

City of Fort Myers

Public Art Committee Minutes

May 30, 2023

The Public Art Committee of the City of Fort Myers, Florida met in regular session at the Oscar M. Corbin Jr. City Hall, 2200 Second Street, its regular meeting place in the city of Fort Myers, Florida on April 18, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. Present were Vice Chair Dotres, Ava Roeder, Carolyn Gora, and David Meo. Also present were Tom Hall, Art Consultant, Jennifer Smith, Cultural Affairs Manager, and Amanda Browning-Richardson from the City Attorney's office. Absent were Chair Leila Mesdaghi, William Taylor, Jane Lane and Bettye Middlebrooks.

Call to Order: Vice Chair Dotres called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm

Pledge of Allegiance: Vice Chair Dotres led the Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Taken by Jennifer Smith

Public Input:

- A. Fort Myers Fire Department Chief Tracy spoke in support of a Carmona sculpture being moved to the front of fire station 15 (Ward 6) and a living memorial such as a tree with a plaque at fire station 17.

- B. Fort Myers Police Department LT Roger Valdivia spoke on behalf of the FMPD, in support of creating a memorial for Chief Diggs, whatever that may be, to be placed at the new Police Department Headquarters. Currently, the land for the new FMPD HQ has not yet been acquired. Lt Valdivia will include the Committee as the project moves forward so it is in the design planning stages.

Regular Items

1. **Meeting Minutes:** Motion to move April 18, 2023 minutes to June 28th Agenda. Approved 4-0 Presentation from Earl Kennedy and the Combat Infantrymen Association members regarding their proposal to raise funds and market for an all-Veterans Memorial in downtown. Mr. Kennedy provided a power point presentation and a model of the proposed memorial. Mr. Kennedy has discussed acquiring their proposed location with the mayor, but the property has not yet been purchased or been placed under contract. Mr. Hall asked if the organization had considered a different location such as Centennial Park. Mr. Kennedy stated the organization prefers the higher visibility of the lot across from the Luminary Hotel. Committee members thanked the men for their services. Vice Chair Dotres asked the City Attorney for suggestions on how to move forward. The City Attorney advised approving support of the concept and to move forward to the City Council. ***MOTION: To move forward in support of the concept of a Veterans Memorial.***
Approved

2. **Presentation from Elgin Hicks, Director of Parks & Recreation, on Lions Park Project** Tabled and added to June agenda.

3. **Update from CRA regarding First Street Pocket Park.** CRA not available for presentation. Councilman Bochette has seen the design; it does not block the mural currently in place; the benches are movable; the plans include nice landscape of palms; closeable gates on the front; interior patio with drainage and moving forward due to private donor paying for everything. Councilman Bochette advises the committee to keep this project on its mind to be able to put forth its opinion when the opportunity arises.
4. **Input from Councilperson Liston Bochette, City Council Liaison (Ward 4)** Councilman Bochette was disappointed no one from this committee attended the Ward 4 meeting – each city committee was asked to send a representative. All staff and 4 committee members were not advised of the meeting invitation. Councilman Bochette asked Mrs. Smith to coordinate with Blanca Contreras to ensure these communications regarding the next Ward 4 meeting in September is shared with this committee. Councilman Bochette advises this committee to consider the Edison Extension Project roundabout opportunities as he is working with the City Manager to try to free up some of that budget – it doesn't have to be all the money but some to work on maybe a roundabout. Councilman Bochette asked this committee to come up with a project to present to City Council to ask that it needs x amount of dollars for an annual project. Or eco project. Be creative and bring forth some discussions with a budget at the next committee meeting as a “special annual project” needing funds. If the project is in the CRA one, maybe the CRA could kick in additional funds and matching donors to help move it forward. It would make a difference to City Council to show this committee doesn't just have a bunch of great ideas but are moving forward and planning a project. Councilman Bochette also mentioned a call about the Manatee Monument that is in the river. Suntec received the contract and Councilman Bochette is waiting to hear if they would like to participate in saving the monument and stand it back up.
5. **Update from Jose Parrilla, Parks & Beautification**
The quote to paint the bottom of all the Carmona sculptures a rust color is \$3,000 approximately. When the time comes additional discussions can take place regarding the flyer/brochure holders. Uncommon Friends and Panther fountains are all up and running.
6. **Report by PAC Member Ms. Gora & Mrs. Roeder** Mrs. Roeder and Ms Gora combined their presentation from Florida Association of Public Art Professionals 25th Annual Conference May 11-13 in Orlando, FL. Past, the Present and the Future was the format of the conference. Past included socially engaged art such as raising awareness of the Florida constantly receding coastline.
7. **Report by PAC Member Ms. Gora & Mrs. Roeder (continued)** Other Florida communities have advanced their arts and culture community utilizing branding, QR Codes, Otocast, unified transportation systems, bus stops, and developing relationships with elected officials. The City of Orlando created a Selection Committee Panel made of stakeholders such as art professionals, members of the community, local government to put out a call for artists to create a pool of artists/art teams. The pool stays on file as needed versus sending out a call for artists for every project and is quicker than doing a café style selection. Augmented reality is another aspect available to enhance the arts & culture experience in our community. Some other features of the latest arts options include 3d

printed sculptures.

