



METRO ARTS

NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE

MINUTES

Public Art Committee

May 11, 2023, 11:00AM-1:00PM

Metro Office Building

Nashville Room

800 President Ronald Reagan Way/800 2nd Ave S
Nashville, TN 37210

If you have any questions, please e-mail arts@nashville.gov.

Commission and Committee Members Present: Campbell West (PAC Committee Chair), Paul Polycarpou (Commissioner), Ellen Angelico (CARE Committee Chair), Sara Lee Burd, Lakesha M. Calvin, Shaun Giles, Stacey Irvin, Daniel Singh (*ex-officio*)

Committee Members Absent: Donna Gilliam

Metro Art Staff Present: Anne-Leslie Owens, Atilio Murga, Jesse Ross, Nyamal Tuor, Vivian Foxx

Guests Present: Simone Boyd (local artist), Anna Dearman (Nashville Department of Transportation)

A. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Chair Campbell West at 11:10 am

B. Approval of Minutes: April 13, 2023

A motion to approve the April 13, 2023, meeting minutes was made by Chair Campbell West and seconded by Sara Lee Burd. Approval was unanimous and the motion passed.

C. Welcome

Chair Campbell West welcomed everyone and recognized guests Simone Boyd (local artist) and Anna Dearman (Nashville Department of Transportation) who are partnering with Metro Arts on the Arthur Avenue public art project.

D. Action Items

1. Old Hickory Community Center Public Art Project (Finalist)

Public Art Project Manager Atilio Murga provided a recap of the Old Hickory Community Center Public Art Project and shared the citizen selection panel's finalist recommendation. After interviewing and scoring the 4 artist semi-finalists, the panel selected artist Gordon Huether from Napa, CA. Commissioner Paul Polycarpou, chair of the panel, commended the panel for their work. Executive Director Daniel Singh noted that, in the future, we'd like to add bias/equity training for our selection panels as we are doing for staff, Commissioner, and other Metro Arts panels.

A motion to approve Gordon Huether as the finalist for the Old Hickory Community Center project was made by Chair Campbell West and seconded by Commissioner Paul Polycarpou. Approval was unanimous and the motion passed.

2. Arthur Avenue Public Art Lighting Project (Budget, Selection Process, Selection Panel)

Public Art Collection Manager Anne-Leslie Owens provided a recap for the Arthur Avenue Public Art Lighting Project. The project, a collaboration between Metro Arts, NDOT, Project Return, and community organizer and artist Simone Boyd has resulted in a successful NEA Grant for which Metro Arts has matched \$75,000 for a \$150,000 NEA project grant. Additionally, Metro Arts has committed \$400,000 for a public art lighting project. Simone Boyd provided a background of North Nashville and the proposed artwork site. The impact of the interstate is still being felt today. Residents were displaced and streets cut off from each other. Arthur Avenue is one of the few connector streets but it is low and dark, unmaintained, and residents do not feel safe there.

In consideration of the grant deadline (June 30, 2024), staff is recommending an invitational call rather than an open call. This allows us to identify artists with capacity to meet project schedule, significant public art experience, history of innovative community collaboration, experience/background in interpreting African-American history, and collaboration with fabricators and lighting designers. For each invited artist, we plan to provide a \$6,000 honorarium to cover travel/lodging and proposal development. Artists would come in for a July 13-14 artist site visit to include a community meal, site visit, and stakeholder meetings. After completing a proposal due July 31, they would present their proposal to selection panel virtually on August 4.

There are 7 artists who meet our criteria:

1. Nekisha Durrett, Washington, DC
2. Ekene Ijeoma, Brooklyn, NY
3. Erwin Redl, Long Island City, NY and Bowling Green, OH
4. Karyn Olivier, Philadelphia, PA'
5. Alex Braden, Washington, DC
6. Lava Thomas, Berkeley, CA

7. Cliff Garten, Los Angeles, CA

Proposed Selection Panel (Council of Elders) developed in consultation with Simone Boyd.

