



MEETING MINUTES

Metro Arts Commission
Public Art Committee
Thursday, August , 2024, 11:00am-1:00pm
Metro Southeast Building
Antioch Conference Room
1417 Murfreesboro Pike
Nashville, TN 3721

Attendance at Meeting:

Commissioners: Campbell West (Chair), Sara Lee Burd, Shaun Giles, Stacey Irvin, Dr. Cara Robinson, Carlton Wilkinson, Dr. Paulette Coleman (Interim Executive Director, ex-officio)

Absent Commissioners: Arlene Nicholas-Phillips (Commissioner) and Beverly Watts (Commissioner)

Metro Arts Staff: Jessica Ingram, Anne-Leslie Owens, Chris Afotey, Daryn Jackson, Masonya Osei, Jesse Ross & Vivian Foxx

- A. Call to Order, Welcome, and Land Acknowledgement
 - a. Commissioner Chair West called meeting to order at 11:10 am
- B. Public Comment
 - a. No Public Comment
- C. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. A motion to approve meeting minutes from February , 2024, and April 11, 2024, by Dr. Cara Robinson and seconded by Sara Lee Burd.
- D. Agenda Items
 - a. Temporary Art on Metro Property Proposal: Nashville Tree Foundation for Frederick Douglass Park

Background and Overview:

The proposal under review is for a temporary art installation at Frederick Douglass Park in East Nashville, submitted by the Nashville Tree Foundation. The project aims to raise awareness about the emerald ash borer, an invasive pest threatening ash trees in the area.



This initiative involves the transformation of a diseased ash tree into an art installation, with the artist Brian Somerville creating a whimsical sculpture titled *Bridges Burned and Lessons Learned*. The artwork will depict two squirrel kingdoms connected by a bridge, inhabited by a large snake, using metal, fiberglass, concrete, and epoxy materials. The installation is proposed for a period of 12 months. The Nashville Tree Foundation has committed to maintaining the sculpture during this time, with the foundation also responsible for the removal of the installation after its lifespan ends.

Review Process:

Metro Arts and the Nashville Tree Foundation's proposal were reviewed in accordance with Metro's guidelines for temporary art installations on Metro property.

Metro Arts does not directly manage the temporary art projects; instead, Metro's Parks, Nashville Department of Transportation (NDOT), or General Services handle the approval and management of projects on their property. Metro Arts conducts an initial vetting process in collaboration with the relevant department before presenting the project to the Public Art Committee.

Key criteria for the evaluation include ensuring that professional artists are compensated, that there is community engagement, a maintenance plan is in place, and the project has a designated contact for its upkeep and removal.

Project Details:

The proposal includes a community engagement component, aiming to educate the public about the emerald ash borer and the impact of the infestation on local trees.

The project's primary focus is on the aesthetic transformation of a tree that was scheduled to be removed due to the emerald ash borer's infestation.

The artist, Brian Somerville, has been selected through a process that did not involve the Public Art Committee. Metro Arts' role is to ensure that the proposal aligns with established guidelines.

Maintenance and Removal:

The Nashville Tree Foundation will be responsible for maintaining the installation for its 12-month duration. After this time, the artwork will be

removed, and any necessary restoration of the site will be managed by the foundation in coordination with Metro Parks.

Discussion:

Members discussed concerns about the potential for the sculpture to be climbed. It was noted that while the sculpture is designed to be safe, it may be like other structures in the park that are climbable, though the design does not explicitly encourage this.

There was clarification that the Public Art Committee's role is to ensure that the proposal meets the minimum criteria for temporary art installations, with final approval and terms to be developed by Metro Parks.

Questions Raised:

How long will the sculpture be displayed

The sculpture is proposed for an 11-month display period.

What will happen to the site after the installation is removed

Since the tree was going to be removed due to the emerald ash borer, the park's staff will work with the Nashville Tree Foundation to determine the next steps for the site after the artwork's removal.

