

## **Amherst Public Art Commission**

Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2017

Members in Attendance: Emma Ayres, Eric Broudy, Amy Crawley, Daniel Grant, William Kaizen, Ellen Keiter, and Rene Theberge.

Meeting called to order. The September meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

### **Chairman's Report**

Rene sent a letter to state Senator Rosenberg and Representative Goldstein-Rose requesting assistance to create a Percent for Art fund in Amherst.

Rene and Amy submitted a \$1,400 grant request to the Amherst Cultural Council to have four power boxes painted in town. The amount will cover artist stipends and supplies. The Commission will hear an answer in January.

### **Cultural District**

Rene noted the Cultural District is plodding along slowly. Eric put forth bylaws for the steering committee to consider. The town is the "holder" of the Cultural District, which was created in agreement with the BID to manage it. The Massachusetts Cultural Commission is currently revising guidelines for state cultural districts, which has further slowed the process.

### **XTCA Cross Town Contemporary Art**

Eva Fierst, educator at the University Museum of Contemporary Art (UMCA), joined the meeting to present the Cross Town Contemporary Art public art project. The art will be installed in spring 2018 and remain on view through fall 2018 (six month venue). The three site locations are: Kendrick Park, Frat Green, and Haigis Mall. Eva is also looking at an open space area on North Pleasant Street. Ellen suggested that Realignment Park be considered as a site possibility.

The project theme is inclusivity and sustainability. Several artists have committed to the project: Roberly Bell, Sarah Braman, Collective LOK, Naomi Darling and Darrel Petit, Tom Friedman, Joseph Halvorson, Jean Shin, and Rob Swainston. Eva sent out a call for local artist proposals; dependent on budget, she hopes to add at least two local artists.

Eva shared the project budget. She has applied to the UMass Chancellor's Fund for support, and the BID will contribute some funds. Other money will come from the UMCA's operating budget and the Berkshire Taconic Fund ART. Eva asked for recommendations for additional funding sources.

In conjunction with the project, UMCA will present an exhibition by the featured artists.

Daniel inquired about insurance and maintenance. Eva said the project is sponsored by

UMass, although she was unclear about insurance on town property or maintenance responsibilities.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Daniel reported a balance of \$657.28

### **Percent for Art**

Prior to the meeting, Eric distributed an updated Percent for Arts timeline with projected/anticipated dates. Rene will submit the document to the Town Manager. Eric commented that the Commission is now waiting for the town to decide on a building project and for the state house to pass special legislation.

William asked who will manage/administer the Percent for Art projects. He noted the enormity of the task and that it could be risky to rely only on volunteers. Ellen agreed and hopes there will be money in the Percent for Art budget to hire project managers, especially for the first installation.

### **Downtown Fire House Arts Group**

Emma said her group had their first meeting since July. Julian Lustig, an entrepreneur who helps local startups, is assisting her with drafting a business plan and collecting data. The group will launch a monthly live music series in January (Full Disclosure was a successful fringe festival). They've identified the Pacific Lodge as an ideal venue, although a ramp must be installed for ADA compliancy. They will also approach the Monkey Bar and other restaurants/bars that already host live music. The goal is to build an audience and demonstrate that an active arts program in town is a viable one. The live music series will allow the group to collect valuable data needed for future support, such as attendance numbers and restaurant revenue. Natick serves as a valuable model.

### **Public Art Site Condition Report**

Emma asked about the Commission's limitations around fundraising. Rene will check with the town council. He suggested we may want to establish a Friends of Amherst Public Art group. We can apply for grants (the Amherst Cultural Council has supported the Commission in the past). Ellen will research if the Commission can apply to the Community Preservation Act for art restoration funds.

### **Town Hall Gallery**

Amy publicized a call for artists for the 2018/19 gallery schedule. The deadline for submission is mid-January. There has been no word on getting improved lighting in the gallery (\$1,100 estimate).

### **Website**

Amy and Rene met with "Mike 2.0" in the town IT department. They updated information on the exhibition submission form, removed the donation button, and made changes to the online map. The Commission can update pictures on the site

banner (three to five images) and can change the icon buttons. Amy will ask about building an archive page for past exhibitions.

There are five boxes of the public art walking tour brochures upstairs in the Town Manager's office. Rene reminded Commission members to visit their assigned sites two-to-three times a year to replenish brochures. Eric suggested bringing brochures to local real estate offices. William agreed to distribute.

Meeting adjourned 1:30 pm

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Next meeting Thursday, November 30 at 12:00 noon.