

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF FORT MYERS**  
**PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE**  
**January 24, 2022**

The Public Art Committee of the City of Fort Myers, Florida, met in regular session at Oscar M. Corbin Jr. City Hall, 2200 Second Street, its regular meeting place in the City of Fort Myers, FL, on Tuesday, January 24, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. Present were: Carolyn Gora, Chair, presiding, Committee Members, William Taylor, Leila Mesdaghi (Arrived at 4:08 p.m.), Victor Dotres, David Meo, Molly Deckart and Ava Roeder. Also present were Councilmember Bochette, Phyllis Calloway, CRA Representative, Charles Barnes, Lee County Black History Society Representative, Betty Adams Community Representative, Tom Hall, Art Consultant, Donna Lovejoy, Assistant Director Public Works, Jose Parrilla, Parks Interim Manager, and Reva Daly, Public Works Fiscal Coordinator. Absent: Bettye Middlebrooks

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Gora called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Gora led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**ROLL CALL** - Taken by Reva Daly.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**REGULAR ITEMS**

1. Approval of December 21, 2021, Minutes

**MOTION: Committee member Taylor moved to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2021, meeting; seconded by Committee member Meo; motion carried 6-0.**

2. 4:15 p.m. MLK/VSSB Gateway Artwork Finalist Presentation by Michael Don Clapper.

Mickael Don Clapper, public artist from Denver, Colorado introduced himself to the committee. He began his Zoom presentation by sharing his power point that he had prepared. He noted three distinct inspirational items he used as metaphors for his project. The first one referred to Veronica S. Shoemaker's life and legacy to the city of Fort Myers and were floral blossoms. He noted that we know that she owned a florist shop, and we are very familiar with her struggles running 17 times to become the first black council person in the city of Fort Myers history. The second item was an equal's sign that would play a large part in the sculpture signifying equality between all races. The third image that he used as a metaphor was an image of Dr. King from his I have a dream speech. He explained the materials and techniques that he would like to use for the sculpture and showed past artworks as examples. Mr. Clapper presented his

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rendering for the City of Fort Myers that he called “On Towards Equality” made from two elements of rolled steel to be convex when looking at the front for three dimensionality. He noted that it has the three distinct metaphorical elements to it as he described earlier. The floral pattern represents Veronica Shoemakers life as a florist. That is meant to honor her and represents the dreams that she had of becoming a City Council person. The second metaphorical element is the equals sign that he mentioned earlier, it binds the two separate pieces together for a very immediate metaphor for equality. His goal was to grasp the meaning of this piece in a quick immediacy because it is not a public place for pedestrians, because you’re driving by it. Mr. Clapper noted that he wanted people to grasp it quickly as they glance at it. The top pinacol is the image of Dr. King from his I have a dream speech. Mr. Clapper wanted to honor him in reference to Civil Rights. Mr. Clapper presented different images of the proposed artwork and explained its materials in detail to the committee. He explained its size being anywhere from 21 to 23 feet tall and eight to nine feet across the top and five feet across at the bottom and three feet deep to give the committee an idea of its scale. Mr. Clapper asked the committee if they had any questions. Committee member Meo asked if the towers were rounded, because they look flat in the pictures. Mr. Clapper noted that they do look flat in the rendering, but they do have a 12-foot radius and they are rolled back to give it more of a partial cylinder look to it to give it more three dimensionality to it. Committee member Meo inquired about the piece encountering excessive winds. Mr. Clapper noted that all of his projects are engineered to their specific site and are engineered to the specific region’s codes. Mr. Clapper explained the structure of the piece and that it will be engineered to withstand hurricane force winds. Committee member Roeder asked what the back of the sculpture looks like, because people are driving by it in all directions. Mr. Clapper noted that you would see Dr. King’s image in reverse at the top of the sculpture through the top of the palm trees. Committee member Taylor had a question for Parks and Recreation about the trees and landscaping, he inquired if the back is going to be blocked off from the view. Jose Parilla, Parks Interim Manager confirmed that it is pretty lush in the back and that there are big palm trees and that eventually they are going to cover the whole back and that you are not going to see much of from the back side anyways. Mr. Parilla asked what the sculpture is made out of. Mr. Clapper noted that he often works with Corten Steel, but he doesn’t want to use the Corten steel for fears of the rust coming down on the blossoms. Mr. Clapper explained the process he would use to paint the sculpture. Committee Member Taylor asked for Mr. Clapper to explain how he makes MLK and the flowers from the steel. Mr. Clapper noted that all of the imagery is water jet cut through the steel before it is rolled, and that imagery is all on a computer and the machine follows the computerized pattern. He went on to explain the process of creating the photographic imagery of holes of different sizes to create the pixelated shape. Chair Gora thank Mr. Clapper for his presentation.

