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UNAPPROVED DRAFT ACTION MINUTES

PUBLIC ARTS COMMITTEE
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF July 14, 2021

PUBLIC ARTS COMMITTEE:

The notice of the meeting was posted on July 08, 2021.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Vertz called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.
- 2. ROLL CALL:**
 - Present:** Chair Vertz, Vice Chair Mills-Thysen, and Committee Members Langberg, and Stucker
 - Absent:** None
 - Staff:** Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** June 02, 2021

Vice Chair Mills-Thysen made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

Committee Member Langberg seconded the motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

VOTE:

Ayes:	Chair Vertz, Vice Chair Mills-Thysen, and Committee Members Langberg, and Stucker
Noes:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	None

4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Jason Brown

Hi. Good morning. Thank you all for giving me an opportunity to talk to you this morning. I just wanted to talk briefly about a public art project I was hoping to get Sebastopol involved with. I've seen it around other jurisdictions, and I just think it's a wonderful way to get art down at the street level for all the citizens to enjoy, and for tourists to enjoy. It's a utility box public art mural project. A lot of jurisdictions I've seen have done it, some that I've visited, such as Fort Collins in Colorado, or Bozeman in Montana. I've visited these towns and I've left with this positive feeling about the city, and it was just really from walking around and enjoying the sites, maybe walking into a coffee shop or whatever you're doing. But while you're moving around cities that have these sorts of programs, you're being

sprinkled with these beautiful pieces of art, just all along the way, on the corners, or in the alleyways, and all of these utility boxes that we all see everywhere that are oftentimes covered with graffiti or stickers, or various colors of paint that are intended to cover up, you know, previous vandalism, I'm sure you can all relate to that description. My wife and I were just walking down to The Barlow the other day from our house on the south side of town, and we passed six utility boxes that had graffiti, or spray paint trying to cover graffiti over those things. It's just an example of such a great opportunity. We have to allow artists to propose pieces of art on these boxes so that we can all enjoy them just as we're spending our day moving about town. In addition to that, we rely pretty heavily on tourism, and I think it has a real positive effect on a visitor's experience in the town and the reviews that they might offer to others as they go back to wherever they've come from.

Marghe Mills-Thysen, Vice Chair

Has everyone read all the emails that have been going back and forth about this? Is everyone familiar with this?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

No, that is why Mr. Brown is here to talk.

Marghe Mills-Thysen, Vice Chair

Okay, well, I thought everyone else had seen them.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

We can't do that because of quorum and public Brown Act requirements. That's why I asked Mr. Brown to come today.

Jason Brown

I just wanted to talk about that and see if there's any way that the City would be interested in such a program? I know that the City of Sebastopol does not own these utility boxes, and I understand from talking with some other program leaders and other towns that that is an obstacle. A lot of places own their utility boxes, and it becomes a little bit of an easier process. I know I've personally tried to talk with PG&E about this project, and they are set in their ways a little bit, I think they would need to be encouraged a little bit to want to play along. I know some of the other boxes are owned by a company such as AT&T or other communications companies. I think if there's some way for the City to get interested and get involved with these utility companies, and then then, of course, we have to figure out a way to fund it. I just think it's such a wonderful opportunity that I wanted to present it and see if there's any way we could try to get that moving forward. That that's really all I wanted to say, I guess.

Jennifer Vertz, Chair

Thank you, Mr. Brown. I know I have a bunch of questions, but from what I'm understanding is that we could request, if everybody's interested, to put this on the agenda for next month, and if everybody would like to see that happen, we can go ahead and say yes, and we'll try to put it on the agenda so we can discuss this further and possibly take the month to do a little bit of research as well.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Right. Because of State Brown Act requirements, we cannot go into a full discussion right now because it is not on the agenda, but I definitely appreciate your coming to this meeting so we can get this started in a way that involves the Public Arts Committee, which I think is the appropriate committee to work on this. The Committee is welcome to ask Mr. Brown any questions that they may have at this time.

Chair Vertz asked for questions of Mr. Brown.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I will just add a couple of notes in terms of if they Committee wants to agendize this. I have heard from the Sebastopol Downtown Association, or at least the president, or former president when I first got here, with interest in this type of a project as well. And yes, the owners of the utility boxes are somewhat an issue. I have a contact at Caltrans, and a couple of other contacts, one for PG&E who I think is more responsive. If we wanted to proceed without utility permissions, I think that is certainly something that I would want to talk to the City attorney, and City administration about, but I certainly have seen rogue art in that way. I am just not sure that the City could sponsor something like that without the utilities permissions.

