



MINUTES

Metro Arts Commission Public Art Committee

February 28, 2025

1:30 AM-3:30 PM

Metro Southeast

1417 Murfreesboro Pike

Green Hills Room

Nashville, TN 37217

Committee Members in Attendance: Campbell West (Chair), Evan Brown (Commissioner) Stacey Irvin, Carlton Wilkinson, Cara Robinson, Ashley Bachelder (Interim Executive Director, *ex-officio*)

Committee Members not in Attendance: Sara Lee Burd, Shaun Giles, Arlene Nicholas-Phillips (Commissioner)

Staff in Attendance: Anne-Leslie Owens, Atilio Murga, Jesse Ross, Masonya Osei, Vivian Foxx

A. Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Commissioner West called the meeting to order at 1:40 PM. She welcomed all attendees and expressed appreciation for their participation.

B. Public Comments

It was noted that no members of the public had signed up to provide comments. No written public comments were submitted before the meeting, and no attendees requested to speak.

C. Approval of Minutes: February 28, 2025

The committee reviewed the minutes from the November 14, 2024, meeting. A correction was requested to reflect that Dr. Cara Robinson was in attendance at that meeting.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the minutes with the noted correction. Approval was unanimous.

D. Action Items

Chair West noted that due to ongoing discussions and planning, the following action items would be deferred to the next meeting:

1. **Lending Library Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Nashville Public Library**
2. **Temporary Art on Metro Property: Nashville Tree Foundation Proposal for Centennial Park**

E. Project Discussion and Updates

1. **Nashville Youth Campus for Empowerment (NYCE) Public Art Opportunities - presented by Atilio Murga**

Overview: The NYCE is a major redevelopment initiative, spearheaded by Judge Sheila Calloway, to replace the current Juvenile Justice Court with a modern facility focused on youth empowerment. The new campus, located on a 14-acre site in North Nashville (District 2, Council Member Toombs), will provide educational, therapeutic, and community-based resources. Staff presented preliminary ideas for PAC feedback. Based on feedback received and additional research and planning, staff will present project recommendation at a future PAC meetings.

Public Art Opportunities:

- **Comprehensive Wall Sculpture** – A large-scale, permanent artwork is being considered for a key space within the facility. The proposed selection process will be a national call to artists, allowing for broad participation.
- **Direct Artist Selection** – Stephanie Pruitt-Gaines has been identified as the possible lead artist for a second major project within the campus. She has been involved with the juvenile justice system's artistic initiatives in the past, worked with Metro Arts on the Bloomberg Initiative grant proposal, and has demonstrated a strong commitment to the vision of the NYCE project.
- **Empowerment Collection** – Under consideration is a curated selection of 10–15 artworks will be commissioned from artists with direct or indirect experiences with the juvenile justice system. The theme will focus on empowerment, resilience, and justice.

Timeline: The goal is for all public art installations to be completed by January 2027.

Funding: The projects will be supported through Metro's Percent for Art program, though specific budget allocations are still being determined.

Discussion: Committee members expressed enthusiasm for the project but raised questions regarding artist selection processes, community involvement, and material durability. A concern was raised about ensuring that the space remains welcoming and appropriate for all who will use it, including youth and families involved in non-criminal proceedings such as adoptions and custody hearings. Commissioner Brown raised concern about the national call and local artists; Atilio Murga explained local artists can apply for the national call and balances out with the local calls for artists.

2. **Nolensville Pike Transit Shelters: Behind the Artist Video Series - Presented by Atilio Murga**

Overview: Metro Arts has collaborated with the Metro Nashville Network to produce short feature videos showcasing artists involved in the Nolensville Pike Bus Shelter Project.

Partners: WeGo, Metro Nashville Network (ITS Media Team)

Artists Featured: Tess Davies (Glenrose Outbound), Prado Studio (Glenrose Inbound), Thandiwe Shiphrah & Daniel Arite (Thompson Lane Inbound), LeXander Bryant (Antioch Station Inbound), Tony Sobota (Elysian Field Inbound)

Project Background: The bus shelters feature artist-designed vinyl wrap installations. The video series aims to highlight their creative processes and the impact of public art on transportation spaces. Will air on Metro Nashville Network and Metro Arts and WeGo social media/website.

Challenges: Due to technical difficulties, the video trailer could not be played during the meeting. However, links to the videos will be distributed to committee members.

Discussion: Committee members praised the initiative and encouraged continued efforts to document and promote public art projects. They also emphasized the importance of ensuring artists receive proper credit and visibility for their work.

3. Arthur Avenue Artist Site Visit and Lighting Testing - Presented by Anne-Leslie Owens

Overview: The Arthur Avenue underpass lighting project, a long-term initiative in North Nashville, will begin construction this spring.

Status Update: The artist, Alex Braden, is scheduled to visit Nashville in late March to conduct a site assessment and finalize installation plans. Anne Leslie Owens reviewed the lighting design. Installation is expected to begin by May 2025.

Concerns & Maintenance: Committee members raised questions about durability, potential vandalism, and maintenance responsibilities. A **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** is being developed with the Nashville Department of Transportation (NDOT) to outline maintenance protocols, including graffiti removal and light fixture upkeep.

Discussion: Some committee members suggested considering additional urban beautification elements, such as greenery, but noted challenges in maintaining landscaping in high-traffic areas. Chair West noted this is a multi-year project and thanked the staff for the commitment over the years.

F. New Business / Old Business

1. FY2026 Budget Public Art Priorities and Scheduling

The FY2026 budget has been submitted, with no new funding requests for public art projects.

Committee members discussed the importance of long-term financial planning for upcoming projects.

2. Metro Arts Hiring Update

- **Public Art Manager:** The hiring process must be restarted due to a procedural issue. A new call for applications will be posted, with an expected hiring timeline of 2–3 months.
- **Finance Manager:** The hiring process is actively underway, with candidate review in progress and interviews expected in March.
- **Public Information Officer:** This role, which will focus on media relations and public engagement, is also in the hiring process.
- **Executive Director Search:** No timeline has been established yet for the permanent position.

3. 25th Anniversary of Nashville's Public Art Ordinance

The ordinance, signed in June 2000, will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2025. Possible ideas for celebrating the milestone include: a retrospective exhibition of Metro Arts' public art projects, community engagement initiatives, and commissioned and/or purchased artwork. Planning will proceed as staffing levels stabilize to ensure proper execution.

Additional Discussion: Commissioner Carlton Wilkinson raised the possibility of commissioning a public art installation for the 440 Underpass at Leland Lane & Battlefield Drive. Staff advised reaching out to Councilmember to explore funding and project feasibility.

G. Adjournment. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.