

Salem Public Art Commission Meeting

April 18, 2017

The Public Art Commission (PAC) was held on Tuesday, April 18, 2017, 2016, in Room 314, Third Floor, at 120 Washington Street, Salem, MA.

Norene Gachignard, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:20pm

Roll Call:

Members Present: Norene Gachignard, Lillian Hsu, Janine Liberty, J Michael Sullivan, Amanda Moore and Deborah Greel, Public Art Planner

Approval of March Minutes:

Hsu made a motion to approve. Sullivan seconded the motion

Motions passes: 4-0

Mickey Northcutt and Rosario Uberia Minaya from North Shore Community Development Corporation presenting upcoming projects in the Point Neighborhood

Northcutt introduced their programming and housing portfolio to PAC. The new buildings are located on Peabody Street and Leavitt Street. They described developing a masterplan for the neighborhood by using a game written by Liberty's husband. Northcutt discussed the map of the Point neighborhood and the buildings they own. They decided to renovate everything they owned and buy more buildings to also renovate. All buildings use historic tax credits to preserve and restore the buildings. The CDC has a staff of 30 with 3 real estate managers, a team that engages the community and the staff of Youth Build. Youth Build empowers young adults with the competency and desire to transform their lives and improve their communities through education, employment, and leadership development.

Gachignard asked about occupancy and Northcutt said they are at 100% in their buildings. In 2014, they bought buildings from troubled landlords with conditions that were unlivable. Northcutt said one of the buildings had a bad reputation and have been transformed. A building on Palmer street is being restored and the first floor will have 2000 sq. ft. of community space. The alley way in back of the building will have cool lighting. Liberty asked about the demographics for the building and was told it is for everyone, both singles and families. Northcutt said that the building will be used not just for services but rental for functions and lots of fun programming. Northcutt noted the restored pocket park on Ward Street, which is full of activity every day and it has turned into a great space.

Northcutt mentioned the two new projects they are embarking on will be financed as one package in order to be able to get the financing needed. There has been a lot of community input as to the design of the buildings and what people in the neighborhood wanted. Northcutt and Minaya have been giving presentations to folks that would be open to building modern buildings. There could be push back and they need voices to support the modern design.

The Leavitt Street project is a mix of apartments with the biggest demand for family housing. There will be 25 apartments with parking and 2500 sq. ft. of retail on the first floor.

Sullivan, who serves on the Design Review Board (DRB) mentioned that the board would not give any push back for modern architecture and he noted in his opinion this is the right direction to go.

The Peabody Street Project has a challenge to the site as it is on different levels, facing Peabody Street and another entrance facing Ward Street. Peabody Park, located on Peabody Street, is challenging as few people access it without having to do a lot of walking. Opportunity exists to have the project incorporate a stairway for easy access from Ward Street. The Peabody Street building would use the park as the front yard. A community room will open up to the park that will get greater use. A ramp/staircase about 12-foot-wide and not feeling like an alley and it will be engaged with cool lighting and artwork. The Peabody street building has some nice design elements and Northcutt wants people to make sure people check out the building. The Ward Street side is more traditional architecturally and Sullivan suggested making both sides more interesting.

Both buildings are sustainable and with new construction they will be LEED certified. This project will be passive house. It will achieve close to no energy building. Main goal of passive house is to have the inside temperature of the building will never go below 65 degrees.

Hsu asked about the alley space and how does someone access it by wheel chair. As it private, Northcutt noted, it doesn't need to be accessible but she asked if there could be accessibility from the interior of the building. Faced with the choice of pathway or no pathway they wish to provide access in the stairway from one street to another. Northcutt said that he can ask the architect to explore making the stairway more accessible.

On another topic, Northcutt mentioned wanting to have artwork, through a mural slam, on the National Grid wall on Peabody Street. He noted they haven't maintained the wall in 50 years.

