



City of Sebastopol
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APPROVED MINUTES

PUBLIC ARTS COMMITTEE
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF November 16, 2016
10:30 a.m.

SEBASTOPOL CITY HALL
7120 BODEGA AVENUE

PUBLIC ARTS COMMITTEE:

The notice of the meeting was posted on November 09, 2016.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Gordon called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present:	Chair Gordon, and Committee Members Arnold and Mills-Thysen
Absent:	Committee Member Persinger (excused) Committee Member Vertz (unexcused)
Staff:	Kenyon Webster, Planning Director Rebecca Mansour, Planning Technician

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

4. PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Director Webster updated the Committee on the following:

- Last night the City Council adopted our new General Plan. This comes as a huge milestone after more than two years of public process.
- A request relating to code amendments on height and parking for Hotel Sebastopol was on that agenda as well, however the Council postponed action so that they could negotiate with the applicant on a number of things including a request by the applicant for some kind of financial assistance.
- Hotel Sebastopol will be bringing their project to the Design Review Board.
- Hotel Sebastopol will be bringing their art proposal to the Public Arts Committee as required as well.
- The CVS project is hoping to open its store mid-January.

The Committee asked questions of Director Webster.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA: There were none.

6. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: There were none.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR: There were none.

8. REGULAR AGENDA: There were none.

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. REVIEW OF PUBLIC ART PROPOSALS: Three artists were selected to proceed in the review process for a public art project in Sebastopol. The Committee received presentations at two meetings on November 2, 2016. At this meeting, the Committee will discuss the review process and proposals. A recommendation decision is expected at the Committee meeting of December 7, 2016.

The Committee asked questions of Director Webster.

Committee member Arnold commented:

- Thanked staff for this process and for the evening meeting on November 2, which he found to be very useful.
- A number of people have approached him and thanked him for this public art process.
- One man expressed wanting to see all three projects receive funding and expressed an interest in leading fundraising efforts.
- We have received a wide range of comments.
- One of the proposals has received overwhelming feedback compared to the other two.
- Has looked through, read and listened to each and every comment received.

Chair Gordon asked Committee member Arnold if he felt that there was a consensus towards one of the candidates and commented that he did not have that feeling.

Committee member Arnold stated that he generally did feel that there was a consensus towards one of the candidates. He then shared a rating sheet that he created to help himself rank the proposals.

Committee member Arnold reminded the Committee that these funds are coming from developers per our one percent for art requirement.

Chair Gordon asked why that was important.

Committee member Arnold responded that it is important to remember the source of the money.

Chair Gordon strongly disagreed on the source of the money being important.

Chair Gordon suggested adding 'Appropriateness' to the rating sheet.

Committee member Mills-Thysen commented that appropriateness could be measured by 'for the city generally' as well as 'identity (does it reflect the city)' and 'reputation (from outside city)'.

Chair Gordon agreed.

Committee member Arnold agreed that those could be added to the rating sheet.

Committee member Mills-Thysen commented that safety is very important and suggested adding 'Safety' to the rating sheet.

Committee member Arnold agreed however noting that he prefers to not think about safety, unless it is super obvious, because people will do things and it is hard to outthink all of that.

Committee member Mills-Thysen stated that safety is important and should be a consideration.

Committee member Arnold added that safety considerations can make design more difficult.

Chair Gordon agreed with Committee member Mills-Thysen in that safety should be a consideration.

Committee member Mills-Thysen expressed appreciating the rating sheet as drafted by Committee member Arnold and asked if the Committee could build on it.

The Committee agreed.

Committee member Mills-Thysen commented that the cost and complexity of maintenance is very important. She added that durability and longevity are also important.

Chair Gordon commented:

- The rating sheet is valuable and sets up a conversational starting point.
- Would hate to undervalue what the art itself is going to do, or does do, in its position.
- Has never heard of considering a return on investment when looking at a public art piece before.
- Don't under value what the actual artwork and how it represents the city, the community, the people that live in the city and the history of the city as being really important, if not the most important.
- No one piece will be perfect.
- Ancillary problems are a part of public art; they are a part of anything.
- The very essence of what the art is doing in the community is the paramount criteria for selection.
- The reputation of an artist is important but should be secondary to the actual artwork that is being presented.
- A lot of the comments received focused on a particular artist and their resume and less so on the actual artwork.
- The City will soon have enough money to do this process again.
- This is a first shot, not a one shot.
- This is an exciting process.
- Looking forward to hearing how each Committee members feels about each of the proposals.
- Surprised by the levelheadedness of the responses that he's heard from members of the community.