Jason Brown

Well, thank you all very much. I appreciate it.

Jennifer Vertz, Chair

Thank you, Mr. Brown.

Jeffrey Stucker, Committee Member

Thank you, Mr. Brown.

Jennifer Vertz, Chair

I would like to agendize that for the next meeting so we can discuss what we can actually do with Mr. Brown's ideas.

5. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None.

6. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. Sculpture Garden Update

Vice Chair Mills-Thysen provided updates, and the Committee and Director Svanstrom discussed the sculpture garden.

Comments on signage included:

- I do think it makes sense to have signage.
- Public Works can put signs out this week.
- Chair Vertz stated that she would create the signs in whatever size is desired once the information to include on the sign has been agreed upon.
- Director Svanstrom stated that she could have the signs printed and laminated once the file is received. Once that is done, Public Works can place the signs at the site.
- The Committee agreed to place one identifying sign at each end as you enter the area off the path.
- The Committee agreed to add signs that speak to graffiti and/or vandalism on each of the platforms (8 total).
- Suggested staking signs in front of each platform, rather than some form of adhesive.
- Chair Vertz is going to receive the information to do a draft of the two major signs that will be on either end, as people pass the sculpture garden, and then a smaller sign that addresses respecting the concrete platforms.
- The Committee agree to have two larger signs, one at each entrance, that announces the sculpture garden and invites artists to apply.

- The Committee agreed to have one smaller sign at each platform that speaks to respecting their space and anti-graffiti.
- The Committee expressed support for adding a QR Code or a bitlink to the call on the City's website to the main entry signs.
- The Committee discussed outreach regarding the call.
- The Committee discussed extending the call if enough responses are not received by the deadline.
- The Committee discussed the possibility of placing art on half the pads now, and half the pads later, depending on the number of responses received.
- The Committee discussed the way the call appears online and agreed to remove the Ives Park map now that the pads are in place.
- In addition, the Committee agreed that a note should be added about the pads being in place.

B. Public Arts Project Updates

Director Svanstrom provided updates on Michael McGinnis's project noting that fabrication is underway, and an installation date should be determined soon.

Director Svanstrom provided updates on Ned Kahn's contract amendment and that she is waiting for it to be finalized. She noted that Mr. Kahn is working with his geotechnical engineer given its height to ensure safety.

Director Svanstrom noted that she did not have progress on signage for Mr. Kahn's artwork. Vice Chair Mills-Thysen volunteered to be the point of contact with Mr. Kahn as former Committee Member Arnold had been.

Director Svanstrom offered to contact Mr. McGinnis regarding signage for his sculpture. As she recalled, Mr. McGinnis has expressed a preference regarding signage.

Chair Vertz stated that she would love to see something there, whether Mr. McGinnis wants a sign or note, to recognize that it was sponsored by the City of Sebastopol and the Public Arts Committee.

Members of the Committee concurred.

The Committee discussed signage for current and future public art projects in terms of having a standard template or leaving it up to the artists.

The Committee agreed to a future agenda topic that could include art on the utility boxes which has to do with potential clutter in the city and continuity of different elements within the fabric of the city.

Chair Vertz spoke on branding and commented that it would be nice to add 'Sponsored by the City of Sebastopol', or the 'Public Arts Committee'. That consistency will help brand the City's local art in that way; it makes it more recognizable. Then, if the artists want to add something else, that is up to them, and we can discuss and possibly adapt to that as long as it has our branding.

The Committee discussed branding further.

The Committee agreed to use the word, "commissioned" rather than "sponsored".

The Committee discussed holding an unveiling or a dedication ceremony for Mr. McGinnis' upcoming art and agreed to discuss it further once an installation date is known.

Chair Vertz offered to contact D&S Awards regarding plaques for the public art projects of Mr. Kahn's and Mr. McGinnis' and future works.

Director Svanstrom suggested something metal with an enamel paint on it for the logos with text. Either aluminum or stainless steel.

The Committee discussed placement and/or installation of the plaques.

Chair Vertz stated that she would look into plaques and would send a couple of options to Director Svanstrom and Vice Chair Mills-Thysen.

C. Potential Sculpture Sites for Future Calls

Jennifer Vertz, Chair

I would like to just preface this that, maybe I missed something, but could we also make it not just sculptures, but just future calls?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I'm sorry, yes, this is intended to cover potential sites for future art calls.

Jeffrey Stucker, Committee Member

Has done some preparatory work around Spooner Park, and also the Joe Rodota trailhead at Petaluma Avenue closer to town. Reviewed images with the Committee. Noted that he was able to get in touch with Una Glass as well.

