**Salem Public Art Commission Meeting**

The Public Art Commission (PAC) was held on Tuesday, October 17, 2017, in Room 314, Third Floor at 120 Washington Street, Salem, MA.

Norene Gachignard, Chair of PAC called the meeting to order at 6:03pm

**Roll Call:**

Members Present: Norene Gachignard, John Andrews, Jim Fallon, Austen Barron Bailly, Janine Liberty, J. Michael Sullivan and Deborah Greel, Public Art Planner

Members Not Present: Lillian Hsu

**Approval of September minutes:**

Fallon made a motion to approve. Gachignard seconded the motion.

Motion passes: 5 -1 abstention (J. Michael Sullivan was not present at the meeting.)

**Discussion on 2017-2018 PAC Work Plan and Budget:**

***Documents and Exhibitions:* 2017-2018 Public Art Commission Work Plan and Budget**

***Discussion:***

Greel opened discussion when prompted by Gachignard, about how specific items on the work plan such as, the sculpture “Pavilion” and the AR installation “Whispers in Salem” can now be removed from the plan as the projects are completed. She noted that the mural, “From a Dark Place” has some of the paint worn off.

Greel has spoken with Mark Katz from Sperling Interactive, a local group of designers. She believes it may be worth sitting down with them brainstorm to find if there are places the PAC could begin utilizing in alleys and Derby Square. Andrews discussed an article he read recently that suggested instead of limiting local art to art boxes why not open up the limits and have to local artists make proposal. There may be some proposals for something great at $7000 or maybe a couple good ones that come in at a lower cost allowing the PAC to invest in multiple projects. By introducing the idea of “limitlessness’ to the Public Space Project at 289 Derby Street is it possible to encourage creative use of the area or should the funds be for creative placemaking pop ups if the time line coincides to when the PAC allocates funding. Liberty agreed noting the idea is similar with what the PAC did for the call for artist when they picked three locations and the PAC got very different proposals. Andrews, was informed by Greel the quantity of proposals for the Celebrating the Urban Environment initiative was around 18. Andrews feels that the amount of money must be fair to artists since other programs are not getting that kind of response, and that having a brainstorming session with Sperling Interactive before the Call for Art is released would be best in order to incorporate the ideas of possible locations into the marketing material.  
Andrews asked when is the deadline for the expending the funding in the PAC budget and Greel told him the funds will need to be allocated by the end of June. The Commission was encouraged by Greel to, over the next month do a little homework, while walking around think of what everyone would want this call to look like.  
Gachignard asked if it would be best to invite them to the next PAC meeting but Greel feels a more fluid, informal meeting would be better. Mike Sperling and Daniel Gursha from the Ledger may also be tapped as a resource for finding good locations. Liberty brought up local school teachers being invited to the process since many of them are artists as well and they may approach the spaces challenge from a different perspective. Greel felt the best way to do this would be to invite the local teachers to the All City Art Exhibit. Greel had also met with the Kelley Rice, communication director of the Salem School System, to see how the PAC can work with them on similar projects as the mural on Collins Middle School.

Liberty was interested in knowing how far the PAC’s reach was when it comes to placing local art. Noting that the PAC is under represented outside of downtown. Greel told the PAC that the master plan concentrates mostly downtown and use for the budget is relative to the density of the population though engaging places such as The Point, Artists' Row and local schools is something that is being done, but the PAC is not necessarily funding those projects. However, Greel pointed out that there are 11 murals that will need to be redistributed and putting them into neighborhoods beyond downtown may be a good solution.

Gachignard asked if the PAC should speak before the City Council in December, with a list of accomplishments and do another ask for an increase in the PAC’s budget. Greel agrees maybe even incorporating Patronicity, a matching grant program from Mass Development as well.

**Programming:**

Liberty wanted to know where is the PAC was with the programming Greel updated the PAC that Salem Cultural Council (SCC) grant was applied for $500 titled “*From the Traditional to the Streets: Women in the Arts”.*  Bailly has agreed to moderate and Silvia Sanchez, a mural artist will be one of the guest panelists. The program will be a collaboration with the North Shore Community Development Corporation. Even if the grant doesn’t go through the funds should still be utilized for the forum.

Andrews had received an ask from Boston Art week the PAC may be able to tie that into this project if the forum is in the spring. Greel thought it would be great if Arts Week was brought to Salem and if it doesn’t work still keeping Salem Arts Festival in mind when scheduling projects would be important.

Andrews wanted to know if the theme of Celebrating the Urban Environment could change. The idea of Connections allows the PAC to work with other initiatives in town. If there was an amazing centrally located art piece and have it be an inspiration to the schools, allowing them to create and then display their own art in their area. Bailly and Andrews noted there is a connection point now of all the mural initiatives in the city. Greel thought of using that connection in time for Salem Arts Fest though Andrew said the timing of how late it is in the school year may pose a challenge. Liberty agreed that this is an ongoing goal, making connections with the groups around the city. Greel suggested that maybe connections/connecting spaces should be our theme. Other possible connections like Boston Art Week (April 27, May 6), Bailly inquired if Lafayette Park could be a possible connection, Greel and Gachignard explained that currently the City is reworking the landscape and lighting of the statute. Bailly shared that since public art does often take the form of sculpture so that would be a good connection as well. Sullivan was enthusiastic about the Lafayette site being a place the PAC should consider for more art. Greel, Andrews, and Gachignard discussed that right now there are already art boxes and an obelisk memorial, but it may be a good place to hold a forum.