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### 3. 5:00 p.m. MLK/VSSB Gateway Artwork Finalist Presentation by Douglas Kornfeld

Tom Hall Art Consultant introduced Douglas Kornfeld of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mr. Kornfeld began his power point presentation via Zoom showing the committee three previous projects that would give the committee some insight to his process. The first artwork was called Meeting of Minds and won a national award for Americans for the Arts. He shared his second project titled Runner located at the Indiana State University. He noted that the Runner became a major focal point for the campus and a symbol for the entire university. The third project he shared is in New Orleans that was a great project with a terrible title Evacuspot. He noted that it is 17 identical sculptures located throughout the city of New Orleans where each marks a spot where people gather for transportation out of the city when there is a call for emergency evacuation. It became their evacuation symbol. He explained its simple design being the same gesture used to hail a cab and the same used during Marty Gras to ask for beads from the passing floats. At the dedication the sculpture was proclaimed by the Mayor as official symbols of the city. Mr. Kornfeld noted wanting to create a symbol for Fort Myers and from his research what stood out was Veronica Shoemaker. He noted what an amazing woman she was, her life and contributions to Fort Myers being the first African American elected to the city council. He explained that in 2010 she was one of three women recognized for her elected service to Lee County and her decades of helping others. Mr. Kornfeld noted a deeply personal connection to Veronica Shoemaker and her successful florist shop, because he grew up working after school, weekends and summers in his father's flower shop and garden center. Mr. Kornfeld presented the headline that summed up her life Politics, Posies and Persistence and noted they are what inspired his artwork for Fort Myers. He presented images that inspired his design. He found a photo of a garden trellis to symbolize a gateway and it seems three dimensional, but it is actually flat. He presented photos of his sketches that lead to a preliminary design. He presented slides of his sketches of a sunflower, gateway and flower petals. He showed the final result compiled into one image of a symbolic gateway surrounded by flower petals. Its dimensions he noted were 36 feet across and 18 feet high. He noted that it would be boldly visible from the surrounding streets and at night it will be lit with solar power stored up during the day. The title for the sculpture was said to be Politics, Posies and Persistence dedicated to Veronica Shoemaker. Mr. Kornfeld noted that the sculpture will be built with stainless steel tube, stainless steel pipe and stainless-steel perforated sheet with all of these materials able to stand up well to the harsh salty Florida climate. He noted that annual washing with common soap and water, the sculpture can be expected to last almost indefinitely. Light fixtures will be mounted on the north face of the sculpture to light it streetside. The solar panels will be on the back or the south side where they will capture the most sunlight to provide the power for the night lighting. He estimated five months to build and install the sculpture. The detailed budget was available in the brochure that Mr. Hall passed out. Committee member Taylor asked about the section that has the vanishing point and if there was some type of mesh or metal there. Mr. Kornfeld replied yes, they are smaller holes than the ones in the petals. It's an optical illusion it is basically a two-dimensional object, but it gives the illusion of

