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Minutes

Parks, Arts & Culture Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 23, 2023, 5:00pm

MEETING CONDUCTED IN PERSON AT 645 PINE ST IN THE FRONT CONFERENCE ROOM AND VIA ZOOM

Attendance:

Committee Members: Chair Joan Shannon, Councilor Mark Barlow, Councilor Ali Dieng

City Staff: Cindi Wight – BPRW Director, Doreen Kraft – BCA Director, Colin Storrs – BCA Staff, Holli Bushnell – BPRW Staff

Public Present – Ryon Fink – Oddfellows Lodge Member, Joanne Kasliz

Meeting called to order at 5:045pm by Chair Joan Shannon

Approval of Agenda

Councilor Dieng moved to approve the agenda, Councilor Barlow seconded, all were in favor.

Approval of Draft Minutes from 1/26/2023

Barlow moved to approve the minutes, Dieng seconded, all were in favor.

Public Forum

Public forum was opened at 5:06pm, as there was no one present who wished to speak at this time, public forum was also closed at 5:06pm

BCA Update: Oddfellows Lodge Mural

Doreen Kraft and Colin Storrs were present to represent BCA and assist in the presentation along with Ryon Fink from the Oddfellows Lodge. Fink reached out to BCA a few months ago for assistance commissioning public art in the form of a mural for the front of Oddfellows Lodge. Fink was advised to meet with the other members of his organization in March to discuss parameters of the project if PACC and the City Council are in support of the project. BCA does not have funding to assist in developing this project in the current fiscal year.

Fink explained that the Oddfellows are looking into possibility of using city funds on private property which would be a first for the city. He confirmed that the Oddfellows intend to use the new public art guidelines for the development process and the final selection of the piece, however the ultimate ownership of the mural itself is still somewhat unclear. First step is to sit down at lodge meeting and determine the budget for the piece and what the Oddfellows are able to contribute towards the budget.

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Once they know exactly what funds they have for the piece the Oddfellows will look to other sources for additional funding. BCA will help facilitate the development process by providing advice and assisting in contacting artists. A review committee will select the most appropriate piece for the project.

Shannon asked if Fink could provide some background on the Oddfellows as an organization. Fink presented a slide show which detailed the history of the Oddfellows as a beneficial organization similar to the Elks or Masons or the German or Champlain Clubs. They own and operate out of a building on North Avenue which, in the past few years, has become rundown and a prime target for graffiti. The Oddfellows main focus is on community building, mutual aid, and charitable works. They were founded nationally in 1819, are open to any and all who are interested, and have chapters all over the world. The Burlington Oddfellows Lodge has dedicated crew of diehard members who are aging rapidly (part of the reason the outside of the building is in disrepair). The primary focus of the Burlington lodge right now is North End pantry. They have been open for 10 years, have had approximately 30,000 visitors in that time, and currently see around 500 visitors per month for food, diapers, clothing, etc. The Oddfellows try to insure that there are no barriers to use of the pantry; it is a community space and their services do not feel like hand-outs. They want to build community, not just provide charity. The pantry is open Saturdays and Sundays between 9 and 11, and Tom Fleury has been point person in pantry effort.

The Oddfellows have big plans in the next year. There are a lot of new members who have joined in the last 4 months from around the neighborhood, looking for ways to help community and build needed space. Lodge members are working on turning the main hall of the lodge from storage space to a community center. They hope to hold community dinners, game nights, a device clinic, and, ultimately, hope to make the space available for public use. The Oddfellows want the space to be as usable to everyone as possible.

Dieng asked if the Oddfellows have expenses or pay property taxes, and Fink confirmed that they do. The Oddfellows have tried to figure out ways to have different tax status, but they do pay property taxes and that is their biggest expense.

Fink continued by explaining that the Lodge has a big brick wall that faces North Ave that has attracted lots of graffiti over the years and has become an eye-sore. Fink also noted that there is limited public art in the New North End. The district contains roughly a quarter of the city's population and yet has virtually no public art projects. It's pretty barren art wise and the Oddfellows would like to change that. The New North End is becoming just as diverse as the rest of the city, and Fink and the Oddfellows feel that it would be nice if the area started looking like it.

On town meeting day, the Oddfellows will hold a lodge meeting (every member who shows up gets an equal vote following Robert's Rules of Order). Fink and other lodge members will be presenting a motion for mural project to move forward and set a budget. The initial budget will be \$1000 to solicit proposals from 5 to 7 artist. Once they've received/reviewed their proposals they'll be coming back to PACC to talk about funding the actual installation of the mural. They will have cost and timeline info

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when they return to discuss split funding. The lodge has limited resources but would like to work with the city to get this done in a timely manner. They are aiming to select proposal in spring and hope to have the finished mural installed before winter. Fink and the Oddfellows felt this will transform both the building and the area as a whole. In terms of what they're looking for, they love the murals that have been installed around the city in the last few years and hope to do something similar. The Oddfellows would like the mural to emphasize their pantry work and including Oddfellows symbols (pretty unobjectionable and would like to have them worked into proposals).