Motion to approve the Nashville Tree Foundation's Emerald Ash Borer Public Awareness Project proposal, titled Bridges Burned and Lessons Learned, with the condition that the project moves forward subject to final review and approval by Metro Parks, including the development of terms and conditions such as responsibilities for installation, fabrication, site preparation, insurance, maintenance, and permits by committee member Shaun Giles and seconded by Carlton Wilkinson.

b. Omari Booker/Strobel House Design Proposal

Background and Overview:

Omari Booker's design proposal for a permanent public art installation at Strobel House, Nashville's first permanent supportive housing project, was presented for review. Each committee member received a written narrative of the proposal in advance for review. The project is influenced by extensive community engagement and aims to reflect the themes of transformation, abundance, and the resilience of those who have experienced homelessness. Booker has worked closely with artists from Daybreak Arts and Room in the Inn, as well as the Strobel family, to develop the artwork.



The installation will feature both two-dimensional and three-dimensional elements, including a large painted wall mural and sculptural elements. The mural will be displayed on the corner retaining wall of the Strobel House property, with a focus on themes of community, nature, and the human experience.

Proposal Details:

Location: The artwork will be displayed on the exterior retaining walls of Strobel House property, specifically the corner wall and adjacent planters. The two planters located at the front of the building will also feature sculptural elements.

Mural and Sculptural Work:

The mural will depict a lush garden with fruits, vegetables, and flowers, representing prosperity, opportunity, and safety—a contrast to the vulnerability often experienced by the unhoused population. The design incorporates a portrait of Father Strobel sitting in a garden, symbolizing the welcoming, abundant environment that the facility provides for residents.

The mural will extend across both sides of the corner retaining wall. The wall closest to the CS overpass will include an additional painted scene, reflecting the metaphor of home through a window. This concept was inspired by the words of artist Miss AM Hassan, who described home as having a window to look out of.

Planters and Transformation Theme:

The planters will house sculptural works that represent the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly, a symbol of personal growth and change. These works will be created using reused materials, reflecting the artist's goal of highlighting the potential for beauty and value in discarded items—an analogy for the transformation that residents of Strobel House undergo.

Materials and Fabrication:

The artist plans to collaborate with local stone masons and sculptors for the fabrication of the mural and sculptural elements. The planters will feature three-dimensional sculptures made from recycled materials, with a focus on durability and sustainability.

The sculptural elements will be securely adhered to the wall and planters to ensure they cannot be removed, addressing concerns regarding safety and vandalism.

Community Engagement:

Omari Booker's design was shaped by extensive community engagement with residents of Daybreak Arts and Room in the Inn. These sessions led to the development of the transformation metaphor, the incorporation of the butterfly symbol, and the design of the garden mural.

The project has been presented to the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) and received positive feedback for its poetic representation of abundance and prosperity.

Maintenance and Long-Term Care:

Metro Arts staff and the artist have discussed long-term maintenance strategies for the mural and sculptures. Given the materials involved, maintenance will be minimal but may require occasional touch-ups or repairs.

Funds have been allocated to ensure the upkeep of public art projects, and Metro Arts will work with General Services to establish a maintenance plan. This will include ensuring that the materials used are durable and weather-resistant, and that the installation is protected from the elements.

Discussion:

Committee members expressed enthusiasm for the project, praising the thoughtfulness and community-driven aspects of the design. Some concerns were raised about how the sculptural elements would be attached to the wall and planters, but it was confirmed that these would be securely adhered to ensure safety.

Questions were raised about the durability and long-term care of the materials, with assurance from the artist and Metro Arts staff that these issues are being addressed, including using water-resistant coatings and working with experts in durable public art materials.

Motion to approve Omari Booker's design proposal for the Strobel House and recommend approval by Public Art Committee by Shaun Giles and seconded by Dr. Cara Robinson.

c. Creative Girls Rock/Looby Community Center Design Proposal

Background and Overview:

The next action item presented was the design proposal by Creative Girls Rock for public artwork at . Alexander Looby Community Center. This project is part of the participatory budgeting process.

Creative Girls Rock has conducted two community engagement sessions to inform the design: one initially planned to be at Looby, which was moved online due to a tornado warning, and the second held at Napier Elementary, which included a panel presentation. These engagements helped the artists connect with the community and gather input for the design.