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depth. Chair Gora confirmed that the sculpture is 18 feet high. Committee member Meo asked if the piece is mainly visible from the front. Mr. Kornfeld replied yes. Committee member Meo noted that if it was placed on a berm that it might be better visible from the back side as well. Mr. Kornfeld noted that he hadn't considered that, because the photos showed quite a bit of extensive foliage directly behind it and the yellow would stand out against it. Mr. Kornfeld noted that he was willing to consider anything, but he designed it with the idea that it would primarily be seen from the front. Chair Gora asked Mr. Kornfeld if he took into consideration anything about Martin Luther King who was also a part of this project. Mr. Kornfeld replied that he did but decided that he wanted to focus on the local connection to the site, Veronica Shoemaker. Mr. Hall asked how the sculpture is anchored to the site. Mr. Kornfeld thought that it would be reinforced concrete footings at either ends of the arch and a lesser but still substantial amount of concrete running along the bottom of the arch. Committee member Roeder asked if there was perforated space in the arch and if they were different designs within each space. He noted that all the space that is in the arch has perforated metal, but the holes are a quarter of an inch in diameter enough to let the sunshine through. He noted that shadows are important to his work when they fall in the right direction, they can be really dramatic. It was confirmed that it would be lit by solar power, because there is no access to any electrical. Chair Gora noted that there were no more questions and thanked Mr. Kornfeld for his presentation and the booklet that he provided.

#### 4. 5:45 p.m. MLK/VSSB Gateway Artwork Finalist Presentation by Cecilia Lueza.

Cecilia Lueza introduced herself via Zoom and her company Cecilia Lueza projects. She also introduced Mr. Greg Moon, her husband, who was in charge of logistics and installations for overall operations. She noted that she fell in love with this project, because its foundation is the very reason that she came to America and became a US citizen and that this project is very dear to her heart. She shared a quote by Martin Luther King Jr. "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope." Mrs. Lueza continued that after immersing ourselves in the life of Veronica Shoemaker and learning about the unique history and culture of the Dunbar community our goal for this very special project is to capture not only the brightness of hope and the power of dreams, but also the achievement of justice, equality and freedom pursued by extraordinary individuals like Veronica Shoemaker. She presented a model of her design titled Journey of Hope and the sculpture was composed of two main pieces. One is an African American woman looking with yearning and determination in her eyes as a way to symbolize hope and dreams of her future. She noted that the second sculpture functions as a background and it was inspired by a sunburst that symbolizes a new day where justice, equality and freedom will prevail. She noted that the colors of the artwork are partially inspired by the city's logo and the blue of the ocean. She described the colors of the sunburst transition with orange at the bottom and yellow at the top the colors symbolize the arrival of the future, the burst represents freedom. She stated that this color pallet creates a contrast and makes the sculpture stand out from the greenery of the landscape. Mr. Moon noted the dimensions of the sunburst are approximately 14

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and a half feet in diameter and the concrete base is 12 feet in diameter and the total height is 15 to 16 feet. Mr. Moon noted that the work is made of half inch aluminum, cut by a water jet tool. He noted that it would all be finished colors using a powder coat that is very resistant to the UV and the elements, very industrial grade powder coat. Everything would be bolted and put together with stainless steel fasteners. Mrs. Lueza presented a rendering of the artwork. Mr. Moon noted that the sculpture would have LED illumination at night powered by a 200 watt solar panel with a battery that would charge during the day and at night when the sun goes down the light would turn on and turn off in the morning when the sun comes up. The lights would be in the back part of the head, shooting towards the sun and they would not be visible from the street. They showed another color option of the sculpture. They concluded their presentation and asked if there were questions. Jose Parrilla, Parks Interim Manager asked about the concrete pad and if it is built somewhere else and then just put down or is it built on site. Mr. Moon noted that it is two feet tall by 12 feet in diameter of concrete that would be cast in place right there. Mr. Moon noted that he is a state general contractor here in Florida with a strong engineering background. Committee member Mesdaghi asked who the profile of the face it is, and if it was Veronica Shoemakers profile. Mrs. Lueza noted that it is an African American woman profile, nobody in particular and that it was just about celebrating all women, all African American women and all African Americans in general and what they have to go through to achieve what they deserve. Committee member Meo asked about the dimensionality of the blue streak and how thick it was. Mr. Moon noted that the birds and the main face structure is all half inch, the light blue element would be quarter inch. He noted that it's a 12 inch flat bar all the way around that we would form to the outer perimeter of the head. Chair Gora asked about the powder coating and what the life of that was, because we have really strong sun here. Mr. Moon noted their subcontractors use really industrial stuff that you would find on offshore drilling oil rigs and that it is very heavy duty. He explained the process further. Committee member Roeder asked about the visibility of the sculpture from all directions. It was noted that you would see color coming from all directions that is going to catch your eye. Committee member Mesdaghi asked if they could put birds on the back of the sculpture. Mr. Moon stated that they would have to be in the same exact spot of the birds in the front. Mr. Parrilla noted to keep in mind that there is a lot of shrubbery behind it. They discussed the landscaping of the site. Chair Gora thanked them for their presentation.

