

MINUTES
PUBLIC ART COMMISSION
Thursday, January 17, 2008
Palo Alto Civic Center
250 Hamilton Avenue
Council Conference Room
7:00 p.m.

Commissioners present: Ron Cooper, Terry Acebo-Davis, Laura Deem, Paula Kirkeby, Einar Sunde
Commissioners absent: Karen Frankel, David Negrin
Staff present: Linda Craighead, Staff Liaison, Co-Director Arts & Culture
Darlene Katsanes, Program Asst., Arts & Culture
Council Liaison: John Barton

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Cooper.
ROLL CALL

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY – Commissioner welcomed new Commissioner, Einar Sunde.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Minutes of November 15, 2007 and January 14, 2008 approved as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT – Commission reviewed the financial report.

ACTION

CALIFORNIA AVENUE SCULPTURE PROJECT

Chair Cooper introduced internationally acclaimed artist Bruce Beasley. He is one of twenty artists worldwide commissioned to create an artwork for the Olympics in Beijing, China. Beasley presented a proposal for a sculpture on California Avenue, a work that references cliffs and mountains in nature. The 3-dimensional sculpture has the following dimensions: 12-1/2 feet tall, 10-1/2 ft on one side and 11 feet wide at widest point. Material is granite from China, and maintenance free. The surface finish is light brush hammered. Any aggressive paint remover can be used to clean the granite. It can also be sand blasted or wire brushed. Beasley believes the simple geometric shapes of the sculpture grouped together arrive at complex relationships for the viewer. Beasley stated that the interlocking blocks with tumbled blocks at the base of the sculpture give it a sense of connection with the earth and a geological feeling. Sculpture is cut out of one block of granite. Commissioner Davis asked about how the artist would prefer the sculpture to be lit. Beasley prefers that the lighting be ambient, lit by floods on plaza level, not poles. Light levels need to be studied at this site. Beasley proposal included an option for up to five blocks for seating, smooth-surface finished, to be installed nearby sculpture.

Commission had questions of the timing of California Avenue streetscape project. Kirkeby wants to know what type of surface the City is planning for the site. Beasley is flexible with hardscape or concrete paving. Seismic issues will need to be addressed. Beasley will provide engineered drawings, shipping of granite from China, and transport of sculpture from Oakland to site, and will supervise installation. Installation will require a crane, and he can recommend a crane operator he has worked with successfully. The Commission will need to cover cost of installation. Beasley stated that he is honored to do this work for Palo Alto, and that this sculpture for a commercial developer would be twice the price. Beasley said that he's at the point of his career that he's more interested in where his sculptures go, and the environment they are in, rather than making money.

Vice Chair Kirkeby stated that Beasley has concerns about the costs because the material costs have increased in the last few years. Beasley stated that the primary part of sculpture is \$125,000.00, the carved

base that the sculpture fits into is \$40,000.00, and seating is \$20,000 for a total of \$185,000.00. The Commission discussed the project budget and agreed that they would need to pay the artist over a few years.

Council Liaison Barton arrived at 7:48 pm.

Motion: Move to pay Bruce Beasley \$75,000, and discuss fundraising for additional funds. Chair Cooper amended the motion to \$80,000.00.

MOVED: Kirkeby; Seconded: Deem.

Motion was discussed. Craighead stated the need for the Commission to be cognizant of the impact to the budget. In this budget year the Commission can only commit available funds (to-date \$96,329.44). If the Council in 08-09 did not approve CIP funds for the Commission this would leave the sculpture half paid for, resulting in a shortfall. Commission receives a budget of \$50,000 a year, but the monies cannot be appropriated until Council approves the City recommended budget for the Commission each year. Approving funds for this project will set the financial path for the next few years for the Commission. The Commission asked Barton's advice on the City's budget for the coming years. Barton stated that he cannot predict the economy. Beasley said he will be flexible if the budget changes if there is a shortfall. Craighead cautioned the Commission to keep enough working funds for the unforeseen. Kirkeby asked Beasley if he would be flexible to receive payments over a few years. Beasley is willing to receive \$80,000 now, second payment of \$55,000 in July 2008, and \$50,000 in July 2009. Kirkeby said that the monies for five benches could be donated or supported by five families or businesses. Commissioner Acebo-Davis expressed reservations about leaving the upcoming Commissioners with a smaller budget for a few years.

