



METRO ARTS

NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE

Minutes

Public Art Committee

October 12, 2023, 11:00AM-1:00PM

Lindsley Hall, Peabody Room

730 President Ronald Reagan Way/730 2nd Ave S

Nashville, TN 37210

METRO ARTS MISSION:

Drive an Equitable and Vibrant Community through the Arts

Committee Members Present: Paul Polycarpou (Commissioner), Sara Lee Burd, Shaun Giles, Stacey Irvin (via WebEx), Cara Robinson, Ellen Angelico (*ex-officio*), Daniel Singh (*ex-officio*)

Committee Members Absent: Campbell West (Chair)

Metro Arts Staff Present: Atilio Murga, Vivian Foxx, Anne-Leslie Owens (via WebEx), Jesse Ross (via WebEx)

Guests: Andres Bustamante, Tessa Ortiz-Marsh (Metro Legal), Lora Fox (Metro Legal)

A. Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:13 a.m. by Commissioner Paul Polycarpou, chairing the meeting in Campbell West's absence. He welcomed new Public Art Committee member Dr. Cara Robinson.

B. Public Comments

Commissioner Polycarpou invited Andres Bustamante to address the committee. Bustamante, a local sculptor, expressed confusion and a desire for more information about the Commission's decision regarding the allocation of Thrive funds. He indicated that artists are facing difficulties related to the program's lack of funding.

C. Approval of Minutes: August 10, 2023

A motion to approve the August 10, 2023 meeting minutes was made by Shaun Giles and seconded by Sara Lee Burd. Approval was unanimous and the motion passed.

D. Action Items

1. Looby Community Center Mural Public Art, Semifinalist Recommendations

Public Art Collections Manager Anne-Leslie Owens gave a recap of the Looby Community Center Mural project. One of the projects that emerged from the 2022 Mayor's Participatory Budget project, it has a \$200,000 budget for a mural, community garden, and seating. \$105,000 is designated for the mural project. Of that, \$60,000 will be the artist budget. The remaining \$45,000 will be used by Metro Arts to purchase the polytab mural cloth, install the completed mural, and pay stipends to community selection panelists. The community selection panel met to evaluate and score the artist applications. Their three top scoring artist are being recommended as the semifinalists: Creative Girls Rock, James Threalkill, and Omari Booker.

A motion to approve Creative Girls Rock, James Threalkill, and Omari Booker as artist semifinalists for the Looby Community Center mural project was made by Sara Lee Burd and seconded by Shaun Giles. Approval was unanimous and the motion passed.

2. Bordeaux Gateway Public Art, Semifinalist Recommendations

Public Art Collections Manager Anne-Leslie Owens provided a recap of this project which will bring public art to a prominent traffic triangle in Bordeaux located at the intersection of Clarksville Highway and Rosa L. Parks. With a budget of \$200,000 from the 2022 Mayor's Participatory Budget program, Metro Arts has allocated \$185,000 for the artist budget. The remaining \$15,000 will provide for stipends for community selection panelists and semifinalist honorariums for the development of concept proposals. Staff recommends the community selection panel's five top-scoring artists as semifinalists: Creative Girls Rock, James Threalkill, Stephen Hutchins and Omari Booker, Prado Studio, and Shabazz Larkin. There are three current Metro Arts public art projects for which local artists are eligible and there is some overlap among the semifinalists for these projects. It is likely that one of the Bordeaux Gateway semifinalists will be awarded a contract for Looby or Permanent Supportive Housing and may be ineligible to pursue the Bordeaux Gateway project. For this reason, staff recommended moving forward five artists as semifinalists who will be paid \$2,000 each to develop a design concept. This approach will enhance the community's involvement and options as they provide feedback on a wider range of design concepts.

A motion to approve Creative Girls Rock, James Threalkill, Stephen Hutchins and Omari Booker, Prado Studio, and Shabazz Larkin as artist semifinalists was made by Commissioner Polycarpou and seconded by Sara Lee Burd. Approval was unanimous and the motion passed.