Shannon commented that the South End has been benefiting from many of the current public art projects. She loves this idea. She proposed setting aside councilor funds and allocating them for the project. Shannon asked what was remaining in councilor funds. Barlow stated that the fund started with \$50,000 and not very much has been spent for the current year.

Shannon continued by stating that, while the Oddfellows are a private organization they are both public facing and provide huge public benefits. Shannon agrees that the streets in the New North End are busy, diverse, and deserve the same treatment as the rest of the city. Shannon asked of Kraft or Storrs could provide a potential cost estimate. Storrs commented that BCA estimates the cost of mural installation at \$20 to \$50 per square foot, but may be a little outdated. He guesses that the cost will probably be closer to \$50 per square foot project. The space for the mural is 80' x 22', so the cost will likely be around \$8000. The best part of the space is that there are no windows or shapes to design around – it's a very simple space to work with that makes it ideal for a mural project.

Shannon asked if the mural could potentially wrap around the building and Fink confirmed that that is a possibility. They will be encouraging artists who apply to be creative with their concepts.

Barlow asked if there will be any work done to the building, specifically the entrance, before the mural is installed, and Fink confirmed that the Oddfellows are making basic repairs to the entrance which they intend to complete before the mural installation. The Oddfellows would be able to tailor the building work to suit the mural artist, but they would want to decide on the details first.

Shannon asked about the condition of the building façade. Fink stated that the building is brick, and is in good shape. There is no crumbling and the bricks are well-sealed. Storrs agreed that the façade looks good, but cannot confirm it's in perfect condition without having a mason check it. He commented that murals are not permanent public art, they have a life span and eventually need to be removed or repaired, but the existing wall looks like it's in great shape for the project.

Shannon asked Fink what he's looking for from PACC this evening and Fink explained that he's really just introducing himself and the project. Fink will be returning for funding after proposal phase. He is working with Storrs for management of project.

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Kraft commented that the council funds may not be available when Fink is ready to return and request funding assistance. She wondered if the committee should propose setting aside a certain amount of funding to be confirmed after muralist is chosen. If this is something they want to support it may be a good idea to have funding saved. Shannon agreed that it would be worth putting aside \$10,000 if it's available.

Dieng stated that he is very impressed with Oddfellows and Fink. He loves that it's about community and family. He agreed to the proposal to set \$10,000 aside for project and asked how the committee should proceed. Shannon stated that the committee would need to make a motion to set the funds aside, vote on the motion, then send the request to the Board of Finance.

Dieng moved to request \$10,000 from City Councilor initiative funds for purpose of public art mural at Oddfellows lodge in the New North End. Barlow seconded, and asked to understand exactly how the request would be presented to Board of finance. Dieng confirmed that he would draft a request before the next council meeting.

Shannon asked that Fink prepare the case for the mural, stating that PACC likes the concept even though the details aren't all worked out. All are in agreement on the concept and will propose that money be set aside for it. They can discuss the project at Board of Finance, hold money out, and then have final approval after details become clear.

All were in favor of requesting that Board of Finance set aside \$10,000 for the Oddfellows Lodge Mural project with final approval of those funds to be determined following the selection of an artist/mural project. Shannon thanked Fink for his work, commenting that this mural is a great community beautification project.

Fink stated that he was excited and can't wait to bring back their proposal.

Safety in Parks

Cindi Wight was present to provide a quick update. She shared that discussions continue with Mayor's office and BPD. That said, they are not ready to bring anything forward yet. Wight shared that, unfortunately, there are not funds available for the expanded ranger program as BPRW envisioned it this year. In light of that BPRW is working with the Mayor's office and BPD to come up with a plan for what enforcement looks like with only our 2 existing rangers. These discussions need to continue before BPRW, BPD, and the Mayor's office and bring their proposal to PACC.

Some positive updates include that the rangers will be training with Denver, CO Urban Park Rangers for 9 days. Denver has grown their program from 2 rangers in 2011 to 60 today, and they are a well-received group who act in the same manner as our rangers.

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Barlow commented that the training will give the rangers additional tools to use with the upcoming changes. Shannon added that, having spent a year in the department the rangers will be going into the training knowing exactly what challenges they face. Wight agreed, providing the example of how Denver handles their hazardous site/encampment clean-ups. Instead of picking through a site they choose to pay \$400/hour for hazmat team to clean the areas.

Kraft commented that she hopes the public safety plan that's in the works can be put in place as soon as possible. BCA has started signing contracts for summer events, and those bookings need to be completed by March. BCA and visiting artists need to know that the city is able to take care of activities they're contracted for and that there is adequate protection for children and families. She feels this needs to be known as soon as possible so we know what resources are and what things will look like.