Jeffrey Stucker, Committee Member

From having been there are that the Joe Rodotta trailhead would probably be best seen by pedestrians, there's a lot of tree growth, a lot of leaf, a lot of branching in general. A piece, whatever it may be, may not be as visible from there besides traffic coming through, traffic passes that place pretty fast unless it's backed up. Whereas the other side, Hopmonk, in my opinion, is far more visible to vehicular use. Also, to pedestrians that are going along Petaluma Avenue towards and away from

Marghe Mills-Thysen, Vice Chair

I had the opposite response. I went by in my car and by foot. I thought the spot south of the bench was very visible to cars, and very uncomplicated. Whereas the Hopmonk was very cluttered and distracting and people thinking about whether they're going to be turning there, and it's just more congested.

Lars Langberg, Committee Member

Part of our idea for one of these sites as we have been talking about a sort of gateway, so it seems like further south is better so there is not confusion with Hopmonk and what is happening there.

The Committee continued to review images and discussed these two sites further.

Jennifer Vertz, Chair

The Hopmonk side, if it is non-publicly owned land, we would be entering into the idea which I would love to approach of putting art on other pieces of property. That could include the utility boxes. I would love to have the option of being able to put art on non-publicly owned land. Is not the entrance to the Joe Rodota trail owned by the County?

Marghe Mills-Thysen, Vice Chair

We received permission on that. These are primary to me as they are the four gateways, and I would not want to put it on a private property because who knows what could happen in the future. If we want to put it on private property, I would be open to considering that more, but not for the gateways. That is my view.

Jeffrey Stucker, Committee Member

This may be a topic for another time, but I appreciate what you are bringing up, Chair Vertz, because Sebastopol really does have a limited number of flexible open City-owned spaces to locate really effective public art and it might be worth our time to look more deeply into private land and what agreement can be entered into with those property owners that would perhaps safeguard the art into the future.

Jennifer Vertz, Chair

Public art is temporary. So much public art is temporary. It is not going to last forever anyway. Some stuff might, but even the City has had to update its own signs. I do not want to rule out placement on private property. Especially on the Spooner Park side, there just is not a lot of room.

The Committee reviewed images and discussed Spooner Park as follows:

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

All the roadway portions are going to be Caltrans and I cannot imagine, based on how difficult it was to get something off the side of the right-of-way, that they would allow for liability and other safety reasons something to go in the roadway. That should be a median that is planted up, or something, but it is unfortunate. I do not think that would be an easy one for art.

Lars Langberg, Committee Member

I do not think the content matters, if it is Caltrans, it is Caltrans. Would that be the case for Spooner Park then because it has a Caltrans highway on both sides?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

No, Spooner Park itself is owned by the City.

Jeffrey Stucker, Committee Member

It is a shame that Caltrans is not more opening minded, because some of those sites are far more visible. I did finally reach Ms. Glass yesterday, and we spoke about Spooner Park. She gave me a little history, which I will share later, but she is very pro-public art in Spooner Park. I mentioned the possibility of moving on or more of the solar pedestals and she seemed open to that. Ms. Glass gave me a contact that works for the company that installed them if we want to find out potential costs in the underground cabling, etc. to have to move one or more of those. We also spoke a little about signage which Director Svanstrom also brought up. I guess there is some new signage that has been installed, correct? At least that is what Ms. Glass shared.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Right, there is a wayfinding program for signage that was designed a few years back. We are installing it in phases. I think the first phase, which is the pedestrian signage and wayfinding that is, I think, over there by the Peace Wall by the cinema and across from the police station, there is a map signage, I think there is also one at the plaza. There are various smaller signs directing to different places. The other future phases of it, one is signage for City parking lots, wayfind to park, pedestrians were put first, then the car. I think we also have a couple of these installed, like the signage for Ives Park. We have additional signage for other City buildings as part of that as well. You see right by the sculpture garden that there is the Ives Park signage, that is pretty new. I do not know if we have monument signs slated for Spooner Park in terms of a larger welcome to the city sign, but I can look into that.

Marghe Mills-Thysen, Vice Chair

I also went by there, and that was my thought, Committee Member Stucker, if we could move the last two panels, and possibly update the city sign, there would be a spot and that is more south, which is what Committee Member Langberg is talking about, and it is very prominent, that front area is not so much under trees. I am even wondering if the City has any plan of updating the solar as it was installed quite some time ago.

