Visual Arts Commission Minutes
Thursday, May 9, 2019 | 3:30 – 5:00 pm
Collins Conference Room (Lower Level)
101 1st Street SE, Cedar Rapids IA

Commissioners Present: Kayt Conrad - Vice Chair
Lynn Ocken
David Van Allen
Jonathan Berger
Alexis Dagit – left 4:41 p.m.
Ashley Glassberg
Anne Johnson

Commissioners Absent: Bill Stamats - Chair

Community Development Staff Present: Eric Pate, Bill Micheel, & Jillane Gilmour

1. Approval of Minutes
Commissioner Johnson moved and Commissioner Van Allen seconded to approve the April 11, 2019 meeting minutes, noting a spelling correction on page 3 and that the Statue of Liberty sculpture is listed on the asset list. The motion carried.

2. Public Input
There was no input from the public.

3. Discussion & Possible Action Items
a. Light Sculpture
Mr. Micheel shared an update on the light sculpture. After discussion with the Engineering Department, it was discovered that the piling at the desired bridge location is filled with sand. There would be some geotechnical work that needs to be completed to make sure it is stable. Several opinions obtained from engineering firms suggested avoiding placing a piece of art in this location that could lean, and stated it would be necessary to create a footing. In addition, a feasibility study would be required to provide parameters, such as height, weight, and surface area of the art piece. A City Councilmember noted that this bridge floods and questioned time to move the art during a flood event. Due to costs associated with the bridge location, City staff suggested seeking alternative locations. Mr. Micheel shared that he spoke to the General Manager at the DoubleTree, and they were excited about the possibility of art in the lantern. A City traffic engineer will contact the Iowa DOT since it is a state highway to discuss a lighted element to the art. The Commission discussed that the art be interesting whether it is lit or not. Mr. Micheel shared that City staff will need to find out if hanging the art is possible. In addition, the Commission discussed other locations to consider, including Greene Square Park and Mays Island. Any new ideas will be discussed at the meeting in June.
b. Market After Dark Projection Art
Commissioner Conrad shared that Daniel Fine visited Cedar Rapids to view prospects for the Market After Dark projection art. Mr. Pate shared that the Economic Alliance was excited about the proposal, and a permanent installation would be funded and set up by the Downtown SSMID. After discussion with the Market after Dark coordinators, it needs to be decided how brilliant we would like this to be. The ideal arrangement would call for a set of multiple projectors in front of the Market after Dark location the day before, and students would set up. Mr. Pate stated that he is currently pending for a quote from Marvin Schmuckle. The estimated amount was $15,000-25,000, which included renting projectors. In the second scenario, the Downtown SSMID would be the entity behind funding and organizing. Once the quotes from Marvin are received, this will be presented to the Downtown SSMID. If they are not in favor of the first arrangement at that site, a smaller, permanent installation will be utilized. Mr. Fine shared that the artist’s fee is $5,000. Mr. Pate stated that the desire from the Downtown SSMID would be project art every day with the permanent installation. The Commission discussed the frequency of art and fair promoting.

c. UFG Pocket Park
Mr. Pate shared that the contract was awarded to Hardscape Solutions, and completion is expected by the end of July along with the sculpture that Cara Briggs-Farmer is creating.

d. League of Women Voters Commemorative Art
Myrna Loehrlein, Chris Goodwin, Mary Ann Nelson & Larry Nelson joined the meeting to discuss a proposal for commemorative art celebrating the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment in 2020. The proposed concept of the piece is an array of life size female silhouettes working their way to the top of Mt. Trashmore. This particular site was chosen due to its height and chance for visibility. The position of the silhouettes would be a random field, rather than rows or columns. The silhouettes would be anchored to concrete piers with a rear brace. Mr. Nelson shared a sample of the seven gauge (3/16” thick) 304 stainless steel that would be used. The League has set aside $25,000 for the project, and discussed coordinating with the library to share with the county. No matter what the project ends up being, the League would like to pursue the opportunity for an interactive education piece and potentially take advantage of the library’s exhibition area or rooftop.

Mr. Micheel shared items to consider at the Mt. Trashmore site. There are active gas wells, and permanent footings could be tricky. A membrane covers the ground, and depending on where the silhouettes would be placed, there could be some challenges with that. Mr. Micheel noted that he cannot speak for the Solid Waste Agency on this project, as they have their own board of directors. The recommended step would be to contact Karmin McShane to discuss.

Ms. Loehrlein shared that they would like to avoid NewBo as there is already a lot going on in this area. Commissioner Ocken suggested reaching out to Ann Stamats, as she has been interested in doing a sculpture walk. Commissioner Dagit also suggested reaching out to Jesse Thoeming with the Economic Alliance, as he is currently advocating for the American Discovery Trail and building artwork along that path. Ms. Loehrlein will reach out to Karmin and Jesse, and Ms. Goodwin will contact Ms. McShane. The
group discussed the lantern at the US Cellular Center, although it is an all glass space and could be interpreted as “hitting the glass ceiling”.

Mr. Micheel shared that in this situation, VAC will provide feedback and the League will likely return to a future meeting. Currently, it is not necessary to provide an official motion or action. Need to determine where it will be as we are further along in the process. It is possible it could end up on public property. Commissioner Ocken suggested using a rooftop space. Mr. Pate and Ms. Loehrlein will communicate as we move forward.

4. Member Updates/Announcements

5. Adjournment
Commissioner Johnson moved and Commissioner Glassberg seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Next Meeting: July 11, 2019