

# Public Arts Board

## Minutes – May 17, 2017

---

Meeting called to order at 6:40 PM

**A) Roll Call –**

**Members Present:** Rabbi Baruch Cohen, Jason Eddleston, Barbara Heller, Monica Neville, Linda Wells

**Student Members Present:** Celeste Demps-Simons, Sarah Evans,

**Members Absent:** Anne Ritchie, Mary Roberts

**Student Members Absent:** Cecilia Trella

**Administration:** Sean Campbell, Assistant City Planner,  
Jana Ecker, Planning Director

**B) Approval of Minutes – April 19, 2017**

Motion by Monica Neville, seconded by Jason Eddleston to approve the April 19, 2017 minute with the following changes:

**The insertion of the sentence “Ms. Heller further added that any other sites that formerly contained sculptures could be used in the future” after the first sentence of the eighth paragraph under Section C, Unfinished Business, Potential Site Locations for Public Art Installations.**

**The insertion of “loaned” between “four” and “sculptures,” elimination of “in the City’s long range plan that the Board had requested to,” insertion of “on the Board’s wish list to be” between “sculptures” and “purchased,” and the insertion of “d” after “purchase” to read as “purchased” in the third sentence of the first paragraph under Section D, New Business, Russell Thayer Application to Donate Sculpture *Wind Rapids*.**

Yeas: 5            Nays: 0

The motion carried

## C) Unfinished Business

### Map of Prioritized Locations for Public Art with Parks and Recreation Feedback

Sean Campbell informed the Board that he presented the map and list of prioritized locations for public art to the Parks and Recreation Board. The Parks and Recreation Board unanimously approved the prioritized site locations with the caveat that any art piece proposed within a park or along a trail must be reviewed and approved by them first before going to the City Commission for final approval.

Mr. Campbell also informed the PAB that six of the prioritized site locations fall within Mill Pond Historic District and therefore require review by the Historic District Commission.

Barbara Heller stated that it has been customary of the Board to forward proposed sites to the Parks and Recreation Board for review and further added that the Board would continue to do this in the future.

Motion by Monica Neville, seconded by Jason Eddleston to approve the map and list of prioritized potential public art site locations and forward the materials to the Historic District Commission for review.

Yeas: 5                      Nays: 0

The motion carried.

Rabbi Cohen asked what the map of the prioritized locations would accomplish if a sculpture proposed for a park would require Parks and Recreation approval anyway. Ms. Heller stated that the sites are not necessarily pre-approved and ready for an installation, but rather, pre-qualified by the Public Arts Board. The purpose of the map is to help give interested donors and lenders an idea of where the Board's interests are in the City of site locations in the city.

## D) New Business

### 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Birmingham Bloomfield Cultural Arts Awards

Ms. Heller announced that the Cultural Council of Birmingham Bloomfield (CCBB) in conjunction with †The Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center (BBAC), the Birmingham Eccentric and the Community House is seeking nominations for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Birmingham Bloomfield Cultural Arts Awards. She encouraged Board members to fill out

and submit applications nominating any artist who lives, works, or has impacted the Birmingham Eccentric reading area, which encompasses Birmingham, Bingham Farms, Beverly Hills, Bloomfield Township, and Franklin.

## **E) Committee Reports**

### **Public Arts Presentation by Rabbi Cohen**

Rabbi Cohen compiled a series of photos demonstrating various public art concepts that depart from the usual abstract sculpture. He stated that the concepts as shown in the photos are intended to generate possible ideas and to stimulate discussion as to how they could work in Birmingham.

One concept in particular that Rabbi Cohen presented was the parklet, which temporarily converts an on street parking space into a park, garden, or something else pedestrians may interact with. Rabbi Cohen proposed the idea of having parklets to add an artistic element to the streetscape. The Board expressed a collective interest in parklets. Ms. Ecker explained that the City leases on-street parking spaces to restaurants for dining decks and that perhaps the City Commission would consider adopting a similar program for the parklets. She also added that the outdoor parking decks are leased at the daily rate for the parking spaces they occupy.

Rabbi Cohen proposed creating a subcommittee to focus on a few sites for parklets or to identify sites for parklets, or something to that effect. Ms. Ecker suggested establishing a subcommittee to focus on several options, not just the parklets, as the Board had expressed interest in other art concepts in various spaces in the city.

The issue of funding was raised in regards to parklets. Ms. Ecker explained that some cities have sponsorship programs to raise money for various art projects. Ms. Ecker advised that the other Boards, such as the Multimodal Board and Advisory Parking Committee, would have to review and provide input on the idea as it falls within their purview.

Given the numerous directions the Board could go to enhance public spaces with art, the Board agreed that the creation of a subcommittee would allow them to refine and focus on several ideas.

Jason Eddleston suggested that the Board refrain from making a motion to establish a subcommittee until Mr. Campbell finished giving the presentation on the Alleys and Passages Plan.

