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MAYOR

Salem Public Art Commission
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Public Art Commission
September 20, 2022, 6:30pm
Meeting held remotely via zoom

MEETING MINUTES

Note: All proposals, presentations, and/or documentation to be reviewed and discussed at this meeting can be viewed online at the following link: <https://bit.ly/SalemPACProposals>

- **Meeting called to order at 6:42 pm.**
- **Roll Call PAC:** Norene Gachignard, John Andrews, Janine Liberty, & Kurt Ankeny Beauchamp in attendance. Absent: Carly Dwyer-Naik, & Catherine Bertrand. Additionally we welcome Gwen Rosemond as a sit in amongst the commission chairs.
- **Meeting Minute Approvals**
 - o July 28, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes- Janine motioned to approve special meeting minutes, Norene confirmed motion moved, John seconded. Kurt abstained.
 - o August 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes- Commission has suggested to amend the minutes from the August 16th meeting to reflect the correct placement of the Sarah Remond portrait as it alluded to being hung in the wrong building. Norene called for a motion to approve minutes. John moved and Kurt seconded. Janine abstained. Motion carries and minutes were approved.
- **Joseph Choate Statue Relocation Update and Request for Comments-**

Salem has received state funding from the Boston Corridor Improvement Project for road repairs to the area around the Essex Street, and Boston Street intersection. It will be reconfigured to improve safety, signal improvements, and share use paths for pedestrians and bicyclists. The proposal is to relocate the statue, which is currently located in the front of the median on Essex Street (between North and South bound approaches). The engineering department has proposed to shift the position of the Statue back about 25 feet North in a newly designed median area. Julie showed the commission the submitted proposal. The city is seeking comments from the PAC and the community in the design hearing that is coming up with Massdot on the 27th of September. The state will be paying for the work to be done. The PAC has no comments on the change as the proposal seems very well thought out and very much needed. *Janine had asked about updating the public art record and Julie had agreed to update the geo-location and note that it was relocated due to a state management project.*

- **Naumkeag Portrait Project Updates-**

The PAC had supported the original Commission in the sum of \$5,000.00 with the support of Parks and Rec Commission in the sum of \$25,000.00. A total commission sum of \$30,000.00. The timeline has been significantly extended due to the intricacies of the piece and working with the Massachusetts Tribal Council. The artist has asked for an increased stipend if we are amenable. The city is in support of providing additional support because of his diligence in working on this project and the extended timeline. Parks and Rec Commission, and the Witch House will be partnering with us in support. Julie opens up the floor for discussion with funding this proposed increase in commission. The total ask amount from PAC is \$4000, however, the Commission only has \$2,500 unallocated funds.

John and the commission speak hesitantly about the additional funding. They feel for the artist and they understand that it is necessary to pay the artist. However, PAC is the only commission here that is a non-revenue earning project. With PAC's limited budget, it is very hard to offer any more than originally allocated as we have a set budget. The challenge is that PAC would love to support artists and their art, but it takes away from what we are able to do yearly in different projects and supporting other community members. Previously the PAC had contributed \$5,000 and with an additional \$2000 added, a total sum of \$7000 would be almost one third of our yearly budget.

Norene motioned to allocate \$2000 toward the artist of the Naumkeag portrait project. Kurt seconded. Chair Norene opened up for additional discussion, Gwen added to the conversation that this is indeed an issue that needs to be met. Allocating $\frac{1}{3}$ of our yearly budget is a huge pledge, but supporting art is our duty. If entities are going to come to us for more money that exceeds our budget, then clearly we are going to need a bigger budget. If this is to be one of our responsibilities to fund projects, then we need to have the means to do that. John added that it is necessary to inform the other organizations of how little we have to offer financially. No public comment. Motion carried unanimously. Motion passed.

- **Making It Public Temporary Public Art Call & Timeline Workshopping-**

General Overview:

Grant Rules/Regulations:

- Must be a Massachusetts Artist
- Must be temporary
- Must be written in a manner that is easily accessible/understood by artists at all levels of their career.
- Must be written in a manner that is welcoming and explicitly inviting to BIPOC artists
- Must release the call in Fall 2022
- Must finish project by June 2023

We have \$15K for the project

- How do we want to allocate this funding, we could release the call for \$10-\$12K and reserve \$3-\$5K for project related expenses, materials, implementation, installation, marketing etc?