The mural design proposal, developed with input from local community members, reflects the legacy of . Alexander Looby and his significant contributions to the civil rights movement and social justice in Nashville. The design also acknowledges other key figures in the movement.

Proposal Details:

Location: The mural will be installed on the exterior of the Looby Community Center building. The designated wall for the mural is a large, textured surface, and the artwork will be mounted above a certain height to discourage vandalism.

Dimensions: The mural will be 4 feet wide by 20 feet tall, with a fabric mural material (mural cloth), selected for its durability and long lifespan. This material will be installed using a technique that ensures it can withstand weather conditions over time.

Design Concept:

The mural focuses on the themes of empowerment, justice, and equality, and highlights . Alexander Looby's pivotal role in civil rights activism. The design also includes portraits of other civil rights leaders from Nashville, including figures such as JC Napier, whose contributions helped shape the city's movement for justice.

The mural aims to illustrate the interconnectedness of the civil rights leaders' efforts, emphasizing how progress was achieved through collective action.

Additional Elements: The design features symbols of justice and equality, such as Lady Justice, and includes other motifs representing the broader civil rights struggle, including references to I-40 (the interstate that threatened



Nashville's African American communities) and a tribute to Looby's legacy in the courtroom and beyond.

Mural Materials and Installation:

Fabric Material: The mural will be printed on durable fabric that will be mounted onto the wall using a fabric-pulling tab technique. This method has been chosen for its longevity and resistance to wear.

The fabric will be installed above feet from the ground to deter graffiti and damage.

The mural's production will involve a collaboration with a company in Philadelphia, with Metro Arts staff and art handlers overseeing installation locally.

Budget:

The total budget for the project is \$60,000, which includes the cost of materials, rental space for creating the mural panels, and a 20% contingency for any unforeseen costs.

Community Engagement:

As part of the community engagement process, Creative Girls Rock held interactive sessions where community members provided input on the themes and figures to be included in the mural.

The proposal highlights the role of C. Alexander Looby in Nashville's civil rights history while also connecting his legacy to national movements and other leaders.

Maintenance and Long-Term Care:

Metro Arts staff emphasized the importance of ensuring the mural's longevity and maintaining its condition over time.

The mural's fabric material is designed to withstand weather conditions, but Metro Arts will continue to monitor the mural's condition and plan for any necessary repairs or maintenance.

Discussion:

The committee expressed support for the design, with members noting the mural's powerful tribute to Nashville's civil rights legacy and the thoughtfulness of the community engagement process.

Questions were raised about how the space below the mural would be treated, and whether additional design elements could be incorporated into that area. The committee suggested that further exploration of the space



below the mural might be beneficial, potentially adding color or greenery to enhance the overall aesthetic.

It was also suggested that a key or informational plaque be included with the mural to provide context and recognize the individuals depicted, which has been successfully used in other projects, such as the Donelson Library mural. This idea was warmly received by the committee.

Motion to approve Creative Girls Rock's design proposal for the Z. Alexander Looby Community Center public artwork, including the design, installation plan, and budget, with the recommendation for continued collaboration with Metro Parks to ensure the project's success and longevity by Sara Lee Burd and seconded by Carlton Wilkinson.

E. Project and Program Discussion and Updates

a. Temporary Art on Metro Property Process

- Discussion: A proposal was introduced to streamline the approval process for temporary art installations. By publishing best practices, PAC aims to provide guidance without requiring each project to undergo committee review, addressing procedural inconsistencies.

b. Lending Library: Evaluation of Collection and Artist Data

- Acquisitions: Added 53 new artworks, valued at \$61,500, focusing on artist diversity.
- Exhibit: Currently open to the public until August 16, 2024.

c. Fairgrounds Public Artwork Update

- Progress: Project nearing completion; an official opening date will be announced soon.

F. New/Old Business

- Farewell to Public Art Manager: Jessica Ingram announced her resignation to pursue new opportunities. PAC members expressed gratitude for her contributions and dedication to Metro Arts.

G. Adjourn:

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 by Chair West.

Submitted for approval by

Vivian Foxx, Metro Staff