Further action on this matter was suspended until after the Alleys and Passages Plan presentation.

### **Public Arts Board 2016 Annual Report**

Mr. Campbell presented the Public Arts Board 2016 Annual Report to the Board. The report discusses the following in detail: the approval of the Jay Lefkowitz sculpture; the updated procedure and application for reviewing public art; the updates to the existing CityScapes contracts (which resulted in Russell Thayer donating his piece to the City); the adoption of site and placement guidelines; and the identification of potential public art site locations. Mr. Campbell also presented the goals of the Public Arts Board for the coming year.

Ms. Heller asked whether it would be more appropriate call the potential public art sites "pre-approved locations." Mr. Campbell advised that "approved" might imply that the sites have been reviewed and inspected for various concerns by all necessary City Departments, which would be required for a proposed sculpture anyway. Ms. Ecker suggested calling them "pre-qualified" site locations instead. The Board agreed upon this name.

Ms. Heller asked the Board if the name "Art in Public Spaces" is broad enough. The consensus of the Board was that the name is fitting as it does not imply just sculptures.

Motion by Jason Eddleston, seconded by Monica Neville to approve the Public Arts Board 2016 Annual Report based on the discussed comments and changes and to forward it to the City Commission.

Yeas: 5            Nays: 0

### **Birmingham in Stitches**

Linda Wells confirmed that she would be volunteering in the event as one of the knitters.

Ms. Heller had requested that staff update the Birmingham in Stitches press release to contain photos from ~~2015~~ **the last two events**.

No other updates were given at this time.

## **Fundraiser**

Ms. Heller informed the Board that she submitted an application for the PAB and Cultural Council of Birmingham Bloomfield (CCBB) charity poker event. The event is proposed to take place at 5 Star Lanes in Sterling Heights on July 5 – 8, 2017 from 4 PM to 2 AM. Ms. Heller advised that volunteers are needed to work shifts of at least 4 hours. Volunteers must arrive to the bowling alley 15 minutes before their shifts begin. Ms. Heller stated that she would find out the exact times for the shifts once the application has been approved.

## **F) Communication**

### **Alleys and Passages Plan Presentation**

Mr. Campbell gave a brief summary of and presentation on the Alleys and Passages plan and its relation to the public arts program. He explained that alleys are primarily used for servicing businesses and vehicle circulation and passages are intended for pedestrians. He added that for the sake of public art, the Board need only concern itself with passages. Similarly, he explained that of the three different via types in the plan, Connecting Vias are the only ones recommended for aesthetic enhancements such as public art.

Ms. Ecker advised the Planning Board and Multimodal Board would also have jurisdiction in regards to how public art makes it way into these passages.

Mr. Campbell presented a map of the alleys and passages in the city. He proceeded to show some of examples of public art that were exemplified in the plan, such as colorful installations suspended between walls over a pedestrian passage.

Mr. Campbell presented a series of maps that resulted from an inventory of the Alleys and Passages plan in 2012. As demonstrated in the inventory, Stewart's Walkway (formerly Social Passage), Clark Hill Passage, and Edison Passage have been recommended for public art. Ms. Ecker added that other passages could be explored outside of these, but nonetheless, these are excellent ones to focus on. Mr. Campbell pointed out several terminating vistas on the map and explained that they are blank walls within passages that are envisioned to be enhanced as to draw pedestrians in. He added that public art would do well in these spots.

Mr. Eddleston asked whether any portions of the passages are privately owned. Mr. Campbell explained that most of the passages themselves are public, but the walls that abut them are private. He also noted that 2-dimensional art had been temporarily

installed on some of the walls for the DIA| Inside Out program and that could happen again in the future.

### **Public Art Subcommittee**

The Board resumed their discussion on the formation of a subcommittee. Ms. Ecker had sensed that the Board's primary interests were on parklets and alleys and passages. The Board had agreed that the subcommittee's focus would be on activating public spaces with art and that it would be called the Public Space Activation Subcommittee.

Motion by Rabbi Cohen, Seconded by Linda Wells to establish a subcommittee of the Public Arts Board to explore activating public spaces through use of public art.

Yeas: 5                      Nays: 0

The Board nominated the Monica Neville, Rabbi Cohen, and Jason Eddleston as the regular members of the subcommittee. Ms. Ecker advised the nominees to coordinate with staff to come up with a meeting date, time, and place.

### **Additional Communication**

Ms. Neville recalled an unfinished thought from the previous meeting regarding the new public plaza behind the Google building as envisioned in the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the N. Old Woodward parking structure. Ms. Neville inquired whether the RFP could be amended to require a wall, platform, or something to display public art in this area. Ms. Ecker indicated that it could so long as the City Commission supports the idea. The Board would have to formally make the request to the City Commission to include this in the RFP.

### **G) Public Comments**

No public comment.

### **H) Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.