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MAYOR

Salem Public Art Commission
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Public Art Commission
July 27, 2023, 6:00pm
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 6:00 pm.**
- **Roll Call PAC:** Norene Gachignard, John Andrews, Janine Liberty (arrived late), Hannah Gathman, James Bostick & Gwen Rosemond. Absent: Carly Dwyer-Naik. Also present: Julie Barry.
- **Meeting Minute Approvals**
 - o **May 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes** – Julie entertained a motion to approve the minutes. Gwen made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, Hannah seconded. Motion approved. The PAC discussed whether the May meeting minutes were previously approved.
 - o **July 6, 2023 Meeting Minutes** – Norene entertained a motion to approve the minutes. Gwen made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, Hannah seconded. Motion approved.
- **2024 Fiscal Year Plan –**

Julie presents an updated budget and work plan and entertains thoughts/changes from the PAC or a motion to approve as planned. She notes two items that can be finalized later, the experimental marketing for PAC items and allocating the remaining \$7,500 in the downtown performing and activations fund. The funds could be put towards the Community Art Project at the Salem Arts Festival, but she reiterates that it can be decided later in the year. Norene entertained a motion to approve the 2024 fiscal year plan. Hannah made a motion to approve the fiscal year public art plan and budget prepared by Julie, Norene seconded. Motion approved.
- **Public Art & Performance Mini Grants Call for Artists Language Review –**

Julie presents a draft of language and notes that Hannah provided her thoughts and posed two questions regarding the use of ‘based in Salem’ and whether timelines were needed for the completion of each project. Julie understanding of the intentions of the mini grants was to specifically service artists living and

working in Salem, which requires either a Salem business or home address, and she did not believe an artist who only works in Salem hits the mark of being Salem based. She notes that most of the PAC's work is broadly cast and not all Salem artists have the skillset to service the larger commissions, but this is a way to put money back into the Salem community and support local artists.

Hannah suggests the requirement of having a Salem address to be eligible be included in the application. John recommends a statement that artists must live or work in Salem. Julie suggests using the language 'reside in' or 'have a studio or organization based in Salem.' John notes that an artist living in Danvers that works at a restaurant in Salem would not fit the criteria.

John notes the numerous opportunities given to artists outside of Salem and was in favor of an opportunity for artists residing in Salem, given the challenges people face with being able to afford to do, even if it will be harder to find people to satisfy the requirement. Gwen notes that including that language removes any opportunity to work around it and she would prefer the grant funds go to a Salem resident. Jim notes if funding was not previously offered to artists that did not reside in Salem, this would not create a grey area.

Julie notes that this is the second round for this mini grant opportunity and asks if Salem based organizations would be eligible to apply. Hannah notes that an organization based in Salem could have no artists that were Salem residents and the wide discrepancy from the previous round, regarding the scale of what was being asked and the intent and motivation for the program that was more for individuals. There is a lot less grant opportunity for individuals that aren't 501 organizations, and she would not be opposed to stating the grant funding is for individuals and Salem residents only, making it easier to clarify eligibility and gets to the artists who have less resources.

Julie agrees and raises concerns with restricting applicants that may apply to the performative portion, since Salem may not have many individual performers, noting that the funds are taxable. Hannah suggests that one member of a trio of performers would qualify them to apply vs. a choral non-profit where none of the performers lived in Salem. Julie notes the existence of a couple performance groups that could pursue the funds, so the intent needs to be clear. She read an example of the proposed language. "Applicants must be based in Salem. We define being based in Salem as having a residential or organizational/studio address in Salem, MA" and she suggests including "residential address" and that they must be "individuals." Julie suggests revising the language at a future date or reviewing them in two separate categories, organizations vs. individuals, as was done with the grant funding in Cambridge.

Norene suggests keeping the eligibility broad. John suggests limiting eligibility due to the lack of options for Salem residents, when Mass Cultural and ECCF provide no more than a couple hundred dollars to support individual artists. It's easier to receive a Mass Cultural Council grant with some leverage behind you, and he sees more groups receiving those grants than individuals. John suggests tweaking the language regarding what the PAC seeks to gain from individual creators.