### 5. Award of MLK/VSSB Gateway Artwork Commission

Tom Hall, Art Consultant noted that they were now in the discussion phase and to make comments at random comparing all three until they are ready to vote. Chair Gora noted that she thought that the first one covered everything that we asked for and the other two were concentrating on Veronica Shoemaker who is wonderful, but she thought that it is both intersections. Committee member Deckart noted that she thought the first presentation was the strongest design. Phyllis Calloway, CRA representative noted that the first sculpture captured everything, but that she thought that a lot of it was captured

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with the third sculpture as well. She noted that on behalf of the CRA she really thought one and three captured the theme in totality. Number two was good, but she didn't think that was the right corner for number two. Charles Barnes, Lee County Black History Society Representative noted that he was so glad that we talked about the theme, because there was a great deal of work that the CRA did to come up with that theme. The artists one and three took that into consideration, He noted that he thought that two just missed the entire mark and he actually changed the name of the theme. Mr. Barnes noted that he was leaning toward number three. Tom Hall, Art Consultant noted just to put it in context the CRA decided to initiate this project. We did a Zoom power point to the community showing them different types of public artwork that they could consider. After that the CRA put out a survey asking the community for feedback and the feedback was specifically Hopes, Dreams and Civil Rights. There was also a sediment that it was not a representational piece, per say. Betty Adams, Community Representative at large noted that she liked the comments of both the CRA Representative, Ms. Calloway, and Mr. Barnes from Black History Society. She thought that they both brought in some interesting points especially the one about the fact of not having something that looks exactly like Martin Luther King and Veronica Shoemaker. That you want something that is representative of what they stood for, but not just actually seeing them. You want something that is leading to the future. Ms. Adams noted that she thought that something representative of looking forward would be great. Committee member Dotres noted that he agreed with all three representatives. He thought that the first one was an amazing artwork, that the second one was a very beautiful piece that would look nice anywhere and the third one he thought that it was perfect. Mr. Dotres agreed that it shouldn't look like anyone, she should look like everyone, so he stated that the third one is a keeper. Committee member Roeder noted that at first, she thought that what Carolyn said was absolutely correct and he was my favorite in the beginning, but she would have to go with Cecilia, because if you look at her previous work it is extremely colorful and vibrant. Chair Gora thought the imagery on the third sculpture was repetitive with What Dreams We Have and How They Fly, the Cheryl Foster piece. She liked the first one for its height. She noted that it's much higher and if you want a beacon coming into Fort Myers, you're going to see that above the trees and the Journey of Hope is lower at 16 feet which doesn't have that height. Committee member Meo noted that he agreed that on number two and number three their inherent problem of height would have to be made up with something that should have been done with the Cheryl Foster piece and that is to place it higher on a berm. There was a public comment made by Mr. Levon Simms about maintaining the safety of the intersection. Mr. Hall spoke on behalf of their conservation team Rosa Lowinger and Associates, that they are not fans of powder coating in this climate. Committee member Meo commented on the visibility of the sculpture from different angles causing distractions while driving. Committee member Taylor noted that he keeps vacillating one minute to the next between one and three. The committee continued to discuss sculptures one and three from the presentations. It was agreed that you are not going to see the back view, because of all the foliage. Chair Gora noted that she was

