

Minutes
ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION
August 27, 2013, Lacy Boardroom, Carnegie-Stout Library

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Henkels at 4:40 p.m. following staff assurance of compliance with the Iowa Open Meeting Law.

Commissioners present: Ellen Henkels, Katherine Kluseman, Sue Riedel, Marina O'Rourke, Gina Siegert, Julie Steffen (by phone), Jessica Teckemeyer

Staff present: Jerelyn O'Connor, Jan Stoffel

Members of the Public: Louise Kames, Geri Shafer, Gene Tully

Approval of Minutes of July 23, 2013. Motion made by Kluseman and seconded by O'Rourke to approve minutes. Motion carried 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Together We Are One Dubuque and We Are a Ripple.** Project Directors Geri Shafer and Gene Tully explained their proposed Public/Private Environmental Art Project. Shafer is an area art consultant and was a former commissioner for 6 years, serving as chair for two years. Tully is the founder and director of Voices, has been a small business owner for over 30 years and is a metal artist. They thanked the Commissioners for listening to the presentation and withdrew their initial request to have the Commission endorse the project at this time stating that a vote would be premature since they are still gathering design and budgetary information as part of this preliminary process. The purpose of the visit is for information sharing with the commission on the proposed project. Shafer stated that their goal is to maximize community involvement, not restrict it. They do not want to bypass the Commission. Commission members were provided a copy of the written proposal that had already been presented to City Council and some commissions had viewed online their presentation to the City Council on August 19.

They recognized that there had been some feeling that the Arts Commission had been bypassed, but that was not the case. Shafer said they first met with city staff on June 26 and were advised to meet with the city manager. The 5th Street location was proposed then by city staff. On July 19, they presented to City Manager and he suggested presenting soon to the City Council, before the City Council Goal Setting. He offered the McGraw Hill site for the project. On July 31, they contacted the City Manager to suggest that the Commission be included in the endorsement process for the project. Shafer met with Jerelyn O'Connor on July 31. O'Connor advised them that the Commission had already met in July and the next Commission meeting would be August 27.

Shafer clarified that they are only requesting seed money from the City and they will be seeking support from many sources – businesses, organizations, individuals, grants foundations.

Tully spoke about the proposed project. His intent is that the sculpture will be a teaching tool. He stated that a few years ago he met with a landscape architect on the 5th Street linear park and proposed a serpentine walkway. Tully believes the proposed sculpture builds on that concept.

Henkels noted that she had reviewed the commission's goals and the city's cultural arts goals and the proposed project would meet many of those goals. Henkels stated that she regrets that the Commission did not have a special meeting to review this before it was taken to the Council.

Riedel was concerned about what pool of money from the City would actually support the project. The Arts Commission has tried for the last few years to get an increase in arts funding. While the budget has increased slightly, the need exceeds the budget. Riedel said there will be expenses associated with the City maintaining the sculpture. We have an established juried process for selecting public art through Art on the River. She expressed concern that we will set a precedent if we approve a project like this without utilizing a juried selection process. The design should be reconsidered. A project of this size should be loved by all. Sitting looking at a rock does not seem very dramatic. Funding should not impact present arts funding or the ability to increase that funding if needed.

Shafer stated that they are not proposing that any funds be taken away from existing budgeted arts funding.

Teckemeyer stated that she is passionate about public art as an assistant professor of art and sculpture at Clarke and a widely exhibited artist. She wants to see a more planful approach to a project of this size. A broad City art plan would be advantageous to have first. This proposal is just too soon. She conceptually found it difficult to understand why this one award deems a monument. That is not what monuments usually honor. Does it have the power to do what the directors hope will happen? Adding a sculpture to an already planned sculpture park is usually the process. The "Bean" and the Fountain in Millennium Park in Chicago have become iconic and a magnet for community involvement. The interactive opportunity that public art should have is not strong with the proposed work. Teckemeyer also considered the budget very high. In her experience, a \$500-\$600 thousand dollar budget could get three sculptures from nationally known artists for the same amount.

Tully noted that they need to pull in skilled people and do this together. Shafer noted that the design could be changed and sound and light have been planned, and that we all need to work together.

O'Rourke asked the presenters to explain exactly what the Council had approved. Did the Council understand fully what they were approving or did they endorse the project out of the excitement from attending the award ceremony in Denver? Shafer replied that they were initially asking for the land and that the City would maintain the sculpture and the area. Shafer noted that after the Council meeting on August 19th, they requested "seed money" from the Council. O'Rourke is concerned that the Council is endorsing a big arts project that is outside of present Commission goals. She questioned why the Council has an arts advisory commission if they take such issues up themselves. What would keep any other citizens with a good idea to come directly to the council and make a similar request?

