

Amherst Public Art Commission

March 13, 2018

Members in Attendance: Eric Broudy, Amy Crawley, William Kaizen, Ellen Keiter, and Rene Theberge

Approval of February meeting minutes postponed until April meeting.

Chairman's Report

Keith Toffling, a professional photographer and curator for Arts Nights Plus, presented his proposal for new murals on the Bistro 63/Monkey Bar building (along the alleyway), which he hopes to install this summer. Although plans are still in the conceptual phase, Keith envisions engaging three to four artists to create separate murals that are thematically connected. He intends to keep the cat and monkey murals as they are popular. He will explore crowd funding or grant opportunities and plans to initiate an online poll to ask the community what they'd like to see. Rene cautioned there may be a town regulation regarding images on the exterior of a building not related to the use of that building. He recommended Keith check with permit administrator Jennifer Gannett. Keith will do an open call to invite many artists. He is unclear on the jurying process at this time.

The Commission learned that, about three years ago, Ian McCree painted the alley cat mural currently displayed on the Bistro 63/Monkey Bar building (and was arrested in the night for doing so). Ian was 16 at the time; he is now a student at Hampshire College.

XCTA Update

Loretta Yarlow informed Rene that the university's facilities department will assist with installation of the various public art projects. The exhibition will open this summer, although an exact date has not been determined.

Cultural Council Grant

Amy spoke to the point person who oversaw the electrical box paintings in Northampton. He shared with her his call for artists, release forms, the types of paints used, etc. His artist application requirements included four images of past work, a short description of the concept, a sketch of the concept, and the artist's CV. He noted that upon completion, each artist released his/her image to the town; it is the town's sole decision how to address damage or defacement (paint over or fix, for example). He worked with the Northampton DPW but did not research ownership of the boxes nor did he reach out to nearby merchants.

Amy and Rene will create a working timeline with a September 2018 installation date in Amherst.

Phool Patti

Phool Patti is an independent social enterprise working around the world to promote the image of Pakistan through its unique folk artistry. The Donahue Institute approached the BID looking for a project in Amherst (artists will be here for a week in June). They primarily paint vehicles, particularly trucks and buses. Suggestions for town included the Amherst trolley, one of the electrical boxes, or as replacement for one of the Youth Action Coalition murals. Donahue claims to have "creative" ways of funding.

Hampshire Student Mural

The Commission endorsed Hampshire student Eli Shalan's concept in general and will help guide him through the town process. Rene will request further information, including intended location.

Treasurer's Report

Daniel absent. No update.

Percent for Art

Eric did not receive a response from Town Manager Paul Bockelman to his inquiry about the status of the state legislature.

Public Art Site Condition Report

No update.

Town Hall Gallery

Amy handed Rene four checks (3 for new artists, 1 for a sale). Commission members reviewed artist gallery guidelines. Edits included several grammatical changes and to make checks payable to Amherst Public Art Commission. Amy added a sentence noting the third floor gallery landing is NOT handicap accessible.

A separate document, Installation Guidelines, lists the items artists need to supply. They are no longer permitted to stick anything on the walls; labels must attach to frames. Amy will omit references to "center lines" and replace with wording that the Commission reserves the right to adjust any work inappropriately hung/displayed (not in accordance with #4 that artwork should be centered at eye level for viewers).

There is no update on an upgraded gallery lighting system.

Web/Social Media

Amy noted that photos have now replaced the gray icons on the Commission's web page. She can use the site to receive applications for the electrical boxes.

Other Business

Eric shared his proposed policy to encourage private developers to consider public art on future building projects. There was discussion how to support, not discourage, developers. The Commission agreed to wait until after the Charter vote on March 27 before submitting to the policy to the Select Board.

Eric is willing to chair the Commission for one year after Rene retires in June, although he will be out of town for two months in the winter. Bill may also be interested in chairing; he is awaiting word whether he will be away for a semester next year as his wife received a Fulbright. Rene encouraged Commission members in their recruiting efforts to fill the empty and soon-to-be-empty seats.

Amy asked if any town committees are slated for dissolution if the charter passes. Rene did not think so.

Next three meeting dates: April 19, May 17, and June 21.

Meeting adjourned, 1:40 pm.