Chair Cooper restated motion.

Motion: Commission to approve sculpture proposal by Bruce Beasley and allocate \$80,000 to be paid now, followed by another payment of \$55,000 in July 2008, and a final payment of \$50,000 in July 2009, for a total payment of \$185,000, contingency being how our budget supports the proposal, with a commitment to work together on budget issues if they arise.

MOVED: Cooper; Seconded: Deem: Ayes: Unanimous.

Next steps: Craighead will check with Public Works regarding timing of the California Avenue Streetscape Project.

CALIFORNIA AVENUE UNDERPASS

Craighead reported on recent damage to the underpass mural. Commission agreed they would like a fresh start with a new mural. Chair Cooper led discussion on options to create a new mural at this site. Commissioner Sunde recommended using tiles like he's seen used in New York. Commission discussed coating the new mural with the same kind of graffiti coating used on the utility mural project. Cooper will talk with the public school system regarding student involvement with this mural project. One idea is that every school child in Palo Alto would create a tile and these tiles would line the underpass. Cooper stated his hope that the materials for this project be donated.

Next step: Commission asked to come back to next meeting with ideas for this site. Staff will get a bid for graffiti coating. Sunde will get information regarding mural projects using tile in New York.

PUBLIC ART FOR SAN FRANCISQUITO CREEK STORM WATER PUMP STATION

Subcommittee reported on artist selection of project artist for the San Francisquito Creek Storm Water Pump Station. Artist Ceevah Sobel was chosen for this project.

Motion: Move to accept artist Ceevah Sobel for project artist.

MOVED: Cooper; Seconded: Deem: Ayes: Unanimous.

Vice-Chair Kirkeby left meeting at 8:30 p.m.

NON-ACTION

MAINTENANCE OF PERMANENT COLLECTION

Chair Cooper congratulated everyone on the auction. Craighead reported that \$1,773.13 was earned from sale of the deaccessioned artworks at the auction on December 13. The Commission will need to discuss plans to sell the remaining deaccessioned artworks. Craighead said that the lobby exhibit space could be used to hang the remaining work for sale. Barton suggested that the artwork could be auctioned off from the Public Art website. An added bonus would be that more people would be visiting the website.

Craighead reported that she has received the revisions for the CAP report and will relay these revisions to the accessor so that the report can be finalized.

Next steps: Staff will contact HD Projects about the website auction idea.

JOINT MEETING WITH COUNCIL

The Commission recapped their joint meeting with Council. Chair Cooper said the joint meeting was both productive and successful. The Council has a great interest in the Color of Palo Alto.

ARTIST SERIES

The Commission reviewed the dates for the artist series and agreed to eliminate one of the four dates. The following dates are confirmed for the artist series: May 29, September 25 and November 6, 2008. Cooper has spoken with a few artists for this series but no dates have been confirmed yet. Barton recommended pairing Mayor Klein with Nathan Oliveira for one of the series segments because they are good friends.

Next steps: Sub-committee will try to set schedule before next meeting. Barton queried whether the media center would be taping these conversations.

ONGOING

OUTREACH

No report.

CIVIC CENTER PLAZA ART INSTALLATION

No report.

NEW ARTWORK FOR CALIFORNIA AVENUE

No Report.

NEXT MEETING AGENDA – February 21, 2008

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council liaison Barton announced that the Civic Center Plaza will be renamed and dedicated to Scott and Coretta King on January 21, 2008. There may be potential to have a commemorative artwork created, to honor the Kings, for the plaza.

ADJOURNMENT – Chair Cooper adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm.