

**ART COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF April 23, 2008  
BEGINNING AT 2:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT OF THE COMMISSION:** Klavon, Indovina, Astorino, Hall,  
Haskell, Serrao, Costa

**PRESENT OF THE STAFF:** Baker, Ismail

A. **No Action on the Minutes of March 2008**

B. **Correspondence**

C. **Items for Review**

a. **World War II, Final Review**

- o **Robert Bukk, World War II Veterans of Allegheny County Memorial Fund Inc.**
- o **Todd Johnson, Design Team**

The World War II Committee explained the fundraising obstacles/challenges that the World War II Veterans faced in regards to the extended timeline of the project and the steps needed for the veterans to begin their fundraising campaign. The short term goals for the project are to raise the needed funds and to complete the construction documents by Veterans Day 2009.

Mr. Bukk shared letters of project support from the following: City Council Member Tonya Payne, Mark Fatla, Executive Director of the Northside Leadership Conference and the Sports and Exhibition Authority.

Mr. Johnson presented the modified design to the Art Commission. Mr. Johnson noted that the memorial will not encroach upon the Great Lawn, the inside of elliptical shaped memorial will create a place for quiet contemplation, national stories will be told via text on the outside of the memorial whereas stories of Allegheny County's efforts in the war will be told on the inside of the memorial. The memorial will also have an east/west orientation telling the story of the European and Pacific war endeavors.

The memorial will be fabricated out of high grade stainless steel, granite, Pennsylvania Blue stone and laminated safety glass. The paving and seating walls will feature rustic and smooth blue stone. The glass panels will feature images of both Allegheny County

(smaller images) and scenes from across the world (larger images)—all images will feature an emphasis on commitment to the war effort. Granite oblong benches will sit within the elliptical space to allow visitors to rest and to contemplate the meaning of the memorial.

Ms. Klavon called for public comments in support of the project.

Mr. McGarvey noted the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Korean Memorials are located on the North Shore and support this project being placed on the North Shore.

Mr. Howard, a World War II veteran encouraged the Art Commissioners to approve the project. He stated that more and more veterans are passing away and he fears that some of the Allegheny County veterans who are vested in this project and may not be around to see the memorial built.

Mr. Johnson, a Korean War veteran, requested that the Art Commission consider the proposed project and respond favorably to the project.

Mr. Watts, Riverlife Task Force, stated that the project team understands the importance of maintaining the North Shore Master Plan and the new design does not encroach upon the Great Lawn.

Ms. Klavon called for public comments opposed to the project.

No comments.

Ms. Klavon closed the public discussion and proceeded to ask the Art Commissioners if they had any questions about the project.

Mr. Costa stated that he was pleased with the modified design but that he was concerned that the Art Commission would not be weighing in on the selected images. Mr. Johnson replied that the team is working with a historian (Bruce Janek) to ensure that appropriate images for the project are selected.

Mr. Costa asked the applicant to address potential vandalism that could occur to the project. Mr. Johnson replied that the materials selected for the memorial are durable but if someone truly wanted to damage the project—they could. Mr. Johnson stated that the glass would be easy to clean/remove graffiti from and that the project team was undertaking efforts to ensure that the work be “skateboard proof”.

When asked about the seat wall, Mr. Johnson replied that the seating was designed to be comfortable and to give the project a presence in winter. The wall will be broken up in places (i.e. not continuous) to allow pedestrians to pass through the space.

Mr. Astorino thanked the veterans for their perseverance on this project and that he understood the remaining challenges facing this project. He continued by stating that he

too felt concerned about the image selection process and that once the images are determined they should be presented to the Art Commission for approval.

Mr. Johnson stated that the height of the text would be readable by the average viewer (and ADA friendly) and that additional signage on the street side of the project would introduce the project to visitors.

Ms. Hall asked Mr. Johnson if the history of women's efforts in the war would be acknowledged in the project—he replied that the history of women would be considered and the goal was to create as clear and balanced of a story as possible.

Ms. Hall asked Mr. Johnson if the team considered the use of technology to tell the story to memorial viewers. Mr. Johnson replied that was a great idea. Mr. Bukk added that it would be interesting to have narratives of veterans telling their stories about the war.

Members of the Commission stated that they would like to see efforts taken to skateboard proof the benches, integration of the benches into the overall scheme of the memorial and a lighting plan. Mr. Johnson noted that the team was working with lighting designer Charles Stone to illuminate the project.

Ms. Klavon asked how many trees would be lost as a result of the memorial—Mr. Johnson replied that they aren't losing any and there will be more ornamental plantings at the entrance of the memorial.

