully fund the railing. Public Art staff is currently collaborating with Public Works and the design team to determine if the artist designed railing is feasible. If it is determined that the railing is not feasible, then artist may cast additional sculptural elements that could be placed near the approaches to the bridge. Commissioners expressed strong support for the integration of the railing in the overall artist project scope and inquired with staff whether additional public art funding can be allocated for this purpose. Staff recommended the approval of the concept design for the artwork by Mary Lucking for the project and that they would return to the PAC with an update on the funding for the railing or make a request for funds. **Moved:** Commissioner Nia Taylor moved to approve the artwork design for the project. **Second:** Vice Chair Miyaji. **All in Favor.**
2. **Acquisition of Creative Seating Elements by artist Colin Selig** – Staff updated the Commission on the project history behind the temporary loan of five seating elements installed in downtown Palo Alto. The PAC approved the temporary installation in April 2016, with a budget of \$6,665 for the delivery, installation, loan, and removal of the artworks. The City entered into a contract with artist Colin Selig for the loan of five creative seating elements to be on display on University Avenue from May 2016 through May 2017, with the option to extend the contract for six months. The artist agreed to give the City a discount on the acquisition of any artworks at the end of the loan period, and apply the costs associated with his removal of the artworks (\$2,500) in the contract to the purchase. The City is asking the Council to approve a one-time contribution from the utilities water and gas replacement projects for the Art in Public Places Fund with the intention that the funds will be used for the purchase of the public art benches. In addition, a group of Leadership Palo Alto Fellows launched a Gofundme page for the benches that raised \$1,200 in funds that can be applied to the purchase. Staff recommended that the Commission allocate funds in the amount of up to \$17,100 for the purchase of the Colin Selig sculptures and accept the five creative seating elements in the City

collection. **Moved:** Vice Chair Miyaji moved to allocate funding for the purchase of the sculptural seating elements and to accept them in the City Collection. **Second:** Chair Migdal. **All in Favor.**

3. **De-Accession of Artworks** - Staff recommended that the PAC initiates deaccession evaluation process for *Digital DNA* by Adrianna Varella and Nilton Maltz, currently sited at Lytton Plaza based on the process and conditions outlined in the City's Deaccession of Artwork Policy adopted in December 2016. Staff provided a detailed overview of the artwork commissioning and maintenance history and presented considerations for the deaccession of *Digital DNA* including: the condition of the artwork cannot be reasonably guaranteed; The artwork requires excessive maintenance and has faults in the materials and repair is impractical or unfeasible; The artwork has deteriorated, and repair or remedy is impractical or unfeasible; and no suitable site is available for relocation or exhibition. Staff also shared recommendations provided by ARG evaluation and the collection report sections from the public art master planners. Staff reminded the PAC that public opinion and aesthetic taste are not reasons to de-access the artwork, but those that apply as outlined in the presented report and policy. Commissioners clarified with Staff on the removal options and expressed concern about the current condition of the artwork noting that exposed circuit boards may contain hazardous materials and pose a risk to public health and environment. **Moved:** Chair Migdal moved to initiate deaccession evaluation process for *Digital DNA*. **Second:** Vice Chair Miyaji. **All in Favor.**

4. **De-Accession of Artworks** - Staff recommended that the PAC initiates deaccession evaluation process for *Go Mama* by artist Marta Thoma currently sited on California Avenue and Ash, based on the process and conditions outlined in the City's Deaccession of Artwork Policy. Staff provided a detailed overview of the artwork commissioning and maintenance history and presented considerations for the deaccession of *Go Mama*. Based on the condition reports provided by ARG and PAMP consultants, calling attention to the artwork not being stable enough to withstand physical contact and expressing concerns about public safety, staff recommended deaccession for the following considerations: The condition of the artwork cannot be reasonably guaranteed; The artwork's structural condition may pose a threat to public safety; The artwork has faults in the design and repair may be impractical or unfeasible; Significant changes to the design of the site have occurred which affect the integrity of the artwork; No suitable site is available for relocation or exhibition. Staff recommended that PAC proceed with the deaccession process and open the public comment period, notify the artist officially of the deaccession, and agendaize the final vote for November. Commission clarified the ways for public input and welcomed the opportunity for public discussion about the future of the artwork. **Moved:** Commissioner Taylor moved to initiate deaccession evaluation process for *Go Mama*. **Second:** Chair Migdal. **All in Favor.**

5. **King Plaza Temporary Public Artwork** – Staff briefed the Public Art Commission on the intent of the rotating temporary public art installations on King Plaza to offer a variety of kinds of installations that explore the use of the plaza and activate the space. Staff vetted a number of artists in the prequalified pool of artists both with existing artwork available for exhibition, and who create site specific temporary exhibitions. Based on this process staff proposed the following three artists for installation on King Plaza over the next 2 years: Toby Fraley with his retro-style interactive installation Art Forge 2:0 to remain on King Plaza through Spring 2018. The budget for the project is \$20,000 with the Art Center contribution \$5,000, making the PAC portion \$15,000. Another project

is Konstantin Dimopolous and his global The Blue Trees project. This community engagement based project is expected to take place April 2018 – January 2019 and cost about \$20,000. Staff also intends to bring LA-based artist Megan Geckler primarily using flagging tape to create a site-specific project for the Palo Alto City Hall. Staff is currently exploring concepts for potentially utilizing the front façade of the City Hall building for an installation. This project will take a number of months to work out logistics and materials that could remain in place for a year. **Moved:** Vice Chair Miyaji moved to approve three upcoming temporary public artworks for King Plaza by Toby Fraley, Megan Geckler, and Konstantin Dimopolus, and allocation of funds in the amount of \$15,000 for the Toby Fraley installation. **Second:** Chair Migdal. **All in Favor.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Chair Migdal made a recruitment announcement to the City’s Boards and Commissions. Staff circulated published copies of the Public Art Master Plan and encouraged the Commissioners to review the document prior to the upcoming PAC retreat on September 8, 2017.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

PAC Annual Retreat – 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM, September 8, 2017 – Mitchell Park Community Center

Next PAC Regular Meeting – 7 PM, September 21, 2017

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:29 PM by Chair Migdal.