Gwen envisions individuals with no other opportunities rather than groups. If the eligibility were extended to groups, her preference would be for a member of the group has a true Salem connection, although she will go with whatever the group decides. Hannah agrees with John and Gwen and reflects upon their criteria during round 1. She notes that The Punto Urban Art Museum was an awesome project that didn't seem to fall under the intent of the program. With so little funding available, the opportunity for individuals is what they envisioned when they came up with the mini grant program. She wants the artists to be aware of why a Salem resident artist is being sought with parameters that have already been set so no artist is wasting their time. Gwen didn't want a local performer to feel as if they wouldn't receive the funding and to not apply because they weren't established or have an organization behind them.

Jim notes that several applications were received in round 1 that fit the criteria being discussed and he'd be surprised to not receive several applications. John suggests intentional digging to get the application in the

hands of the appropriate artists they are sure fit the criteria.

Janine arrives.

Julie reads the revised language. "... from artists and performers based in Salem, MA" and "Applicants must be based in Salem to be eligible. We define being based in Salem, MA as the lead applicant being an individual with a residential address in Salem, MA." The PAC agrees to the language.

Janine suggests eliminating the words "second round." Julie revises the language.

Julie notes that the call for artists would be posted by August 1, 2023 at the latest, leaving 1 month for artists to submit proposals and submit them by September 4, 2023, allowing the PAC to review the application prior to their September meeting. She notes the possibility that for the August meeting, the MAPC may want to hold their community presentation for Charolotte Forten Park and invited the PAC to be a part of that presentation on the evening of their September 19, 2023 regular meeting with the possibility of scheduling a special PAC meeting.

Julie suggests creating a timeline for the execution, such as within the school year of 2024. Norene agrees. Jim notes that funds must be spent prior to July 1, 2024. Hannah notes the March deadline to review. Julie notes that the money must be expended by then. Hannah suggests moving the decision to February. Julie notes that half of the funding is distributed at the signing of the contract and the second half at execution. That was the bollard project and while it was not the most polished project because of the rain, it was completed, and the artist was happy with the result. Julie suggests a project completion date of June 30, 2024.

Jim asks if this call for artists will have a web presence and whether it would include photos of the previously funded project. Julie replied yes.

Julie requests a final review of the application form. Hannah encouraged consistent punctuation at all bullet points. The PAC was comfortable with the revised wording on the application.

Jim suggests the application be bilingual. Julie notes that she did not have in-house translation services but could use Deep Translate, as she did with the Charolotte Forten Memorial Project, where she noted that no Spanish inquiries or submissions were received. She suggests they continue to do so to continue to set the precedent, but she raises concerns with being able to adequately review applications received in Spanish. John stated that he will find someone bilingual to review the applications submitted in Spanish in a timely manner.

John suggests the application be sent to the CDC, Salem schools, and art students, and notes that Salem schools will not distribute the application unless it is bilingual. Julie agrees to have the application translated and posted. Janine agrees and suggests if time is a concern, that a message be included that a Spanish application can be made available upon request. Julie agrees if she is unable to make both versions available at the same time.

John notes feedback received from Lynn is that individual set their computer browser to their native language and a Spanish version wouldn't be necessary unless it was printed material. Hannah suggests having the Spanish version available for posting and stressed the importance of being aware of the options. John mentions a plug-in called User Way that has multiple language options and notes that he was happy that they were having the conversations.

• Public Artist in Residence Review Panel Selection –

Julie states that the call for artists went out, she requests 1-3 PAC members volunteer to participate as panel reviewers, on a date to be determined, and she requests additional participant recommendations to help diversify the panel. Jim asks if the reviewed must be Salem residents. Julie replies that they must be aware of the artistic overlay within the Salem community. Jim volunteers and agrees to ask an artist from Gallows Hill Artist Studios to be a potential panelist. Julie notes that the artists he has in mind applied for their temporary public art project and notes the potential for the artist to want to apply for this grant. Jim agrees to ask.