3. Permanent Supportive Housing, Semifinalist Recommendations

Public Art Collections Manager Anne-Leslie Owens shared that Permanent Supportive Housing is being constructed north of the A.A. Birch Building and the historic Metro Courthouse, situated on Jo Johnston Avenue between 1st and 2nd Avenues close to the river and railroad tracks. Metro General Services was interested in incorporating public art into this project. Working with the design team, we've identified a significant retaining wall that wraps around First Avenue and Jo Johnston as the best location. Additionally, the

artists may extend their artwork into the planters at the building entrance. Eligibility was open to artists throughout Tennessee. The selection panel met to evaluate and score the artist applications. Their five top scoring artists are being recommended as the semifinalists: Detour Norf, Marlos E'van, Omari Booker, Persona Company, and Queen Bee Ink.

A motion to approve Detour Norf, Marlos E'van, Omari Booker, Persona Company, and Queen Bee Ink as artist semifinalists was made by Sara Lee Burd and seconded by Shaun Giles. Approval was unanimous and the motion passed.

4. Temporary Art on Metro Property Proposal Recommendation

Public Art Collections Manager Anne-Leslie Owens presented a proposal for temporary art on Metro property that has been submitted by the Civic Design Center. This temporary art activation is set to take place in the traffic triangle along Arthur Ave. and 11th Ave. The Civic Design Center has been working closely with the Nashville Department of Transportation and selected artist Ozzy Orosco for this project.

The plan is to have this temporary art installation on October 22nd, with an expected duration of approximately one year, or until the paint naturally wears down. The Civic Design Center is deeply committed to fostering a collaborative process, involving the local community and students at Robert Churchwell School. They are organizing charrettes and events to engage residents and community members, making this project a celebration of the neighborhood and its people.

A motion to approve the Civic Design Center's Temporary Art on Metro Property Proposal for Arthur Ave at 11th traffic triangle was made by Cara Robinson and seconded by Paul Polycarpou. Approval was unanimous and the motion passed.

E. Project and Program Updates:

1. Arthur Avenue/ I-65 Bridge Underpass Public Art

Executive Director Daniel Singh gave an update regarding the Arthur Avenue Underpass public art lighting project. Unfortunately, there have been significant delays in our timeline. Originally, we aimed to have the artist selected by August, but now we are looking at October for the final selection. The selection panel process has also faced delays due to various issues. We are actively working through these challenges to ensure that the project continues to move forward.

2. Old Hickory Community Center Community Meetings

Public Art Manager Atilio Murga reported on the two successful community engagement sessions for the Old Hickory Community Center public art project. The first session was held at Old Hickory Public Library and the second one took place at Rhythm in the Village. A diverse group of community residents participated and shared their unique ideas and visions for the project. These engagements have been a great success, and now our artist

Gordon Huether will use the collected data and feedback to develop a concept. We will bring this concept back to PAC and Commission for approval.

3. Main Library Gallery

Executive Daniel Singh shared that the schedule for Metro Arts' partnership with the Library for curated local art exhibits in the library's mezzanine gallery has been adjusted. Originally planned to launch in January 2024 with a 4-month preview of the Lending Library artwork, the Nashville Public Library will instead extend their current exhibit through March-April. Staff are currently working with Nashville Public Library to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for this partnership which will bring four curated local art exhibits to the main library each year.

4. Lending Library Purchase

The Lending Library Project will expand to new Nashville Public Library branches in 2024. While staff had originally proposed a January exhibit of the artwork purchases at the main library gallery, that schedule has been adjusted. With several other public art projects in the active selection phase, we will delay the Lending Library call to artists so that selection and purchase of artworks takes place in early 2024. The Lending Library artworks will be showcased at the main library gallery for 4 months during mid-2024 and then relocate to their permanent home at one of the branches in the 2024 Lending Library.

5. Mural Program Development RFP

Executive Director Daniel Singh explained that Metro Arts created the Thrive community arts funding program in 2014 to support artist-led projects that encourage cultural experiences, community investment and neighborhood transformation. Over the years, Thrive has funded murals and that interest in mural projects has steadily grown. Last year, the grants team received an overwhelming 31 applications for mural projects and was not able to fund these requests with available funds.