Committee Member Mills-Thysen commented:

- We don't all agree on what the deciding priorities should be.
- The piece itself and the value of the art are very important.
- Likes to think about what a piece says about the city, what it does for the tone of the city and what it says about the city from the outside.
- Practical physical things like the long-term look and integrity of a piece are important.
- A lot of the elements raised by Committee member Arnold are important too.
- Likes the idea of doing all three of the pieces.
- Perhaps the Committee can choose one and see what funding may come through for the other two.
- We should want to involve and engage the community in public art.
- Wants exploration of public fundraising for the other two pieces to be considered as an option.
- Expressed having ideas about doing all three of the pieces over time.
- Mr. Kahn's willingness to change the shape and location of his piece is important.
- Ms. Sowell has an alternate location listed.

Chair Gordon asked how the Committee felt about automatically folding in the unselected artists with their original proposals for a future competition.

Committee member Mills-Thysen responded that that would be okay, however, she strongly wished to consider exploration of all three as part of this process, in response to members of the public and in partner with potential efforts to privately fundraise.

Chair Gordon responded that that was one person's comment, not a mandate. He noted that comments like that are common in every public art process.

Committee member Arnold commented:

- Wouldn't want to put the artist and their proposals in the position to be rejected twice out of hand.
- Just like this time, a call for artists should be done.
- Hopes that more local artists will apply.
- The unselected artists can resubmit their proposals, or submit new ones, if they choose.

Chair Gordon asked Committee member Arnold what his reasoning was for wanting more local artists to apply as it was not one of the Committee's stated goals.

Committee member Arnold responded:

- It is wonderful that we have such a wealth of artists in this County.
- Wished that it had been limited to local artists from the onset.
- You get more for your money when going with a local artist.
- The process is more convenient for a local artist.
- It is about honoring the artists who are willing to live here and work here.

Chair Gordon responded that the goal is to create a public art piece for Sebastopol, not necessarily to create a work opportunity for local artists. He then expressed a concern as to why selecting a local artist is such a priority to Committee member Arnold.

Committee member Arnold responded that living and working here is a challenge for an artist. He noted that, based on past discussions, his was a minority opinion.

Committee member Mills-Thysen reiterated her comment about their priorities being different.

Chair Gordon commented that it is good to have such a diverse group of ideas on the Committee.

The Committee agreed to hold their comments on the individual proposals until their meeting on December 7.

Chair Gordon commented that it is good to set priorities in terms of process and expressed a wish to have had more public participation.

It is important that we encourage public participation for future calls.

The Committee agreed to complete their own independent ranking of the proposals prior to their meeting on December 7. Staff will create and distribute a revised version of the rating sheet that was drafted by Committee member Arnold. This will provide a starting point for Committee discussions on December 7.

Chair Gordon commented that in the event of a tie or split vote, it may make sense to have a representative of the Committee go before the Council to explain the Committee's process and outcome.

The Committee agreed to a special start time of 9:30 a.m. for their meeting on December 7.

Committee member Mills-Thysen expressed a concern with the number of meetings Committee member Persinger had been able to attend.

Director Webster stated that he would convey the concern to Committee member Persinger.

Committee member Mills-Thysen suggested adding 'durability' under 'Craftsmanship' to the rating sheet.

Committee member Mills-Thysen commented that safety is very important and suggested adding 'Safety' and 'Mutability' to the rating sheet.

Each Committee member agreed to sort and review the public comments that had been received independently prior to their meeting on December 7.

10. REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEE/STAFF: There were none.

11. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: There were none.

12. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Gordon adjourned the meeting of the Sebastopol Public Arts Committee at 11:54 a.m. to the regular Public Arts Committee Meeting to be held December 07, 2016 at 9:30 a.m., at the City Hall Conference Room, 7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kenyon Webster
Planning Director