

Amherst Public Art Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2017

Members in Attendance: Eric Broudy, Amy Crawley, Daniel Grant, Ellen Keiter, and Rene Theberge. Guest William Kaizen, a candidate for the open seat on the Commission, also attended the meeting.

Meeting called to order. The August meeting minutes were voted on and approved with one correction: it was the downtown firehouse group—not Eric—who recommended a trip to Natick.

Chairman's Report

Poetry Windows

- Rene has not heard a response from Steven Brewer.

Cultural District

- Rene reported that the Cultural District's steering committee met recently and hope to schedule another public event this fall to further broaden their reach. (The steering committee has \$1,000 left from the grant that needs to be spent.) The July networking event was a success with 200 people in attendance and lots of contact information collected. The plan at the next gathering is to honor individuals who've received grants from the Amherst Cultural Council, a local affiliate of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Peter McQuillan will set up a meeting for people interested in helping. Rene believes this will become a regular biannual series.
- The steering committee also discussed future management of the Cultural District. Currently, there are no sub committees and the same small group of people do all the work. Jeff Kravtiz proposed a preliminary operating structure; the committee will use his outline to get the Cultural District up and functioning.
- The Cultural District ordered five signs to be mounted along the main street thoroughfares entering the district. The installation was stalled by the town sign committee, who also wants to mount welcome to Amherst signs. Thanks to pressure from the Town Manager, the DPW will install the Cultural District's four signs as soon as possible (the 5th sign will be kept in case of damage). The signs will be placed at the following locations: on the west wall of Amherst Coffee on Amity Street; at the corner of College and Dickinson Streets near the Amherst Women's Club; at the north end of Realignment Park; and on private property on North Pleasant Street at Collective Copies (above their sign). Eric recommended that a representative from the Public Art Commission be present when the hole is dug at Realignment Park so as not to interfere with any future

projects. The Commission voted unanimously to allow the Cultural District sign to be sited in Realignment Park in the northeast corner (to the left of the “cow sculpture”).

Treasurer Report

- Daniel reported a balance of \$2,052.28.

Percent for Art

- Town Manager Paul Bockelman joined the Commission meeting briefly to report that a vote on the special act for Percent for Art was slated on the Select Board’s Monday agenda.
- Eric announced that the office of the Massachusetts Attorney General had placed article 28 on hold pending special legislation.
- The Commission reviewed the timeline presented by Eric and Ellen. Daniel commented that the budget should be fleshed out more. The timeline mentions 5% for maintenance, but this is a one-time payment, not in perpetuity. Eric said the 5% could go into a general maintenance fund that would be drawn on when needed and not specifically for that particular artwork. The art should last as long as the building/property it is in/sited on. Daniel inquired about insurance, which Eric said will be under the town’s auspices as artwork will be located on town property. Daniel cautioned that it will get costly to pay three finalists and asked if the jurors and project manager will be paid as well. Eric answered that the total project budget covers administrative costs as well as fabrication expenses. The Percent for Art bylaw will allow the town to commission signature permanent artworks. Daniel believes the public could get bored; he would rather see temporary art. Rene observed that the presented timeline contained no specific times. Eric and Ellen will specify how many months/years out to schedule each step. The Public Art Commission will revisit the timeline and vote at the October meeting. Once approved, it was agreed that the timeline should go to the Town Manager as he/she will be part of the approval process and therefore needs to be aware of his/her expected responsibilities.

Public Art Condition

- Ellen stated that it is nearly impossible to address the poor condition of certain artworks without money. She asked if the Commission can request town funds be budgeted in the next fiscal year? Can the Commission run a GoFundMe campaign? Rene said the BID and private individuals underwrote the \$10,000 restoration of Portal. One option is to apply to the Amherst Cultural Council, which has historically provided grants around \$1,300 in the past.
- Amy said there are other opportunities to consider, such as applying for a grant to commission artists to paint utility boxes in town. She also noted the piano project in Boston, which was recently adapted and installed at UMass (juried student art painted on three pianos located in high traffic

areas on campus). The Commission unanimously voted to submit an application to the Amherst Cultural Council seeking money to hire artists to paint utility boxes, which are jointly owned by the town and the utility companies. A jury will select the artists.

Downtown Firehouse Arts Group

- Amy, reporting for Emma, said the firehouse arts group will commence regular meetings next week. They are currently researching statistics on how much money can be brought into a town by an arts center. They are also addressing creative ways to generate and sustain community interest in a firehouse arts center.

Town Hall Gallery

- To date, Amy has received one applicant for the next jury pool.
- The current gallery artist has sold two paintings.

Other Business

- Rene reminded Commission members to disseminate the map brochures at their assigned locations.
- Discussion on Public Art Commission candidates to recommend to Town Manager.

Meeting adjourned 1:30 pm