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disappointed with the second one, because it's not telling me anything. Ms. Calloway noted that she loves number one too, but when she looks at number one she sees the King monument in DC. She thought that the image in number three portrays that there is a community effort of people around and then you have the birds, because we relate to the nurturing of the community. Committee member Dotres noted that the theme although number one is excellent, he thought the third one does encompass the whole theme and when they do Otocast they would mention that sculpture was inspired by Veronica Shoemaker, so even if they don't think that it looks like Veronica Shoemaker, they are going to look at that and think that is Veronica Shoemaker, which is okay. Committee member Deckart thought the third sculpture to be too small and that it needs to be higher. Committee member Mesdaghi inquired if they could increase the size a little bit. Mr. Hall noted that if they were the winners, he could always ask them if there was a way that they can add any height to it, but he thought that they have to make their evaluations based upon what the artists provided. Councilmember Bochette thanked the committee for letting him be a part of the process, but he noted that since this is going to come up for a vote, he excused himself and would wait to see what they decide. Committee member Roeder thought it would be good to see photos from the presentations as a reminder. The committee discussed the photos. They committee decided to take a vote to see where they stand.

**MOTION: Committee member Taylor moved to vote on options one and three for the MLK/VSSB gateway artwork, eliminating number two; seconded by Committee member Deckart; motion carried 10-0.**

The committee discussed how they would like to move forward on how to vote on the two remaining artworks. It was decided to ask each member if they want one or three. The committee was tied with five selection committee members voting for artwork one and five selection committee members voting for artwork three. Mr. Hall proposed that they move to a number system. He noted that for the first artwork, Michael Clapper, they can give it a three if you really like it, a two, or a one. Then we will do the third artwork after that, and we will see who received the greatest number of points. Committee member Dotres noted to his fellow committee members that they did invite guest from the community and that he thought that it is very important to listen to what they are saying too, when we calculate our numbers. Mr. Hall went over the original criteria going back to what the artists were told that we were going to use as criteria to judge their work. A. Artistic merit B. How well the design incorporates the desired themes of dreams, hope and civil rights. C. Suitability of the design to the site including scale and visibility from the adjoining roads. D. Suitability of materials given Southwest Florida's harsh subtropical climate. E. Anticipated durability and longevity of the proposed artwork. F. The artworks annual maintenance requirements. G. The artists experience and incorporating artwork into the built environment. H. The artists demonstrated ability to complete projects on time and within budget. The committee voted using the number system. Artwork number one Michael Clapper scored a 26 and

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Cecilia Lueza artwork number three scored a 23. Tom Hall asked for a motion to accept those results.

**MOTION: Committee member Taylor moved to approve that Michael Clapper artwork has been selected for the MLK project; seconded by Committee member Mesdaghi; motion failed 5-5.**

There was discussion to the motion. Committee member Dotres thought that the scores would have gone with sculpture three and he thought they just played a numbers game. He noted that if it would have been explained better to them, they would have voted differently and they would have gotten their winner. Committee member Taylor noted that there is one last chance to listen to the people who are here from the community. Committee member Mesdaghi noted that she thought their vote matters to her more than ours. Ms. Calloway noted that there is so much more centered around hope, dreams and civil rights that is portrayed in the abstract of art piece number three that captures and can tell stories more than just Dr. Martin Luther King. When people see artwork number three Dr. Kings story is going to be told. She noted that anyone coming through that corridor is going to understand the purpose for that particular piece. It's not just a piece of art, it's a representation of an entire community. Mr. Barnes spoke on the artist and design of artwork What Dreams we Have and How They Fly. He noted that wasn't a good example to compare it to. He noted that both pieces are nice, and he thought that they both would work in the end, but he would prefer the third piece. Mr. Hall noted that there was a motion and a second to accept the count, so you either have to approve it and we are done or vote it down and we revote. Mr. Hall noted that he thought a tie vote means a no and we have to start over. He reiterated that the motion doesn't carry in other words.

**MOTION: Committee member Taylor moved to accept artwork number three as the winner for the MLK project by Cecilia Lueza; seconded by Committee member Dotres; motion carried 6-4.**

6. Upcoming Public Art Committee meeting on Tuesday, February 15, 2022

### **OTHER**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, it was moved by Committee member Taylor; seconded by Committee member Deckart; to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.