8. **Report on FAPAP by Mr. Hall, Art Consultant.** Mr. Hall presented on his takeaway from Florida Association of Public Art Professionals (FAPAP) 25th Annual Conference May 11-13 in Orlando, FL about the power of public art experiences and events. The presentation dovetails from what Councilman Bochette mentioned in March and what Liz Bello-Matthews planned to help brand the City of Fort Myers as an Art Hub. However, the RDA jumped the gun on Liz' idea and with their partners are planning ARTember – an entire month of art-focused experiences throughout the city in the month of September. The basis for this is people young and old are opting for “experiences” for longer lasting joy and shareable on social media. The public art philosophy is moving away from sculptures and murals and investing more into immersive, temporary, art activations like weekend and month-long events that become synonymous with a specific city/county. These experiences play an instrumental role in promoting tourism, supporting the local economy, and fostering civic pride. Two case studies were presented at FAPAP: Blink Cincinnati and Immerse in Orlando. Blink Cincinnati, the largest art light and project mapping festival in the world, solidified Cincinnati as a hub for arts & culture. Blink Cincinnati resulted in a direct economic impact of \$126 million; attracted 2 million attendees over 4 days; created 1687 jobs; and generated \$1.5million in direct artists commissions and sales. Immerse involves 1000 artists that take over downtown (10 city blocks) with music, immersive art installations, unexpected events, and global encounters. Immerse is funded through bed & occupancy taxes as well as grants and private benefactors and gives the city the opportunity to champion the growth of arts and culture. There are 20 full time theater companies in Fort Myers and Lee County. We also have a strong dance and ballet presence in Fort Myers. The committee could collaborate with any number of local attractions for immersive experiences such as Edison Ford Winter Estates, IMAG, Williams Academy, Calusa Nature Center, local brewing companies/distilleries, our local trolley for pop up fashion shows, using temp art exhibits in empty space display windows, incorporating mosaics into sidewalks, etc. Otocast gives us the opportunity to promote different events for free on its Splash page. Vice Chair Dotres complimented all 3 members on their presentations and the great ideas but asked what to do with this information now or what would be the next steps. Mr. Hall asked Mrs. Smith opinion on inviting one of the ARTember organizers if they would consider presenting to the committee so the committee can decide how the members can help. Mrs. Smith would extend an invitation to the ARTember organizers to present and supported Councilman Bochette’s suggestions there needs to be more action – not just great ideas. Mrs. Smith suggested members bring back great ideas with additional research such as what venue, what costs, what permits may be needed to move an idea into becoming a reality. Ms. Gora asked for guidance from Mrs. Bello-Matthews as to how to move forward. Mr. Hall stated they only ask was to include the ARTember events on the Otocast Spash Page as an art experience scavenger hunt or a walking tour to get more attention to the arts and culture program. Mrs. Roeder is concerned about how the members be involved in any events without violating Sunshine Laws, who organizes the event, etc. Mr. Hall suggested looking at each event individually and the sponsor or organizer of the event and starting from there.
9. **Update on Repair and Maintenance of Public Art damaged during Hurricane Ian (Mr. Hall, Art Consultant).** Cape Welding is submitting their City Vendor Application. Their

proposal will be presented to the City Council when the Vendor Application is approved and registered. Repairs for Rachel and the Carmona Sculptures will be presented to the City Council on the June 20th meeting. The City Council regular meeting on June 19th was rescheduled due to the Juneteenth holiday and AV equipment being updated. June 20th is the date of this committee's monthly meeting; therefore, Mrs. Smith will check with the Council Chambers schedule to find another date and time for the Public Art Committee to hold its June meeting. Mrs. Smith will contact the Committee members when the new date and time are reserved.

10. **Update on fabrication of Journey of Hope sculpture by St. Petersburg sculptor Cecilia Lueza (Ward 2) intersection of MLK & Veronica S. Shoemaker Boulevards (Mr. Hall, Art Consultant)** Due to various delays, the projected installation will be sometime in October.
11. **New business:** Liz Bello-Matthews requested the members consider other arts & culture opportunities seen in other cities you would like to have incorporated in the City of Fort Myers to activate the city as an Art Hub in SWFL. Vice Chair asked this be added to the next meeting.
12. **Next meeting:** TBD. Mr. Hall asked if Juneteenth will be an annual holiday. Mrs. Smith confirmed. Mr. Hall stated now there will be 3 months the committee will not be able to meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month: President's Day in January; Martin Luther King Jr in February; and Juneteenth in June.

MOTION: To adjourn

ADJOURNMENT: 6:00pm

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by Public Art Committee with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Special Requirements: If you require special aid or services as addressed in the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (239) 321-7035 or for the hearing impaired, TDD telephone number (239) 332-2541.