Wight stated that Chief of Police Murad indicated that details on the broader public safety plan will be coming in in early march. She also stated that City Hall Park can't be a ranger issue when there are only 2 rangers in the department and noted that BPD is currently recognizing that they need to handle CHP. Chief Murad indicates that there will likely be dedicated officers in CHP who can be very straightforward with people in the park.

Kraft commented that CHP might need a reset button. The lack of enforcement due to inadequate PD staffing has set a bad precedent. She hopes the city can approach the transition back to following ordinances with a unique touch. Wight commented that Denver had similar situation in one of their parks. They chose to close and fence off the park for a short time, then slowly re-opened it. They still haven't fully re-opened that space and they provide 24/7 staff coverage coverage. That's how they regained control.

Dog Task Force

Wight provided a short update on what the dog task force has been working on for the last year. Maria Karunungan, owner of Fetch the Leash, is the chair of the task force and has stepped into leadership role. There is a BPD rep who has come to last few meetings and as well as someone who has joined the task force from conservation board. The task force has been looking at mandate, and has put out a survey which they've advertised with signs in parks encouraging people to take survey. Non-staff members of the task force have been attending NPA meetings. The task force is also working with Burlington City and Lake to include try to include a youth voice in their discussions. They may be doing dive into one site that they feel has the most potential with city and lake semester to work on community outreach. There has been 600 responses to survey. Educational campaigns have gone out (part of initiative/mandate). Licensing educational initiative is being put out now.

A task force member who works as a lawyer with PETA has been going through ordinances and will have updates included in final recommendation. Members of the task force have had an initial conversation with CAO Schad about continued work (education/programing). They proposed that 50% of revenue

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from dog licenses go into reserve fund to support dog work in community, education, and off-leash programming. It has taken more time than the task force initially anticipated to receive compliance information from BPD. They are trying to understand how much ticketing has been happening but only received that information recently. The task force is looking to figure out a goal to get final report. They will be meeting at the end of Feb to decide on goal to wrap work up, make final report, and end task force. It has been slow going but overall it's been a good, positive process.

Barlow stated that the dog task force and specifically the survey has been hot topic on his Front Porch Forum, and he has fielded multiple constituent calls about it. The main concern is that there is only an option for neutral to positive feelings concerning an off-leash dog park, it would be better if individuals were given the chance to disapprove of the idea. He stated that he has had an ongoing interaction with one constituent who has issues with their neighbor and asked how dog issues get reported and if it's something that could go through See, Click, Fix.

Wight stated that reporting is part of what the task force is looking at. It is unclear who enforces what ordinances and where. Barlow stated that he would like to see See, Click, Fix used as reporting platform.

Dieng asked about the current composition of task force members. Wight explained that Jake, the Starr Farm Dog Park volunteer, stepped down recently and that it's going to take a bit to find a replacement. As group is trying to wrap things up they didn't want to bring someone new in for the last month.

Both Dieng and Shannon asked that Kyle, who has been participating in meetings since the beginning, be credited as original member and officially brought on board.

Dieng stated that the community in general very concerned about dog issues. He feels it would be valuable if dog task force could present to full council. The community needs to know what's going on, and he feels the best way to do that would be to provide a progress report to full council and community at large. People don't know this work is happening and it would be a good way to help the community become aware of the work the task force is doing. Shannon commented that she would also like the task force to update the full council.

Joanne Kalisz asked to speak as a member of the community. She stated that she is not a task force member but she did apply and wanted to be involved, but hasn't been contacted or sent links. She feels that there are a lot of people who are interested but not being reached. Primarily interested in talking about the survey which she felt was very upsetting as someone who is very involved with dogs in the city. Shannon asked that Kalisz email PACC with her concerns.

Shannon wondered if, to be consistent with resolution, PACC should appoint people to fill vacant positions on the task force. Dieng was in agreement and suggested getting an application from Kalisz. Barlow commented that the goal of the various positions on the task force were to provide a broad

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perspective on the issues. If we've lost a segment of that we should try to get it back. Takes the point that we're close to the end, but should have a process that honors all perspectives.

Wight stated that she would have the positions posted for the missing task force members on the city website. PACC will be able to appoint new members at their next meeting. Postings will also be placed at Starr Farm Dog Park.

Parks Parking

Wight explained that, in order to have parking services enforce parking in lots controlled by BPRW, they need to add onto the existing ordinance that enforcement of lots is through DPW parking services. The DPW commission is working on changing the language on their side of things, but BPRW needs to go through the council to change their ordinances. Essentially, the change will enable DPW to be the ones to ticket at all BPRW parking lots. Wight asked that PACC please show support for the ordinance change at the upcoming City Council meeting.

Barlow moves to have PACC sponsor BPRW's ordinance change resolution, Dieng seconded, and all in favor. PACC will sponsor the resolution.

Schedule Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on March 22, 2023 at 5pm at 645 Pine St in the front conference room.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34pm