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MAYOR

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## Public Art Commission

November 21, 2023

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 6:45 pm.**
- **Roll Call PAC:** Norene Gachignard, John Andrews, Hannah Gathman, James Bostick, Gwen Rosemond, & Carly Dwyer-Naik. Absent: Janine Liberty. Also present: Julie Barry.
- **Meeting Minute Approvals**
  - o **October 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes** – Norene requested to correct the spelling of her first name. John Andrews made a motion to approve the meeting minutes with spelling corrections, Jim Bostick seconded. Motion approved.
- **Rotating Sculpture Garden Proposed Art Review –**

Julie states that this is the fourth year of the rotating sculpture garden. The first two years were along the Harborwalk and used grant funding through a beautification project. That led to the purchase of the seahorse, and the donation of the ripple wave and vertical ogee that are still in place. The third year was at Leslie's Retreat, where one sculpture, "Follow Your Heart Harry," depicting a man walking with a heart in his hand, was vandalized - figure ripped off its pedestal, and an insurance claim was filed. Julie suggests either considering an alternative location or returning to Leslie's Retreat, which was liked by the artists. She notes that Parks & Recreation can be contacted to determine other potential locations. Norene suggests consulting the Council of the Artists to determine their preferred location. Julie notes that \$6,000 was allotted to this project, and \$1,000 of that was designated for the consultant hired to find artists. The PAC previously voted to do that again rather than make a call for artists, which can change next time when they develop their work plan in June/July of 2024.

Jim asks if the National Park Service land was a possibility, because of the increased number of visitors, or the walkway between Essex and Derby Street. Norene agrees. Julie agrees to explore both and raises

concerns with whether the National Park Service and because it is Federal land the liability would fall on the Federal government that may not be willing to take on that liability. Jim noted that when he takes on projects with the Park Service they must have their own liability insurance, but it would keep the art downtown where it is heavily foot trafficked.

Julie presents the following sculptures:

1. "Burdened Man" by Thomas Berger, made of marble and stone depicting a city on top of a man. Norene states that with the \$5,000 budget, this sculpture is out of their league. Julie clarifies that the sculpture would be on loan and only a \$1,000 stipend would be given to the artist for loaning their piece for 1-year. All proposed artists are comfortable with this arrangement.

Carly encourages the pieces to travel around the city and to not only be placed downtown so the community can enjoy and not just downtown residents. John has no concerns with using Leslie's Retreat this coming year due to the high numbers of walkers and it being a different community than usual. He encourages thinking of ways to invite more people to the space, using The Willows after the Phase II work is complete, and considering the 2026 location which will be a celebratory year for Salem. He has no concerns with keeping the same location or finding a new location for the current year. Julie agrees. Jim agrees and suggests off of Derby Street if the locations are rotated, like Blaney Pier where the Salem ferry arrives. Julies suggests the area for 2026. Jim notes that it is a creative neighborhood with many walkers. John asks if a certain percentage of Crowley must go to public art. Julie replies that public art may be factored into the offshore wind development area, but from Footprint the use of the allotment of funds must take place on that property, and with the project in flux they wouldn't want to execute permanent public art there so soon. She suggests using some of those funds in 2026 to celebrate the development. Jim notes the colonnade in front of Footprint (a row of trees) where the Fete en Blanc was held this summer, that may be part of their property.

Hannah asks if tonight's goal is to select both the sculptures and location recommendations. Julie replies yes and noted that's out of the 12 options, 5 need to be selected. Hannah asks if the pieces or the location would rotate or both. Julies replies both. Hannah was in favor of Leslie's Retreat but agreed that the locations shouldn't only be near or in the downtown, and encourages rotating them each year. Julies suggests a 2-year rotation, given the precedent along the Harborwalk that had two different rounds of sculptures. She notes that finding locations with a suitable substrate and sufficient open space has been a challenge since some sculptures are semi-buried for stability and there can be bedrock below grade or infrastructure that shouldn't be disturbed, which is why the "Singing Rainbow" was not displayed last year, no suitable location could be found. The commission agreed that The Willows would be a good location for 2026 after the completion of Phase II. Jim was in favor of Leslie's Retreat or lower Derby Street. Hannas was in favor of Leslie's Retreat but also keeping them rotating. Julie suggests including pocket park for more intimate installations. Norene reiterates receiving input from the artists regarding locations.

2. "Flying Pencils" by Paul Angicellio
3. "Metropolis" by Joe Chirchirillo, made of concrete.
4. "Corvus Alpha" by Walter Clark, a donation to the City of Salem.
5. "Balancing Act – Expectations" by Josie Dellenbaugh
6. "The Portal" by Joseph Gray
7. "Star Shadows" by Bruce Hathaway
8. "Fractal Cubes" by Ilana Krepchin
9. "Wishes for Peace" by Danielle Kremer
10. "Bath in Orange" by Phil Marshall
11. "Utica Shield" by Evan Morse, a ground piece.