Voting

1. Reverend Margaret Smithson – 60+
2. Mrs. Leitha Carter
3. Mr. Melvin Gill
4. Ms. Barbara Jean Watson
5. Mr. Larry Turnley
6. Ms. Cheryl McReynolds
7. Mr. Thomas Wilson
8. Mr. Max A. Butler
9. Ms. Anna Dearman

Non-Voting

1. Chair – Lakesha M. Calvin (from PAC, ex-officio)
2. Metro Procurement Rep
3. Tennessee Department of Transportation Rep

The committee asked if there are additional delays from TDOT, how will this impact the NEA grant and the June 30 deadline? If we continue to make significant progress, we expect they will be open to a deadline extension should we need to request one. There was discussion as to whether we expect that artists would be available to take on a project with this schedule? Consultant felt confident we could get at least 3 to accept our invitation.

A motion to approve potential artist semi-finalist slate, dependent on artist availability, for invitational call for Arthur Avenue project was made by Sara Lee Burd and seconded by Lakesha M. Calvin. Approval was unanimous and the motion passed.

A motion to approve selection panel slate for Arthur Avenue project was made by Chair Campbell West and seconded by Shaun Giles. Approval was unanimous and the motion passed.

E. Project and Program Updates

1. Bordeaux Gateway Public Art Project

Public Art Collection Manager has been working with consultants Emily Blumenfield and Meridith McKinley of Via Partnership. They have been assessing the site and community vision in order to recommend the best approach to project. It has been critical to interview key stakeholders: Tennessee Department of Transportation, Senator Brenda Gilmore, and Judge Rachel Bell who have provided information on history of existing sign and maintenance of site. Next steps are hosting community meetings in Bordeaux to inform a Call to Artists and opening a selection panelist application.

2. Looby Community Center Public Art Project

Public Art Collection Manager has been working with Via Partnership consultants on Looby project as well. They have been assessing the proposed mural site to recommend the best approach to project. Staff have met with Parks and Looby Library and Community Center staff and received recommendations/assessments from Art Up/Jarvis and Don Hardin Group. Next steps are opening a selection panelist application and launching a Call to Artists.

3. Recommendations from Consultant: Project Checkpoints

Public Art Collection Manager Anne-Leslie Owens reminded the committee of a previous discussion related to the Madison Project. While the artist completed outstanding community engagement, the contract ended with no approved design. There were changes to the project location, design concerns, and budget challenges that impacted the project. To ensure this does not happen in the future, staff addressed this with consultant Todd Bressi and identified certain project controls that will be built into future projects: multiple budget/schedule checkpoints; more thorough reference checks completed by phone by project manager; maintenance review of proposed design by art handlers, conservator, and/or fabricator; and frank and early recognition about concerns so, if they come up later, we are better prepared to address. A more formal report will be presented at future meeting.

4. Public Art Manager Position

Director Daniel Singh indicated we hope that the Public Art Manager position will be listed by June 1. We expect the person might start in two to three months. The low salary and conditions in Tennessee are certainly considerations for candidates coming from other parts of the country. Having hard time getting recruiters to work with us.

5. FY2024 Budget Process

Director Daniel Singh shared that the FY2024 budget process is disappointing. It has set us up between larger and smaller micro-organization. Metro Arts is asking for enough to fund both. Our budget is 2.7 million and to give 2 million to 6 large organizations feels like too much. Lot will happen between now and June 20. Trying to work together and present a united front.

6. August Joint Meeting of Commission and all Committees

Director Daniel Singh requested that all come if they can attend on August 17. We have found that sometimes things get lost in communication and want everyone to be on the same page.

7. Cultural Planning Process

The process just kicked off the first meeting in April and, starting in September and onwards, will have more meetings. It will be an 18-month process and, when completed, Metro will have a new administration in place.

F. New Business/Old Business

Chair Campbell West indicated she will not be in attendance at the July 13 Public Art Committee meeting.

G. Adjourn

Chair Campbell West adjourned the meeting at 1:00 pm