Ideas from Previous Meetings:

Something other than a mural would be preferred

Possible Locations:

- Public Parks (should we pick one specific park?)
- Canal Street
- Bridge Street

- On or over Bike Path on Canal or elsewhere

Possible Forms:

- Immersive Art Experiences/Installations
- 3D Sculpture
- Projections/Image Mapping
- Bike Art (racks, art on bike lanes/paths, etc.)

Thought Prompts/Questions to Consider:

What parameters do we want to set for this project? We were not given any specific requirements by the granting organization other than 1) it must be temporary, 2) the call must be released this fall, and 3) funds need to be expended by June 30, 2023. We DO need to give the project some structure so some things to consider could be:

- Are there specific locations, neighborhoods, or wards we want to see activated?
- Are there specific artist groups we want to lift up?
- Is there a theme we want the artist to touch on?
- Are there specific media or technical restrictions you want to place on the project?
- Do we want to say that this can NOT be a mural but must be 3D temp public art or perhaps even allow 2D digital art but not a traditional mural???
- Do we want to review proposal mockups of the actual art to be installed or do we just want to see a brief description/plan of the project they have in mind and examples of past work? If we require project mockups, we will need to pay the artists for these so would need two rounds of review and selection and need to decide how many finalists and what budget we have to accommodate this.

Discussion-

In previous meetings PAC has agreed to wanting to use this money in an impactful way. With that in mind, Kurt voiced that it would be hard to do something significant and impactful breaking up the grant into \$5000 chunks.

John is concerned about the want and need for the area. Who is the most in need? Is there something in the racial justice category that we could address? Maybe a program or performance in an area that needs new life.

Janine had suggested opening up the call for artist driven creativity, asking the artists themselves what they would want to create.

Julie had suggested keeping a sort of template, such as putting a call for art installations in parks, or play structures to improve certain areas. If we did parks for example, we would need to think of a theme, a media, any restrictions like weight? It is easier to vet templated projects and ideas with more direction.

Norene is interested again in the broad call for artists. She thinks children's safety alongside play structures would be a big concern.

Kurt is updating the commission on the state of Peabody street park, Palmer's Cove who can both use some extra love.

Julie added that Catherine (who is unable to join today's meeting) had sent in her thoughts on this subject to read into record. Catherine would like to focus on projects that would span throughout the city that could be #WeAreSalem. She would like to focus on projects that benefit all people, not just the space. Because the one implication on the grant is to be temporary, she believes it's more about the process than the product.

John would like to look into partnerships with the new head of signature parks to see if he is interested in upgrading all parks in Salem to have the same update and a signature art piece. He would have insight on which parks or areas are in significant need.

Kurt is proposing asking for an object that would activate the park that would be a seasonal piece that we could possibly bring back each year.

Janine brought up the idea of large scale board games that could be deployed in each park each year, temporarily. This same idea could be used with a sculpture that could be moved seasonally and or yearly.

Julie has brought the discussion back to our call; what template can we bring to the public to drive interest in applying for?

Gwen wants to support something interactive. She supports the idea of an interactive piece such as giant checkers or chess.

John is adamant about keeping kids off of climbing whatever is installed. Play structures are a huge liability. It doesn't have to be game or play based, but instead interactive.

Kurt would like to stay away from pieces that are electronic or use power.

Some of the parameters mutually agreed upon include:

- Salem Residents or persons with connections to Salem are invited to apply
- Working with Parks and Recreation and public parks, or neighborhood areas that need help
- No structures, just play elements, or interactive elements
- Strong preferences given to BIPOC persons
- Artist fees and materials come to a stipend of \$10,000 with an admin fee of \$3,000 and possibly remaining funds given to the artist *Julie to check verbiage*

● **Public Art FY23 (July 2022-June 2023) Strategic Work Plan; Budget Allocations Discussion Continued**

Julie called for thoughts on the work plan included in the notes sent on September 14th. The commission called for notes from Catherine, if any. Catherine had sent in notes to Julie to read into the public record. Firstly she wrote that the calendar is exactly what she had requested, however the budget was still confusing. Julie has edited the budget and it is updated on Sharepoint and physical copies have been mailed out.