## 12. "Think Tank" by David Skora

Norene states that she is not a fan of concrete. Jim raises concern with the ceramic "Peace Doves" being too fragile or easily removed. Carly agrees, noting that animals could damage them. Gwen agrees. Norene was not in favor of the carved granite "Burdened Man." Jim and Hannah were in favor of "Burdened Man" and that is was their favorite piece. The Commission agreed to eliminate "Star Shadows" due to the longevity concerns of the metal filagree after 1-year in the elements, and its look as a garden sculpture rather than a public art piece. Gwen suggests individual votes on each piece. Hannah suggests each person only vote for 5.

Motion to approve "Burdened Man," 4 in favor. Motion approved.

Motion to approve "Flying Pencils," 2 in favor.

Motion to approve "Metropolis," 2 in favor.

Motion to approve "Corvus Alpha," 2 in favor.

Motion to approve "Balancing Act – Expectations," 3 in favor. Motion approved.

Motion to approve "The Portal," 3 in favor. Motion approved.

Motion to approve "Star Shadows," 0 in favor.

Motion to approve "Fractal Cubes," 2 in favor.

Motion to approve "Wishes for Peace," 0 in favor.

Motion to approve "Bath in Orange," 4 in favor. Motion approved.

Motion to approve "Utica Shield," 2 in favor.

Motion to approve "Think Tank," 4 in favor. Motion approved.

Carly raised concerns with "Bath in Orange" being climbed on and physically interacted with, which could also be the intent. The Commission agrees that it is a risk with any of the pieces. Julie will explain the changes of human interaction with the artists to make sure they are comfortable. Jim suggests asking how well the raven was affixed to the "The Portal" statue. Julie suggests selecting a runner up if any selected were deemed too fragile. The Commission votes to approve "Fractal Cubes" as a runner up but raises concerns with it also being climbed on. Hannah notes that the shield is the most different piece with its shape and form, which could be the more interesting, the piece could be placed anywhere, and the artist is local. Jim suggests the shield could be easily overlooked. Norene agreed. Jim and Carly note their strong interest in "Metropolis." Julie suggests revisiting the back-up at the next meeting if one is needed.

- **Public Art Signage –**

Julie reminds the Commission that they didn't receive the full amount of grand funding it applied for with the National Endowment of the Arts for Charolette Forten Park. This additional funding was meant to fund signage at the park and they've been working to shore up the budget for that signage. She applied for two grants and is considering a third grant, for a package around storytelling at the memorial that would include the documentation of the project, signage, interpretation, and the dedication. Signage, in both Spanish and braille, is not something that groups are interested in providing funding for. Julie seeks permission from the PAC to hold on the signage project for this cycle. She notes that the PAC elected to use \$10,000 from the conservation and maintenance budget to create a consistent signage program for public art in Salem. If the Charolette Forten park sign is one of those signs, but at a larger scale, there would be a traditional public art plaque and an interpretive art panel. If no grant funding is awarded, she suggests that some of the signage funds be used to create signage for Charolette Forten Park, because the interpretative material is so important to telling her story. The PAC agreed to hold on signage for this cycle.

Norene entertains a motion to hold off on signage funds for this cycle. Hannah made a motion to hold off on signage funds for this cycle, Gwen seconded. Motion approved.

- **Winter Activations –**

Julies states that the PAC has partnered with Main Streets in the past to support their work with the Salem

So Sweet initiative. Kylie Sullivan reached out again about partnering again on either New Years Eve (NYE) activations and/or Salem So Sweet. The PAC discusses how much of the budget was available. Jim notes that the Salem So Sweet event is always successful and well attended but he has never attended the NYE event so he doesn't know how it would benefit public art. John replies that the launch event has not become an annual event again since pre-COVID and Kylie may hope that a partnership with Artists' Row could become an annual event over NYE. Since it hasn't been done yet, there is nothing to judge it by. Carly asked why the event cannot take place at Old Town Hall (OTH) anymore, noting that it was an indoor kid-friendly event. Julie is not aware of a reason why OTH is not an option except for keeping the event small and with minimal lift. John notes that Kylie indicated it is getting too loud and chaotic inside OTH and outside is a better choice in a post-COVID world, and it allows them to partner with the Artists' Row tenants. He adds that the working HVAC systems in the Artists spaces make partnering with them easier.

Julie notes that the PAC wants to sponsor events and has programming funds available for activation downtown and opted to partner with and support existing organizations rather than put out a call for artists. The PAC partnered with them last year to bring the murals to windows and provide some activation to OTH. Jim supports Salem So Sweet with performers and the Holiday Stroll with performers.

