

MINUTES

Public Art Committee Meeting
June 18, 2015

Present: Mike Penwell, Joe Moore, Justin Lamphear, Debbie Williamson-Smith, Courtney Stubbert, Jennifer Knapp Committee Members; Isaac Marquez, Cultural Services staff.

Absent: Betsy Wolfston.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from May 21 were approved with edits.

Vernacular Art Project

Isaac announced that UO Arts Administration students are putting together a web based, crowd sourced public art archive for Eugene. The idea is to use social media and have people snap photos of art they see around town. Isaac said he could invite them to a future meeting and showed their website to committee members. Courtney said he would be interested in hearing them talk about the project; he's curious if they have a public mission or are looking for community interaction. Debbie pointed out that most of their content is re-posted from other sources. Isaac asked if committee members would like the professor and students to come to a meeting. Courtney responded that he would like to hear their goals; Debbie suggested the committee could help direct them toward additional content. Mike stated that we don't want to promote vandalism and, in his opinion, some of the content is simply vandalism. Isaac will contact Riki Saltzman and ask her to attend a future meeting.

Public Art Principles Discussion

Committee members were given a homework assignment to work on operating principles for the group. Justin began by stating that he struggled with what principles mean. Debbie said she created a visual diagram and shared it with the group. Isaac noted this is specifically about the work we (the City) commission. Using the safety net of creating a vision for the permanent works vs. the temporary works, there could be a set of principles for both tracks if we can't come up with one that works for both. Courtney expressed that he got hung up on context – big blanket principles – is it permanent, temporary, in a park for kids? He and Joe both agreed that being project based keeps it more context focused. Courtney said he found it difficult to think of context and then big over-arching principles.

Isaac posed the question: what if each project meets four of the seven principles? Debbie said she thought that was a good idea, and appreciated the flexibility.

Justin shared his thoughts that public art should:

- allow for both temporary and permanent installations
- be subjective or literal of any media of any size
- contribute to a sense of identity of place
- contain a concept
- connect people to place
- invoke dialogue between people

- encourage participation
- be maintainable
- evolve over time or be able to be removed over time
- not be vandalism

Mike suggested the following points for consideration:

- aesthetics
- uniqueness
- ethical position occupied or expressed by the works
- an open and transparent processes should be underlying principle for everything we do

Jennifer agreed with meeting a portion of the seven principles, possibly weighting some so that if you don't meet one you must meet another one in a more strong way. She feels that public art should be very accessible and visible.

Joe thought that whatever the committee decides on should follow the transparency spoke of in the public art plan, and focus on content. Public art should be:

- exceptional or world class
- ambitions
- accessible
- contextual
- authentic
- transcendent
- innovative
- inclusive
- conspicuous

Courtney suggested making some distinct steps for a city our size, instead of general statements like San Francisco uses, and asked about using the word *disruptive*. Justin said he thinks it is okay to use language that pushes art in the direction of the vision statement. Debbie said she felt the language should be more general, rather than so definite. Committee members discussed pros and cons of having principles in place that allow some freedom to take risks.

Isaac suggested drafting the principles and then trying them out on our next commission. Isaac asked everyone to send him their individual versions of the principles, he will create a survey containing all of the ideas and send it to committee members to vote on and see if there are commonalities. Isaac stated that the principles should guide future committees and act as a centering piece that will help to clarify what the city is doing with public art.

Consolidating words and voting on them was the agreed upon method. Isaac will compile one consolidated list, and he and Joe will create a survey monkey to be voted on.

Americans for the Arts Conference (Chicago) Report

Isaac presented highlights of his recent trip to Chicago for the Americans for the Arts Conference, including a slideshow. He talked about a variety of projects in Chicago including a graffiti art tour that he participated in. This prompted a discussion among committee members about the pros and cons of graffiti art and the sub-culture of the artists who create it.