John suggests inviting Santiago Quinones, the new Art Director at the Punto Urban Art Museum under the Northshore CDC. John suggests Trevor XXX, a new local curator at the PEM who may not agree to join the panel. He suggests Dan Lipkin, head of the Philips Library, and Raheena XXX as potential panelists too.

Julie requests additional volunteers from the PAC. Janine states that she was on the previous panel and would volunteer again. Gwen states that she is devoting her time to Charolette Forten Park. Hannah notes that she is not participating with Charolette Foten Park due to a potential conflict of interest with MAPC, and volunteered despite the potential for friends of hers that may apply for the mini grants creating yet another potential conflict. She ponders whether the current artist in residence, Claudia, would reapply. Julie notes that public artists in residence must take a minimum of 1 year off prior to reapplying. Hannah suggested Claudia be a panelist. Julie agrees and suggests the PAC consider additional panelists for diverse opinions rather than the usual panelists. She notes that the call for artists closes August 15, 2023, so the PAC will most likely need to vote on the artist in residence and the Charlotte Forten Park artist at the September meeting.

Janine leaves the meeting.

• Public Art Workplan Project Updates –

Julie stated that four artists have been identified to move forward in the process and meet the technical review team for a virtual site visit on August 3, 2023. They will be invited to ask questions and submit fully fleshed out concept proposals due to the PAC by September 8, 2023, before receiving a \$1,000 stipend. The technical review committee will review the proposals prior to a public presentation on Tuesday, September 19, 2023. Julie suggests this day as an alternative to the September meeting date, to allow the PAC to ask their own questions, potentially host the panel discussion, and for the public to meet the PAC as well.

John questions the review of mini grants at the same meeting. Julie replies that it would require a special meeting for the mini grants review and to formalize the vote for the public artist in residence. If timed correctly, they could also formalize the section for the Charolette Forten Park artist.

Jim asks how much time MAPC requires for their review. Julie replied that with MAPC as partners on the project, each of the 4 artists would present for 5-8 minutes each, with a community Q&A, which could take approximately 1 hour. The PAC doesn't need to attend the park presentation although she hopes they would want to be to learn about each artist and cast their vote as members of the community.

Jim suggested a special meeting prior to September 19th, which is close to October when things are busy. Julie agrees, notes that the mini grant deadline is September 4th, which will take at least a couple days to process so prepare, allow the PAC to review the applications for at least 1 week prior to the conversation. She suggests the week of September 12th or the day of September 26th.

The PAC was not in favor of the last week in September due to its proximity to October. John was not opposed to a lengthy meeting on September 19th and notes his preference for earlier in the month of September.

Julie states that the public artists in residence proposals are due August 31st and suggests reviewing both in one meeting or having the mini grant proposal be reviewed by the full PAC and a preliminary review panel for the public artist in residence that make a recommendation to the PAC. Jim and John believe a review of both can be done efficiently and in one meeting. Jim suggests meeting on September 14th. Julie reminds the PAC that reviewing them in a public meeting means their conversation could be heard by members of the public. John has no concerns. Norene disagrees with the public hearing the PAC potentially discuss their disliking the work of an artist. John notes that they have reviewed artists in the public forum previously and the PAC minutes are public record. Jim states that their individual advanced review of the applications will also speed up their review process.

Julie states that the PAC would solely be the review panel for the public artist in resident if that were the case and she would host it as a private meeting if the PAC does not want to be the only reviewers. Jim agrees to having a separate public artist is residence meeting and reviewing the mini grant program at the larger meeting. John also agrees.

Julie reiterates that the deadline for the public artists in residence is August 31st, the deadline for the mini grants is September 4th, the PAC would have their formal meeting on Thursday, September 14th at 6PM to review and vote on the mini grant applications and recommendations for the pair, and on Tuesday, September 19th the artists panel will occur for Charolette Forten Park at 6PM via Zoom for the PAC to attend if they are able. John was in favor of the artists meeting the PAC. Julie suggests a 5:30PM commencement for a PAC introduction on September 19th, the panel discussion from 6-7PM, followed by community dialog. The PAC agrees.