Ms. Klavon asked who/what organization will be responsible for maintaining the memorial. A fund will be set up at the Pittsburgh Foundation to cover major maintenance costs—the SEA will oversee routine maintenance of the work.

Ms. Klavon asked a motion.

**MOTION:** That the World War II Memorial project receives Final Approval.

**MOVED:** Serrao

**SECONDED:** Astorino

**IN FAVOR:** All

**OPPOSED:** None

**CARRIED**

**b. MLK Mural Project, Informational Update**

- Ashley Hodder, Education Director, MLK Mural Project
- Angela Corley, Public Relations, MLK Mural Project

The MLK Mural Project presented the plans for the upcoming mural season. The MLK Mural Project also stated that they will be seeking approval (in an upcoming Commission

meeting) for the Beechview Underpass Mural and they are in the process of collecting designs and soliciting input and feedback for the underpass mural. A community forum for the Beechview Mural will be held at the Beechview Merchant's Association on May 10.

Mr. Costa asked the applicant to clarify projects they are seeking Commission approval for—some projects listed are not in the City of Pittsburgh.

Ms. Baker acknowledged that a series of murals were slated for downtown and she stated that the mural team must be very careful in how they approach working downtown.

Ms. Ismail stated that all sites must be secure before work commences and that appropriate community buy-in for all projects, including downtown, must be documented.

Ms. Baker offered to supply the mural team with community contact information for projects located within Pittsburgh city limits. Mr. Serrao added that the City Council Representative would also be able to supply community contact information for murals in their district.

The MLK team noted that they are conducting a walk through with the Port Authority to discuss safety concerns as related to the Beechview Mural.

Ms. Hall asked if the team would be coming back to the Art Commission for approvals for all projects. Ms. Ismail stated that the Art Commission does not have jurisdiction over private property.

Ms. Hall asked the applicant why the project was called the MKL Mural project—the applicant replied that they are building off the success of the MLK bus way project and now MLK stands for Moving the Lives of Kids—Ms. Hall replied that the use of MLK could be misleading to the public and potentially offensive.

Ms. Klavon pointed to a map that was in the presentation materials and asked the applicant if the map represented their current mural season. The map listed past projects and the applicant pointed to a list of current projects.

Ms. Hall asked the applicant to clarify who will be creating the murals and if the applicant had approached the Sprout Fund to discuss murals in Pittsburgh. Kids will be creating the temporary mural at the August Wilson Center but professional artists will create the downtown murals.

Ms. Haskell asked the applicant if professional artists creating murals downtown fit into their mission of working with youth. The applicant responded that they believed that this body of work was part of their mission.

Ms. Ismail stated that a clear public process must be undertaken for all mural projects—including downtown.

Though not in Pittsburgh at the time, Ms. Baker stated that she believes other organizations have been told that additional murals (there are some) downtown are not desired at this time. Ms. Baker added that she hoped to create a set of guidelines for artwork downtown as part of the comprehensive public art master plan.

No public comment.

**c. South Side Works Sculpture Project, Conceptual Review**

**o Tim Kaulen, Industrial Arts Co-op**

Mr. Kaulen introduced the project to the Commissioners. The project is comprised of two 18' steel workers made of recycled I-beams and a ladle/relic of the steel industry.

Ms. Baker noted that this project that was a site specific commission generated by the Department of City Planning in the late 90s. Over the years, the site that the project was initially created for was lost and the project is currently seeking a new site. The project requires at the minimum a 30' x 30' footprint—a lot of space which is hard to find in an urban context. The site currently proposed (near the boat launch on the South Side) was selected after viewing a number of city-owned properties that are able to accommodate a work of this size. The City will not guarantee that the site is available until Art Commission approval is received and various City Departments sign off on the work.

Ms. Hall asked the applicant to address public safety issues as related to the artwork at this site. Mr. Kaulen stated that this site was the only option provided by the City. Ms. Baker clarified that this was the only property that the City owned near the original location that could accommodate the artwork. Ms. Baker continued by stating that the City of Pittsburgh is an active partner on this project and will ensure that the project is safe—the City has a few reservations about the project that must be resolved prior to installation of the artwork—i.e. engineering, use of a certified welder, bolts, footpad etc.

Mr. Astorino stated that he believes the project could be successful on this site and hoped that if conceptual approval were granted that it would be tied to the site.

Ms. Ismail asked if a public process had been undertaken for the selection of this site. Ms. Baker replied that there was public process for the original site but that community input has not been solicited for the new site at this time—the reason being that until the project has approval from the Art Commission the site is not a given and may not be made available—we would like to know the options that are logistically feasible before presenting them to the community.