Hsu suggested that the CDC contact National Grid and deliver the message that they would like to paint art on their walls and then if they don't say anything then you're covered. Sullivan said get in writing and keep reminding them that they are requesting the art on the wall by Sept. 30th. Greel mentioned that PAC could help with the call for mural artists. Northcutt mentions the invisible barrier to break the concept of the Point. Donors like the public art and are supporting the effort.

Northcutt spoke about closing Peabody Street for a festival in September and Councilor Dibble, PAC liaison, mentioned that he goes to the Council to request closing the street. Dibble been doing it in his neighborhood and has advice he is willing to share. He also noted that National Grid comes in front of the City Council for permitting so your ward councilor might help make this happen with getting permission to have art painted on the walls.

Discuss and Vote on "Celebrating the Urban Environment" Proposals

Greel discussed the project asking the artist to give us a final proposal. There is a question about the sound installation project from Front Street to Charter Street Cemetery and making sure that there will be signage to inform the public. Gachignard asked about the technology and Sullivan said it sounds interesting but there might be more questions about the use of the technology.

Liberty explained that there is a musical creation data that is imbedded into an app.

Approval for the Livingston, Neumann and Jones/Swain projects are pending on the following details:

Livingston Project: Front Street to Charter Street

1. Route
2. Signage – vertical or on the ground
3. What does each icon look like
4. Provide interpretive material to put on the sign
5. Sonic attractors
6. Are headphones necessary?
7. Who owns the content? Does he own it as it is open source. Can people re-purpose it. If they like it can they source it?

Neumann Project: Corner of Front Street and Washington Street

1. Is it intended to be a structure for people to use to get in and out of?
2. How much weight will it bare.

Hsu said it is a great project. Liberty asked if it was safe to climb on. Sullivan said that his works are built in public parks. Greel will send the Neumann's contact information to Sullivan to ask about structural soundness.

Jones/Swain Project: Mill Hill

Greel met with the Jones today at the site and discussed the installation process. Sullivan asked about the wind load. Sullivan mentioned that the MBTA may see the 'billboard' and we could get a call from MBTA. Hsu mentioned Swain does guerilla style installations in Boston.

A vote was not taken on the projects until further information from the artists is given to Greel.

Discuss and Vote on Artists' Row Creative Entrepreneur Program Selection 2017

Greel explained the process and the two applications that were submitted. One was a gallery of five established artists (Essex County Gallery) and the second a husband and wife artist team (ZBY Gallery) with experience in both gallery and public art. The Artist Selection Panel after interviewing both applicants felt that ZBY Gallery was a better fit for the Row. They bring a knowledge of running a gallery in an urban environment as well as wanting to engage the Row with programming that appeals to residents, visitors and families. They also bring an expertise in gardening as Sullivan has worked as a florist for many years and creates wire topiaries that can be used in the gardens in the Row.

Sullivan made a motion to approve. Liberty seconded the motion.

Motion Passes: 4-0

Social Media Strategy

Gachignard asked that the Social Media Strategy item be moved to next month.

Updates:

Artists' Row – Greel held a two-hour meeting with the tenants and Claudia Paraschiv to discuss the Artist in Residence Pilot Program. Paraschiv presented some ideas based on a previous discussion with the tenants and their ideas of engaging the Row. Paraschiv will incorporate the

ideas into the proposal for the AiR which is due May 1st. The City is considering raising the rent for the tenants this year.

Mural Slam – After receiving feedback from artists that participated last year the consensus was to have a stipend for the artists and one people’s choice award. That would bring the budget of the project to about \$1600 including paint and supplies. The mural slam will take place during the Salem Arts Festival on June 3 & 4.

Salem Arts Festival – Dates are June 3 & 4.

“When Art Speaks” – The all City of Salem Student Art Exhibit at Old Town Hall will take place Friday, April 28th to Sunday, April 30 with an opening reception on Friday, April 28th from 6-8pm. Greel invited the commissioners to attend.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

Adjourn:

Sullivan made a motion to adjourn. Liberty seconds the motion.

8:00pm