Julie states that preliminary review for the artists in residence would occur either September 7th or 12th and the sub-review committee would occur the week of September 4th or 11th. The PAC agreed to hold September 7th at 4:30PM as their preliminary review meeting date.

- **Project updates:**

- **Barrio Mural**

Julie stated that she spoke with the owner earlier that day, who indicated that the artist Mack, had been working on the mural for approximately 4 days before becoming very ill. Mack connected the owner with a local artist whom he coached on finishing the project. Julie requested the resume of the alternate artist but believes the owner may not have been honest and the PAC felt deceived. Julie spoke with Kate Newhall-Smith and the SRA, who felt that because the sketch matches the original proposal, although it was completed by a different artist, it was done with skill, appropriate materials, it's beautiful, and there is no copyright infringement, so there is no other recourse for the PAC or SRA to take. Julie informed the owner that the PAC is available to help streamline the process and help with concerns. This may have been a fluke or an attempt to circumvent the system, but there is nothing to do at this point.

John believes the situation did not occur as the owner stated, and the design is close but not exact, and suggests that if the artist can change for a project on private property, why review it at all. It was a stressful project that took up much of the PAC's time. Julie responds yes, this may have been a fluke, if the owner was told to paint over it she may not. The difficulty comes in regulating and enforcing the process when the owner cannot be fined by the Building Department.

Julie presents a flow chart created by herself and Kate Newhall-Smith for anything that happens within the redevelopment area, on private property, that outlines direction and give authority to the SRA. The SRA conducts its initial review, if the SRA deems it appropriate to have, they would refer it to the DRB and PAC simultaneously, if deemed inappropriate the review process stops and the artwork will not be allowed. If appropriate, the DRB would review the location, context of the surrounding buildings within the urban renewal area, and whether it is a sign or artwork. The PAC will focus on the appropriateness of materials, experience, maintenance plan, owner approval, whether the content is appropriate, and the proposed location. The PAC would then vote whether to recommend or not recommend approval of the proposed artwork to the SRA. After receiving positive recommendations from the DRB and PAC, the SRA would most likely provide approval but could still say no. If copyright infringement was a concern, the PAC could recommend to the SRA that the artwork is not appropriate and make a recommendation to the SRA that it not be approved. The PAC would either vote to recommend the artwork or to not recommend it.

John notes that this process would only be for private property within the redevelopment area and not city wide. Julie replies yes and notes that the PAC would review proposed art not within the redevelopment area unless there is a specific directive with a contract with the city to create public art or a PAC review of the proposal. She notes that the PAC proposing a revised ordinance with revised language would be helpful, such as the language used in Cambridge for “any artwork visible from a public way must be presented to the PAC.” This should make the PAC feel empowered to say no when appropriate.

Jim feels the flow chart protects both the city and the artists and will make the process clear. John agrees, notes they initially said no to Barrio’s mural proposal, and the PAC won’t feel empowered when an applicant is being dishonest. He raises concerns with it setting a precedent given that mural on buildings are popular for businesses, and what the recourse would be if the mural was inappropriate. Julie stated that if inappropriate, the city would have legal recourse to request the mural be removed. John raises concerns with other businesses requesting also add a large mural on an historic brick building and he is aware of other sketchy occurrences with this owner.

- **Other Business-**

- **New PAC Members Guidebook**

Julie stated that the Legal and HR Departments have provided one for the PAC to familiarize themselves with.

- **Public Comments-**

None

- **Adjourn-** Norene entertained a motion to adjourn. Moved by Jim, seconded by Hannah.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Persons requiring auxiliary aids and services for effective communication such as sign language interpreter, an assistive listening device, or print material in digital format or a reasonable modification in programs, services, policies, or activities, may contact the City of Salem ADA Coordinator, as soon as possible and no less than 2 business days before the meeting, program, or event.

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