Hannah asks how much money is earmarked for supporting these events and what portion of the funds will go towards winter activations. Julie presents both a working budget (nuances) and an approved budget (chunks of money). Items in black represent chunks of money allotted that would have been spent, except for the placards.

- Downtown Programming: \$7,500 (annual budget) for mini-grants, \$7,500 remains to be used by June 30<sup>th</sup>
- Public Art and Performance mini grants (from September 2023): \$3,500 was spent in the first round
- Individual Public Art Proposal mini grants: \$5,000 was allotted, \$3,500 was spent

\$1,500 remains for public art in March, \$5,800 remains for the mini grants in March, and \$7,500 remains for downtown activations, totaling \$15,000 left to spend. \$5,000 was earmarked for the community art project with Main Streets for the Salem Arts Festival. Hannah noted that spending \$5,800 on downtown activations would leave \$1,500 in for other mini grants in March and requested clarification on any funding restrictions. Julie replies that downtown activations must take place downtown, but the public art funding can be used anywhere in Salem. The \$5,800 is not available until March 2024 unless the PAC votes to reallocate the funding, so only \$7,500 is currently available and can be used entirely on winter activations if the PAC desires, but there was interest in supporting the Salem Arts Fest community, leaving only \$2,500.

Jim supports contributing funds to Main Street for performers for Salem So Sweet and potentially the Winter Stroll, since supporting those events does more for him than supporting the Ring in the New Year event and they are well attended. They provide entertainment value when downtown that provides the activation. Carly states that NYE event advocates for performers and community crafting projects, and it appeals to a community that is largely underserved and has young children. NYE is such a hard holiday to have with kids and it would be a good event to put their name on because of its reach throughout the city population and it would be a great representation for the PAC. Norene agrees, noting her past volunteer experience at the event that was full of families and the PAC doesn't host many events that appeal to families. Gwen agrees and notes an early NYE event in Boston for families. John supports providing funding to Salem Main Streets and NYE given the PAC support of the event, because he doesn't believe the Holiday Stroll captures the attention of potential shoppers to the downtown. Hannah supports the Salem So Sweet and NYE activation which she believe could be a signature public art event but questioned whether the desire was to get the PAC name behind events that get the most viewers or events that have the potential to engage more people and get in on the ground floor since as Salem residents the PAC doesn't know what takes place during the NYE event over the Holiday Stroll which seemed like an afterthought. Norene and Gwen agreed. John believes Kylie could find sponsorship elsewhere for the Holiday Stroll.

Julie presents a budget showing the PAC supporting all events suggested by Kylie that does not touch the earmarked funds for the mini grants, and would leave funds for the March cycle, \$1,500 for public art, and \$5,800 for downtown activations in the March mini grant cycle. If the PAC were to support NYE, Holiday Stroll, and the performances for Salem So Sweet, it would leave the PAC nearly \$3,000 to support a springtime event and \$2,000 for experimental marketing that previously earmarked \$3,000. Sponsoring the murals could cut into that funding but that could be experimental marketing for the PAC. Jim asks if the unallocated funds must be spent by June. Julie replies yes. Julie notes that eliminating the Holiday Stroll leaves \$4,100 in public art funds, \$5,800 in mini grant funding, and \$2,000 in public art.

Norene entertains a motion to allocate funds for downtown activation as shown. Jim made a motion to support Salem Main Streets and their NYE event and Salem So Sweet performances, Gwen seconded. Motion approved.

Jim states that it was not clear to him that the \$5,000 for the community art project isn't already earmarked. Julie replies that it wasn't formalized because they weren't sure if it would be carried forward, but after a promising discussion today, that Kylie is also interested in, the visual and performing art group at Salem High School and it's something that can be carried forward if a student is interested in it.

- **December Meeting –**

Jim proposes the following agenda item for the January meeting, brainstorming what can be done with the remaining funds, seeking proposals for use of those funds, and asking the PAC to come prepared with ideas on how to spend the money. Julie replies that some ideas have been preliminarily suggested, \$5,000 for the public art mentorship program with Salem High School students, that the PAC piloted last year in partnership with Salem Main Streets and the Salem Arts Festival, and created For The Record, where the public artists in residence and student could receive a stipend using public art funds.

Hannah believes the only idea to consider is the experimental marketing and suggests the PAC brainstorm ideas at a future meeting, then have a couple of PAC members present a proposal for consideration. Julie agrees to add both to the January docket.

The PAC agrees to cancel the December meeting.

- **Other Business-**

Jim states invited all PAC members to attend Salem Art Commission's Holiday Market on Saturday.

John encouraged all PAC members to shop local.

Julie states that she will be off from December 15<sup>th</sup> through January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

- **Adjourn-** Norene entertained a motion to adjourn. Moved by John, Seconded by Jim. Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 pm.

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