In considering these project requests, staff realized there was not have a comprehensive strategy to support so many projects concurrently, and that there is a need for guidelines regarding the lifespan of the murals. Issues have arisen with murals when properties changed hands--those not on Metro property--and a need for more robust contractual terms to address such scenarios. Staff are currently exploring options related to the permanence of murals, such as whether the artwork should be on vinyl, parachute cloth, or digital platforms. Additionally, staff are exploring the feasibility of creating a digital version of the murals, possibly using QR codes, which could remain accessible in libraries.

Working together with the grants team, public art staff are looking at ways we can support mural making in Nashville with both policy, funding, and resources. Staff are currently creating a call for proposals from mural consultants who can guide us through a community-driven process for developing a mural program. We wanted to reach out to the committee for any questions or thoughts they might have that could assist us in

shaping the call. If there are any specific elements the committee believes should be included to guide our staff in this initiative, please let staff know.

6. Tactical Urbanism Guide

Executive Director Daniel Singh reported that the Nashville Department of Transportation (NDOT) is developing “Tactical Urbanism: A Guide for Street Activations and Demonstration Projects.” The guide is a response to the need for quicker and more flexible approaches in participatory urban development. Because tactical urbanism projects proposed by the community could have an artwork component, Metro Arts was asked to review and provide feedback on the process and guide. It was discussed that traditional public engagement processes often lagged, resulting in missed opportunities. The guide aimed to provide a framework for faster decision-making and implementation in urban development projects. The committee recognized the importance of addressing the challenges posed by the conventional process and saw potential in adopting tactical urbanism to expedite projects while ensuring community involvement.

7. Bloomberg Grant Funding

Executive Director Daniel Singh announced that the Bloomberg Public Art Challenge, for which the City of Nashville was a finalist, was not successful. It was unfortunate that Mayor Cooper had unavoidable conflicts on the day of the application review. The committee expressed the hope to explore local foundations and support to make the project a reality.

8. Cultural Planning Process

Executive Director Daniel Singh shared that our cultural planning efforts have faced some interruptions primarily due to staff capacity constraints which hindered our ability to meet planners' requirements. However, we are committed to reinvigorating this initiative and plan to resume in February 2024. We are optimistic about the timeline and anticipate having a draft plan ready by the next summer. Public art will play a significant role in shaping this plan.

9. Public Art Hiring & Metro Arts Hiring

Executive Director Daniel Singh acknowledged that we've made significant progress in our hiring efforts. Jessica Ingram has joined us as Public Art Manager, bringing a wealth of experience in studio and teaching practice, including teaching art in prisons which aligns with our restorative arts focus. Additionally, we are in the final stages of the interview process for the Public Art Coordinator position, and we expect to have the position filled within the next six weeks. Beyond this, we are also in the process of hiring a Restorative Arts Manager, Josiah Golson, who is moving to Nashville from Chattanooga, and has legal expertise and experience working with youth in the prison system. Furthermore, Christiana Afotey, a local artist with significant experience from Bank of America, is joining us as the Director of Finance. Additionally, Daryn Jackson will be taking on the role of

Communications Manager. We have made significant strides with four new hires and four positions we expect to fill in the near future.

10. Metro Arts Office Move

Executive Director Daniel Singh acknowledged that staff have some reservations regarding General Services offer to move Metro Arts from Metro Southeast to a building downtown on Second Avenue recently leased by Metro. Our concerns center around the limited and expensive downtown parking and ADA accessibility for staff, board and committee members, artists we serve, and any members of the public visiting Metro Arts offices.

We hope that the Commission and everyone involved will assist us in exploring options for moving to another location. We aim to be intentional about our space needs and address the parking challenge. Our current lease at Metro Southeast has two more years, and while most other offices are moving out, we must begin the search for a new space early next year. This timeline accounts for negotiations, contracting with Metro General Services, and implementing IT requirements. Starting in January, we will initiate the process of finding a suitable location.

F. New Business/Old Business

No new or old business

G. Adjourn

Commissioner Polycarpou adjourned the meeting at 12:01 pm