Mr. Wolfe representing Council Member Kraus stated that the project should be presented to the South Side Planning Forum.

When asked about maintenance Mr. Kaulen replied that maintaining the work would be much like maintaining a bridge structure.

The dimensions of the ladle are 4' tall and 10' diameter—Ms. Hall was concerned that someone might climb into the ladle and Mr. Serrao noted that water would collect in the base of the ladle leading to corrosion. Mr. Kaulen noted that they could add a drain to the ladle.

The applicant was also asked if signage and lighting were part of the project—Mr. Kaulen replied that a plaque would be created.

Mr. Kaulen stressed that the project was on a tight timeline as the funding for the project is tied to Pittsburgh 250.

Ms. Klavon asked if this was the best site for the project (near fencing and Giant Eagle). Mr. Kaulen replied that it was not the best site as it lacks the historical context that the Hot Metal Bridge site had but that he was willing to concede to see the project realized.

Ms. Baker asked the Sprout Fund representative (grant maker for 250 funds) what would happen if the project were not installed in 2008. She noted that the City would make a good faith effort to secure the site etc but she wanted to know the consequences if the project were not installed on Mr. Kaulen's timeline. He replied that the award does stipulate that the project occur in 2008. However, he stated that a discussion could be held between the recipient and the grantee if the proposed timeline proves to not be feasible.

Ms. Hall asked Ms. Baker if there were other projects that were commissioned by the City but not realized. Ms. Baker replied that she does not believe so but that she discovers new things on the job daily.

Ms. Klavon asked for a motion.

**MOTION:** That the South Side Sculpture Works project receives Conceptual Approval pending confirmation of the site proposed (near the boat launch).

**MOVED:** Serrao

**SECONDED:** Hall

**IN FAVOR:** All

**OPPOSED:** None

**CARRIED**

**d. Café Milano, Conceptual Review**

- **Jimmy DeCecco, Fukui Architects**

Mr. DeCecco stated that Café Milano is seeking conceptual approval for a proposed a 10' x 18' balcony (that is part of a larger renovation project) which would protrude over the sidewalk.

Ms. Klavon stated that the project was being reviewed by the Commission because it encroached upon the public right of way.

A series of drawings with various options were presented to the Art Commission for review—the drawings were conceptual and not to scale.

Ms. Hall asked the applicant if they had explored the possibility of creating a roof top deck—the applicant replied that they did but that there is too much machinery on top of the building.

Ms. Ismail stated that the balcony could impact the adjacent property owners—particularly residential units. Ms. Ismail also stated that the addition of a balcony would need to be vetted through the appropriate public process and be reviewed by the Historic Review Commission. It was also noted that Zoning would need to be involved in any conversations re permitting 2<sup>nd</sup> story balconies as it could be perceived to be an extension of property.

The Commissioners stated that a cantilevered balcony would be their preference but they were concerned about setting a precedent for 2<sup>nd</sup> story balconies without information/input from City Planning. The Commissioners would like for the City of Pittsburgh to establish reasonable design guidelines for 2<sup>nd</sup> story balconies.

The applicant was asked to return to the Art Commission when a design direction has been established (one of three options presented).

No motion was made.

**e. Banners, Conceptual and Final Review**

○ **Romel Nicholas**

The goal of the banner project is to establish a series of flags near Grant Street along the Blvd. of the Allies in honor of the Pittsburgh 250 celebration. The applicant stated that he had the support of Congressman Doyle and that an event that has been planned in conjunction with the big bike race on June 29.

The applicant stated that the brackets which will attach the flags to the poles have been designed with input from PennDot and the City of Pittsburgh.

Ms. Haskell asked how long the banners would be on display. The applicant replied that the banners are meant to be temporary but that they could be taken down at any time if they presented a problem to the City.

Mr. Serrao asked how many flags would be depicted—Mr. Nicholas replied that 27 flags for the 27 allied countries of World War I. Mr. Astorino asked the applicant how the applicant planned to make the pedestrian aware of the concept—the countries will be named on the banner.

Ms. Hall asked if there was an issue with creating banners using flag imagery—Mr. Nicholas replied that he had the support of the National Flag Foundation for this project. Mr. Nicholas noted that some of the allied countries no longer exist and the flags for this project will show them as they were in 1918.

**MOTION:** That the Blvd. of the Allies Banner project receives Conceptual Approval and Final Approval.

**MOVED: Indovina**

**SECONDED: Serrao**

**IN FAVOR: All**

**OPPOSED: None**

**CARRIED**

Meeting Adjourned.