**Discussion of Artists’ Row Creative Entrepreneur Program and Artist in Residence – 2018:**

*Discussion:*

Each tenant at Artists' Row would like to return another season. Greel‘s recommendation is to invite all the artists back this year. Boston Wood Turning and Ceramic by Sibel will be on their fourth year, while Grace & Diggs will be on their third and ZBY Gallery on their second. The reasoning is that the group has been through a transitioning period, and this is the first year Artists’ Row has really achieved its goal as a functioning artistic space. This will be the last year for the two oldest tenants and the others will begin to cycle out and 2019 would be possible to have all stalls available for new tenants. This year there will be an increase rent and the PAC will request each artist to complete a business plan and a marketing plan. The increase to the revolving account for Artists’ Row will also allow Greel to look into winterization, since the tenants pay through the winter.

Greel suggested opening the 2018 season in April instead of May so there are no missed business opportunities. Andrews would like to see a restructuring the rules for the tenants. For example, setting a term limit for 3 years, adjusting business hours and who or what is allowed in the stalls. Right now, some stalls have brought in additional artist, and for the larger stalls it may make sense to have more than one tenant. Currently the method of adding artists has helped meet the challenge of creating and selling art 6 days a week. Liberty points out that as the artist cycle out it would be important to consider keeping one experienced artist on the row to help the newcomers, and asked if the other stalls will have a say as to who comes in since the group currently has fostered a great environment of teamwork. Sullivan asked if there was concern about having all stalls completely new, Greel said this isn’t the plan but it is possible since the tenants are at will. Sullivan also wanted to know if the tenants were aware of the proposed transitions, Greel noted that the information will be provided to them.

As far as Artist in Residence program, it was successful last year and the PAC would should think about putting out another call for 2018, maybe not placemaking again, but performance art or various artists would be good. Andrews noticed the recent barricades on Artists' Row and was wondering if the Row was zoned as a fire lane. Greel said it was but the group agreed it seems like there are multiple access points and if it was not a fire lane there may be a way to expand the type of programing allowed there as this could potentially open the space to a new group of artists.

**Other Business:**  
  
Liberty suggested that the PAC would benefit from more online marketing. Andrew would like to know best practices, such as content types to share and Greel would like to become more involved with other aspects of social media, such as Instagram. Liberty offered to put together a quick workshop to assist the PAC.   
  
Liberty inquired if there was a case to be made for the PAC to be involved in city landscaping. She found that the Norwegian Maple trees are invasive and are found throughout the city. She hopes it possible to work with a committee that does the green spaces to make them more beautiful. Andrews suggested working with the Lorax Committee, run by Sean McCrea, assistant head of Department of Public Spaces for the City of Salem.

Greel informed the group that some of the PAC members terms are coming up in January and Greel will reach out to everyone whose term is coming up via email.

Andrews presented the PAC a request from Andy Bablo, a local artist in Beverly, who wants to know if the PAC could place an art installation in a storage container from Hub Week in Boston in Salem. It would need power and staffing. The installation is a black light reflective and was created with 4 other artists. Currently the piece is in paid storage, but Mayor Driscoll was interested in having the container installed after October. Different spots were proposed for the container such as Phoenix school, Bit-bar Restaurant parking lot, as it is technically a structure so the building inspector would need to approve if it was placed close to the business, though they are willing to staff it for free. Greel suggested Derby square with the possibility of paying for staffing. Gachignard suggested the info booth area once it has been removed. Andrews would like to see a restaurant or a school willing to host the piece. Liberty, Greel, and Bailly don’t like the idea of it being at a school but possibly even Lappin Park. Sullivan noted that the container is the size of a parking space and it seems best to walk around and measure a few spots to see what would work best. Greel would like to be able to organize an event around its arrival and may possibly pull funding together to pay for staffing. If it was event focused Andrews would like to see an event on Artists' Row and maybe utilize a parking spot as the space for the container. Andrews discussed how establishing a relationship with Bablo would be beneficial to the PAC because it elevates the PAC’s position and could lead to multiple proposals from other artists to enhance the city.

**Updates:**

Greel will send the ArtBox Sponsorship draft to the this out to PAC. This sponsorship would allow the neighborhoods or businesses to sponsor a local box. The final paperwork will need approval from the city solicitor. If it’s legal the PAC can utilize social media to publicize the program**.**

**Public Comment:**

Salem State student requested and was given the titles of the Public Art Commission members.

**Adjournment:**

Liberty made a motion to adjourn. Fallon seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 7:04pm