

Amherst Public Art Commission Meeting – June 21, 2017 – Town Hall

Present: Eric Broudy, Ellen Keiter, Bonnie Isman, Rene Theberge, Amy Crawley, Dan Grant, Jim Wald

Rene Theberge started the meeting at 12:05 pm.

1. Minutes of the May meeting were approved.

2. Chairman's Report: Rene took the replacement plaque for the 'Portal' to the DPW office and hopes to see it installed shortly. Dave Ziomek did not provide any news on the new splash park in Groff Park which is a possible site for public art. Jim Wald offered to follow up with Dave.

Rene distributed a detailed proposal from Steve Brewer regarding replacement technology for the defunct 'Poetry Windows.' Rene, Steve, and Sean Hannon met to determine that the proposed solution was indeed a feasible approach. However, two pieces are still missing: first, someone or a group is needed to coordinate the poetry, images, or messages that would be displayed and second, on-going funding to keep the video display alive. Several members questioned why this proposal should be a high priority for our time and resources. We discussed a variety of alternatives, including how to decommission the original installation and reuse the site. Rene will continue to talk with Steve and contact the BID/Chamber to see if they might have an interest in using the site.

Rene discussed the UMass art loan proposal with Tony Maroulis who said not to expect anything to happen soon. The whole University/Town committee is being re-organized.

Art in the Town Room. Ellen reported that the condition of the fabric wall hanging is OK, except for some possible paint loss and edge tears. We don't have documentation on its original condition in 2003 for comparison. The artist is a local resident. Dan agreed to draft a plan for handling the relocation, storage, or deaccession of artworks owned by the Town.

Cultural District. Eric reported that discussion continues on the location of cultural district signs. A brochure promoting the district is being drafted. Everyone in the arts community of Amherst will be invited to an open meeting with food, displays, surveys, and talks on July 25 at Amherst Works. They hope to identify local artists and to start building an active arts community.

Arts Council discussion. We returned to the topic of expanding the commission into an Arts Council with paid staff. Eric pointed out that Boston, Cambridge, Northampton and Easthampton follow this model. Opinions were mixed. No agreement was reached. Eric and Amy identified the following sites as needing to be prioritized for action: Realignment Park, the Dickinson/Frost Dialogue, the mural on CVS, the Poetry Windows, and creation of new works on electrical boxes, benches, and a mural on Triangle Street. No action was taken.

3. Treasurer. Dan reported \$728.28 in the account. Rene mentioned that two invoices are in line for payment.

4. % for Art. Eric distributed a flow chart on artist selection for public art that he received from Cambridge. They strongly recommend hiring a manager for projects funded by % for Art. If approved, the Jones Library expansion would be the first town construction project to include public art. Eric also attended a conference organized by New England Foundation for the Arts which he found very helpful.

5. Public Art Site Condition – no report.

6. Amherst Fire Station. Eric reported on a community event held to drum up support for re-use of the old fire station as an arts center. Town Manager Bockelman seems supportive of the concept, if the town decides to abandon the building.

7. Gallery. The July exhibit is coming in soon. No news on lighting improvements. Rene thanked Amy and Ellen for their work on the gallery exhibits.

8. Social media. Amy reported that the Instagram account is getting more traffic than the Facebook page.

9. Mapping project. Bonnie shared the printer's proof of the revised Amherst Art Walking Tour map. 10,000 copies will be printed by Hadley Printing of Holyoke with funds from the Cultural Council and the BID. Rene will check with the BID about storing the boxes. A new person(s) will have to take over distribution to hotels, museums, and tourism centers. The Cultural District staff may be able to help out. Bonnie will provide a list of past distribution locations. The pdf version of the map will be posted on our webpage and will be shared with college and university admissions offices.

10. Other: At least one person has applied to serve on APAC. Ellen and Emma have both volunteered to takeover the meeting minutes—Thank You! We agreed that the Hampshire County Regional Tourism Council can use photos from the Art Map for their new brochure promoting Hampshire County, as long as they provide a credit line. Eric toured a vacant building downtown that might provide space for artists' studios. Rene thanked Bonnie for working on the commission for six years. ;)

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.

Submitted by Bonnie Isman

Next meeting (if room is available): July 20 at noon, August 31 and September 21