

# Public Arts Board

Rooms 202 and 203 Birmingham City Hall – August 16, 2017

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Meeting called to order at 6:41 PM.

**A) Roll Call –**

**Members Present:** Rabbi Baruch Cohen, Monica Neville, Anne Ritchie, Linda Wells

**Student Members Present:** Celeste Demps-Simons

**Members Absent:** Jason Eddleston, Barbara Heller, Mary Roberts

**Student Members Absent:** Cecilia Trella

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

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

Motion by Monica Neville, seconded by Rabbi Baruch Cohen to approve the July 19, 2017 minutes.

Yeas: 4            Nays: 0

The motion carried.

**C) New Business**

**Proposed Sculpture Donation – President Ford Memorial Wolverine**

Sean Campbell presented a report on the proposed President Ford Memorial Wolverine sculpture. He explained that Douglas Radcliffe North submitted an application to the City on August 4, 2017 proposing to donate his sculpture for public installation. Mr. North indicated that he had donated two identical sculptures to the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum and Library where they are currently on display. Mr. North has proposed the area near the flagpole in front of City Hall as the permanent location for the sculpture. Additionally, a preliminary drawing of a limestone pedestal and bench was submitted with his application as a conceptual foundation.

Mr. Campbell advised that while the donor has proposed the proximity near the flagpole as the location for his sculpture, it is ultimately up to the Public Arts Board to recommend a location to the City Commission for approval. Additionally, because the area in front of City Hall is located in the City's Downtown Historic District, the sculpture would also be required to undergo review by the Historic District Commission (HDC) if the PAB recommends that location.

Linda Wells asked whether the applicant would be paying/providing the materials for the foundation and performing the installation. Mr. Campbell advised that if the sculpture became the City's property, it would be the City's responsibility to cover the costs of constructing a pad and installing the piece. It would, however, be the applicant's responsibility to transport the sculpture to the City.

It was the consensus of the Board that the area in front of City Hall by the flagpole would not be the best location for the sculpture. Monica Neville remarked that the perspective of the sculpture in this space would make it seem very small. Rabbi Cohen asked if any of Mr. North's wolverine sculptures had been installed outdoors. It was noted in the application that it had been placed outdoors for 11 years. Rabbi Cohen felt that because the piece commemorates President Ford that it should be placed in a prestigious location such as in City Hall, the Library, or another public building rather than outdoors.

Jana Ecker informed the Board that the City received communication from other communities that they were also in correspondence with Mr. North about a proposed donation of the same sculpture. Rabbi Cohen noted that the application states that Mr. North has created eight of these sculptures.

Anne Ritchie remarked that she thinks the sculpture is lovely and that there are many University of Michigan graduates in the community who would appreciate the tribute to the former president.

The discussion shifted back to determining a specific location for the sculpture. Ms. Wells echoed Rabbi Cohen's suggestion of possibly installing it in or around City Hall or the Baldwin Public Library. She also suggested the Birmingham Historical Museum on Maple Road. Ms. Ritchie liked the idea of having a sculpture that commemorates a political figure placed in a City building. The Board decided to hold off on making a motion to recommend approval of the sculpture until an appropriate location has been selected.

Ms. Ecker asked the Board if any members would like to volunteer to travel to see the sculpture to inspect it in person. Rabbi Cohen remarked that if the Board is not concerned with the current condition of the sculpture, then there would be no point in

inspecting it. The Board determined that an in-person review of the sculpture would not be necessary.

Ms. Ecker recommended that the Board postpone the approval of the sculpture until the next meeting to decide on a location. Ms. Ecker suggested that staff could explore City Hall, Baldwin Public Library, and other City buildings and take photos and create maps of possible location options. In the meantime, the application would be routed to all applicable City Departments for comments and instruction on how to proceed with reviewing the application.

Ms. Wells expressed her concern about other communities accepting one of his other wolverine sculptures. Her primary concern was that if the artist had plans to install duplicates of the sculpture in other communities in the metropolitan area, the sculpture in Birmingham would not have the same unique value. The Board directed staff to ask Mr. North if he has plans to install other editions of the sculpture in the region. Ms. Ritchie and Ms. Neville indicated that they were not concerned about the artist having duplicate sculptures in other communities.

Rabbi Cohen asked how the construction of the foundation and installation of the sculpture would be funded. Ms. Ecker advised that the Public Arts Board has been allocated \$10,000 to spend on any projects it determines necessary. Rabbi Cohen was concerned that \$10,000 would not be enough.

The Board requested staff to ask the applicant about the cost to construct the foundation, where the other eight sculptures are located, and if he has plans to put them on display elsewhere.

## **E) Committee Reports**

### **Public Space Activation Subcommittee Report**

Mr. Campbell explained the Public Space Activation Subcommittee Met on August 2, 2017. The focus of their discussion was on the creation of a social media platform for the general Public Arts Board content and adoption of specific guidelines to control posts specifically related to the envisioned Birmingham Kindness Rocks Project. Prior to coming up with implementation plan for the proposed Facebook and Instagram accounts, Mr. Campbell reviewed and provided a summary of the City's Social Media Policy. He advised that any approved social media tools that push content on behalf of the City must be consistent with the provisions of this policy. It was discussed at this meeting that specific provision language could be created to control the posting of content relating to the Birmingham Kindness Rocks Project. Additionally, a member of the Public Arts Board or subcommittee thereof could be charged with administrating the

social media pages. This role would come with its specific responsibilities, such as drafting a monthly schedule of announcements to be reviewed and approved prior to posting. Additional guidelines could be prescribed to limit the frequency of posts and control the sharing of content from outside sources.