Lars Langberg, Committee Member

They just need to be cleaned off, the solar panels should work just fine. Moving panels requires trenching, and electrical infrastructure. Unless the City is literally willing to get rid of a panel, which I doubt. To me, it seems like sort of a nonstarter. To me, it is a beautiful piece of work on its own. I think the signage in that location is the thing that needs to be fixed. The panels should stay as they are.

Jeffrey Stucker, Committee Member

Ms. Glass shared her thoughts, which would be to potentially move some of the panels and then perhaps even go into her idea of maybe adding a dragon's head or tail. That could possibly be the artwork. Unless two panels are moved we are really working with a pretty compressed area, and the panels themselves would definitely, in my opinion, interfere with the art because again, this is a prominent location and I am sure that there are a lot of vehicle trips. I do not know if you have that data, Director Svanstrom, otherwise I was going to call Steve Weinberger to see if he has it for purposes of our own discussion.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I do not have that data, but I can email Mr. Weinberger and request it.

Jeffrey Stucker, Committee Member

Thanks for that. Finishing up on my conversation with Ms. Glass, the intention back when it was designed and installed was for it to not be boring, that is why the panels have a winding nature. It was also considered somewhat trendsetting at that time. Sebastopol was on the second city in California to install solar like that. Maybe Spooner Park could become a little more user friendly, like benches or something else, although you have got to cross at least two streets to get there, which is not always the most comfortable thing for a pedestrian to do.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

There are a couple of things going on on the other side of Spooner Park. Next Tuesday the City Council is going to be considering making that a one-way through simple restriping, not changing the asphalt. That is due to the Police Chief's recommendations regarding some traffic safety issues. That street also does not have sidewalks, so it is a little difficult to get to Spooner Park. Since there are no sidewalks to it, if the one-way works well, we have

discussed the idea of taking out some of that right-of-away and giving it a sidewalk, probably on the north side. There are some questions about how we can make it easier to access Spooner Park. That is a longer-range project. It is probably, I would say, three- to five- years out just given the logistics and the expense in terms of our capital improvement plan. There is a potential in the future for better access from the north side of Spooner Park. Right now, yes, there are no sidewalks or crosswalks to get there.

Jeffrey Stucker, Committee Member

If it is okay, I would like to gather a little more information to share at the next meeting, and perhaps I can ask Director Svanstrom a few questions after this meeting.

Jennifer Vertz, Chair

Okay, great. Right across from Spooner Park is Art & Soul. This is owned by the Southpoint Shopping Center, it is the old Aubergine Vintage Emporium building. I have already been in talks with the owner of the building and the owners of Art & Soul, this would be a small project, kind of like the Black Lives Matter mural. We put together all kinds of mood boards on what kind of art we wanted to put there. Some sort of welcome to Sebastopol mural. We have got ideas on and on about what it could be, what could happen here. I like the idea of seeing good things happen here. Welcome to Sebastopol. This is hugely visible, it is wide open and at the entrance of town. Yes, it might not last forever, but the building owners like the idea but they do not want to pay for it. The owners of Art & Soul are doing as much as they can, but I do not want to see them have to put any money into it. Could funds be matched with some sort of City funds for improving the building? Either this is something I do on my own as it something I want to do anyway, or, if the Public Arts Committee would be interested in talking about doing something on private property, we can do that. There is an opportunity right there at Spooner Park, right there at the entrance. I could remove myself from the equation and say I have a conflict of interest. Then, if the Committee is interested, there is an idea there, there is a great wall right there, it could be a beautiful way to enter town. It is a huge welcome to Sebastopol. As you know, they really do like their murals down there because the carwash is also owned by the same group, the Southpoint Shopping Center group, and they are doing new murals right down there too. Somebody is going to do a mural on the side of Art & Soul, we could do it as a welcome to Sebastopol mural, something really fun, beautiful, and memorable as folks drive in on that side of town.

Lars Langberg, Committee Member

Works for me, that looks great.

Jennifer Vertz, Chair

I have already proposed that to everybody down there, the owners of Art & Soul, and the owners of Southpoint Shopping Center, they like it. Maybe that is something we put on the agenda next time as just an idea. This is what could happen on private property. This is why I think it should be an option.

7. PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORT (Update on Future Agendas, Action of Other Boards and City Council)

Director Svanstrom provided updates.

8. ADJOURNMENT: Committee Member Langberg made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Committee Member Stucker seconded the motion. Chair Vertz adjourned the meeting of the Sebastopol Public Arts Committee at 11:55 a.m. The next regular Public Arts

Committee meeting will be cancelled, and a special meeting will be held on August 18, 2021, at 10:30 a.m.