Sculpture Garden-

Catherine's ideas on the Sculpture Garden call were: what is the capacity staff/PAC has for an open call versus using a curator? It seems like based on workload it would make sense to continue forward with a curator for this project so we can focus elsewhere.

Kurt added that he likes the idea of the curator and it has resulted in high quality products.

John thinks that the expertise of the curator is well needed as they are able to give suggestions to placement of pieces when it comes to the materials used.

John also would like to feature BIPOC artists, and suggests that the theme "play" would be a nice way to enter the new year.

Janine would like to hear from BIPOC as well as immigrants, & women in the area.

Catherines thoughts on the Sculpture Garden locations is to find a way to highlight entrance corridors on the map provided online. Canal Street, North Street, & maybe somewhere by Salem State. She suggests outside downtown.

Art Boxes-

Because of the vote to increase the stipend for the artist in the Naumkeag portrait project to \$2,000, it leaves us with an excess of just \$500 which could commission one more art box.

Norene and John suggest leaving that money in the surplus "just in case". No extra Art boxes will be

commissioned at this time.

Catherines idea for the art boxes was again wanting to focus on entrance corridors.

Performances and Activations-

What months do you want the spring activation to take place in? March & April, April & May, \$5,000 each has been allocated for both spring and winter activations, with \$5000 left in unallocated programming funds.

Julie suggested sponsoring a performance at Salem So Sweet, and John suggested that historically, we have run into many issues with stand alone performances, when it comes to rain/weather or cancellations.

For the spring activation, Catherine would like to brainstorm ideas for calls that possibly have to do with Women's History Month (March) and Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Month (April). Perhaps there is a way to use those opportunities as a platform for calls.

Janine would like to see something done in March aside from just St. Patrick's Day.

John proposed getting involved in an ice sculpture sponsored by PAC, instead of a performance based program. John is in favor of aligning these funds with an organization. Film fest, or Jazz fest, Salem So Sweet, ect. *Julie will explore more possibilities and will bring them back to the Commission.*

Julie reminds us that these funds are meant for program activations, in bringing together a community, and those ideas can be stretched to fit those qualifications.

Norene called for a motion to approve the work plan for the year, Kurt moved, and John seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Request Letter from Senior Planner Tom Divine-

Tom would like to seek a letter of support from the Public Arts Commission for his US DOT Reconnecting Communities grant application for the design and implication of an enhanced bike and pedestrian connection around the north Salem overpass. The goal is to enhance the connections through this area in conjunction with the improved connectivity that will result from the upcoming Bridge Street, North Street, and Crescent lot projects. The letter would document the underpass art project as planned and funded. If the PAC is amendable, he would provide us with the draft letter to work with. The letter is due October 13th. Please let him know if PAC is willing to support his endeavor.

With the development that is being constructed off of Bridge and North, the MBTA is going to be revitalizing their train station, and the commuter rail. The city has already earmarked \$75,000 towards an art project specifically to active/engage/beautify that space. PAC is of course interested and Norene has asked Julie to send her the draft for her to sign.

Other business-

Kurt brings attention to the Remembrance Project plaques from last fiscal year. He has noticed other installations in neighboring cities, and compared them to those that are beginning to pop up around Salem. He voiced his concern for Salem's heavily politically edited pieces that depict praises for things that Salem has done environmentally or is in the process of doing. He is concerned that this changed language is not what we had originally approved. Kurt would like to discuss how we can prevent edits like this from happening moving forward. *Julie is going to follow up with the artist about the change, and make sure that these changes were vetted with the artist as he worked with other entities. Keeping the ability to review the final product and polish the process will be discussed in next month's meeting.*

John brought to the Commission that this Remembrance project amongst others, including Culture House, and Julie are going to be featured at the Creative County Summit on September 30th, which will be at The Cabot in Beverly. It will feature about 7 other projects around the county which will be presenting, as well as the head of Mass Cultural. Dar Williams will be in town for a performance and talk. It should be a fun event, and will be live streamed.

• **Public Comments-**

Catherine Miller had a few suggestions to ask the state about the changes around the Choate Statue. She suggests additional lighting and protective barriers to further protect the statue from automobile accidents.

Tom Daniel wanted to remind the Commission about the need to coordinate with Parks and Recreation about the Making It Public call.

- **Adjourn-** Norene called for a motion to adjourn. Moved by John, seconded by Kurt. **Meeting Adjourned at 8:21 pm.**

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