Steffen applauded Shafer and Tully for being bold and visionary. The Commission has been discussing the need for a cultural or master art plan. This proposal is the perfect example of why a formal process is needed and shows a gap in our arts policies. It leads to confusion if a process and guidelines are not in place. Just as a strong City policy and plan guides the building of a new hotel, so should there be a plan for adding public art. We need to have a clear vision of where we are going.

Riedel commented that the Commission's intent was not to squash anyone's dreams. She is not sure what role the Commission really plays now since the City Council has already endorsed the project.

Siegert has many questions and concerns about the process. Maybe these ideas can be incorporated into a plan.

Louise Kames, professor of Art at Clarke University and former member of the Arts Commission, addressed the Commissioners concerning the proposed art project. Why is the timing on the proposal so tight? It seems as if the process was too fast for the scope of the proposed project and lacked community involvement. There has been a precedent with Pyatigorsk Park proposal several years ago which was not approved by the Commission as it was presented. Why was this particular site chosen? A linear park already exists with the Bee Branch and might offer more community engagement. Design-wise, a ripple goes out and a labyrinth goes in, so the labyrinth does not fit thematically. The enthusiasm of the project directors is understandable, but the process seems contrary. Kames also questioned the relationship of the Commission to the City Council. Why does the Commission work so hard?

Tully responded that the work is his inspiration and his vision. Juried art is completely another thing. The City Manager is pragmatic, but he was so supportive of this memorial to our present energy.

At this point, Kames, Tully and Shafer excused themselves from the meeting at 5:35 pm.

O'Rourke stated that she felt that the Commission should address the City Council concerning the project. Kluseman expressed that she felt even more strongly about the need to develop a master art plan for the City after the presentation of the development and initial planning of the public art project by Tully and Shafer. She has concerns similar to the other commissioners about the project's development and execution along with the concept of the project in general. Steffen reiterated that we need a plan based on artistic merit.

Riedel made a motion to form a subcommittee consisting of O'Rourke, Teckemeyer and Riedel to draft a letter to the City Council concerning these issues. It was seconded by O'Rourke. Motion carried 7-0. The draft will be presented to Chair Henkels and the entire Commission for their approval before sending to the Council.

2. **Commission Goals and Priorities.** Tabled for next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Arts and Humanities Month.** Staff will prepare a proclamation to be presented at the City Council meeting on October 7th. Henkels will contact the Dubuque Chorale to see if a small group of singers can appear previous to the Council meeting. Staff will assist NISOM in publicizing its Arts and Humanities Month Celebration at the Carnegie Stout Library on Friday, Friday, October 18, 5-7PM, at the Carnegie-Stout Public Library. Keynote Speaker Greg Sandow will comment on future of the arts. Those interested in attending can contact NISOM at (563) 690-0151 or admin@nisom.com

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION

INFORMATION SHARING

1. **Iowa Arts Council Workshop.** The City of Dubuque will host a grant workshop focused on funding for arts and cultural projects presented by the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. Presenters will be Veronica O'Hern, Grants and Programs Specialist, and Joseph Pierson, Community Resource Specialist. The grant workshop will offer participants an introduction to the Iowa Arts Council, grant-seeking advice and tips, and an in-depth look at the Iowa Arts Council's Project and Job Creation Grant programs. The grant workshop will be held from 3:30-5:00 p.m., on Monday, Sept. 23, in the Aigler Auditorium on the third floor of the Carnegie-Stout Public Library, 360 W. 11th Street, Dubuque, IA 52001. The workshop is free and open to the public. Those interested in attending should contact Veronica O'Hern to pre-register for the workshop at veronica.ohern@iowa.gov or 515-281-3293.
2. **Correspondence from Grantees.** Thank you letters from the Dubuque Arboretum, the Dubuque Arts Council, Bell Tower Theatre, Healing Moments and NISOM were shared with the Commission.

3. **City Expo.** The 2013 City Expo will be Held at Five Flags on September 10 from 4-7 p.m. Commissioners volunteer to assist staff in the information booth for Art on the River.
4. **Retirement.** Stoffel informed the Commission of her retirement effective November 1, 2013, from her present position as Arts and Cultural Affairs Coordinator. She extended her utmost gratitude for the opportunity to be involved with the Commission and the City of Dubuque for the past five years.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Riedel, seconded by Siegert to adjourn at 6:20 p.m. Motion carried 7-0. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 24, 2013, at 4:30 p.m. in the Lacy Boardroom of the Carnegie Stout Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Stoffel, Arts and Cultural Affairs Coordinator

These minutes were passed and approved on September 24, 2013


Secretary