The Subcommittee also focused its discussion on developing an implementation plan for the Birmingham Kindness Rocks Project. After social media guidelines are adopted, the next step would be to begin planning for a community kick-off meeting. At this meeting, project leaders would demonstrate how rocks are to be properly painted and how social media would be incorporated. It was envisioned that designated "rock cluster gardens" could advertise the program further by reaching out to passersby and park users. Informative and decorative signage could also be incorporated into these sites to promote the project further. Attendees of the kick-off meeting could be divided into several groups to design rocks based on a chosen theme to place at their designated location. Some possible locations for the designated rock cluster gardens, subject to Parks and Recreation Board approval, include Barnum Park, Booth Park, Linden Park, Pembroke Park, Poppleton Park, and Quarton Lake Park.

Monica Neville wanted to ensure that there would be one Facebook and Instagram account to promote content for both the Public Arts Board and Birmingham Kindness Rocks Project.

Ms. Neville stated that she would like for there to be a control on the frequency of posts, adding that putting together a schedule prior to posting would provide time to ensure the posts are consistent with the brand. The responsible administrator would be expected to post spontaneous contents without PAB approval but with a clear understanding of the Board's expectations.

Ms. Neville prepared and explained a flow chart demonstrating the steps to organize a community kick off meeting to formally launch the project. She explained that she put this flowchart together to illustrate it clearly so that fellow PAB members would be on the same page.

Rabbi Cohen asked whether the next step was to get the social media accounts approved by the City Commission. Mr. Campbell advised that the next step would be to take the concept to the Parks and Recreation Board since the plan is to make use of public parks. The social media page and project concept would be simultaneously reviewed by the City Commission.

Ms. Ecker explained that the City is hiring a Communications Director. All social media ideas will go to this liaison for approval. This person could also monitor the social media accounts alongside the designated PAB social media administrator.

Rabbi Cohen asked whether the board needs to vote to have a social media presence. Ms. Ecker recommended that for now the Board make a motion to request a Facebook and Instagram presence and take it through the process to get it authorized.

Motion by Ann Ritchie, seconded by Linda Wells, to recommend that the PAB have a social media presence on its own platforms to promote public art in the community.

Yeas: 4            Nays: 0

The motion carried.

Ms. Neville added that after approval, the Board should work to get the Facebook and Instagram accounts up and running well advance of the community kick-off meeting.

Mr. Campbell added that he noticed that many communities' Facebook accounts publish their social media policies directly on the page. Ms. Ritchie added that it is common for social media accounts to place their policies at the top of the page so that visitors see it upon entering the site or prior to posting anything as a guest.

Mr. Campbell asked the Board whether they were content with the recommended provision language to regulate the posting and sharing of content related to the Birmingham Kindness Rocks Project. Ms. Neville suggested changing "The administrators of the Birmingham Rocks Project Facebook account..." to read "The administrators of the **Public Arts Board social media accounts...**" Rabbi Cohen suggested changing the second sentence of the provision to read "Should the responsible administrator determine **that** any such content in the form of a written post, an image, or any other type of shareable media in in conflict **with** these provisions, the post will be removed." Rabbi Cohen additionally suggested the removal of the last two sentences of the recommended language as they explicitly pertain to Instagram and are already implicated in the preceding sentences.

The Board decided to table any discussion about hashtags for the project until a later meeting.

Motion by Monica Neville, second by Anne Ritchie to accept the language with the discussed changes and forward the rock project to the Parks and Recreation Board for review.

Yeas: 4            Nays: 0

The motion carried.

**F) Communication**

**Outgoing Student Member Sarah Evans**

Mr. Campbell advised that Student Representative Sarah Evans had tendered her resignation from the Public Arts Board (PAB). He mailed her a thank-you letter on behalf of the City and PAB for committing her time and service to the Board.

**Birmingham in Stitches**

Rabbi Cohen inquired how he could get volunteers signed up. Anne Ritchie explained that if he knows of any interested volunteers that he put them in touch with her. Rabbi Cohen also asked how the knitting is done so he could explain it to potential volunteers if necessary. Ms. Ritchie explained that volunteers would be assigned an object for which they would pre-knit a panel that would be fastened around the object on-site.

Mr. Campbell informed Ms. Ritchie that City of Troy contacted him to see if they could obtain the contact list for the Birmingham In Stitches project as they were planning for a similar event in their community. Ms. Ritchie expressed that she did not feel comfortable sharing this information as she solicited it from each of the individual volunteers. She added that she would be more than happy to call them to discuss how she went about getting volunteers and share any other additional information about the project.

**G) Public Comments**

Cindy Rose suggested that Board reach out to NEXT Senior Citizen Center for possible volunteers.

**H) Adjournment**

With no further business being evident, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.