

**ART COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2008  
BEGINNING AT 2:00 P.M.**

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

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

**A. No Action Taken on Approval of Minutes**

**B. Correspondence**

Ms. Martz provided the Commission with a Fax from Senator Ferlo's Office in support of agenda item C.

**C. Items for Review**

**a. Ellis School Banner Proposal, Conceptual and Final Review**

- Nancy Rose Netchi, Director of Marketing and Communications
- Hilary Tyson, President, Board of Trustees.

The Ellis School would like to hang identification banners in the perceived entryway of their school. This will be used to assist in the promotion of the school by building both awareness and navigability of the campus. These banners will hang along Fifth Avenue and allow for an additional attention draw to the East End educational corridor that Fifth has become. The banners will be hung on either side of the street

Ms. Netchi presented the design to the Art Commission and stated that materials presented are representative of the final design. The banner material and size will meet all of the City requirements.

Ms. Netchi inquired as to the directional signs on the light poles directly in front of the Ellis School and the viability of hanging a banner on this pole. Mr. Costa replied that he would certainly look into removing the way-finding signage and moving it to another pole that would not have as much impact on the Ellis School. Ms. Ismail asked whether there was a need for special permissions from Public Works in regards to encroachment of something of that nature. Mr. Costa replied that Public Works would issue a permit for banners with the approval of the Art Commission.

Ms. Klavon asked if the size of the banners was acceptable. Ms. Netchi explained that the size was listed at the bottom of the mock-up of the banner design. The size will be 24" X 72" which meets the city requirements. Mr. Costa confirmed that they were an appropriate size.

Ms. Netchi explained that the school has worked with Fast Signs, the company creating the banners to develop a maintenance agreement and budget. They will be replacing the banners every two years to prevent deterioration. Mr. Costa requested that the school ensure that the banners are over the sidewalk and not the street both from a safety standpoint and to maintain the integrity of the banners.

Ms. Netchi asked about the need for police personal on scene. It was explained that she would not need to do this.

Mr. Costa explained to Ms. Netchi that the school would also need to apply for a permit from public works to install the banners. At this time Mr. Costa provided the contact information for Ben Carlise to Ms. Netchi to request a permit with Public Works.

Ms. Klavon asked Mr. Costa if banner submissions were to apply for a permit with Public Works prior to coming to the Art Commission. Mr. Costa explained that a permit would not be granted without Art Commission approval; however it was possible for applicants to simultaneously apply to the Art Commission and Public Works.

Ms. Hall asked why the Ellis School was proposing the banners across the street from their school as well. Ms. Netchi replied that they were modeling their banners on Carlow University's banners which are on both sides of the street and the result is very powerful. As the Ellis School cannot expand for several blocks due to financial restrictions this allows for strength over numbers approach. Ms. Hall asked if this would impact or be impacted by upcoming activities in Mellon Park. Mr. Costa explained that the activities were on the other side of the park.

Ms. Klavon asked a motion.

**MOTION:** To grant conceptual and final approval to the Ellis School for the placement of five over the sidewalk banners on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in front of and across the street from their property.

**MOVED: Astorino**

**SECONDED: Serrao**

**IN FAVOR: All**

**OPPOSED: None**

**CARRIED**

**b. Revitalization of Allegheny Square, Conceptual Review**

- o **Chris Siefert, Deputy Director, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh**

The Children's Museum of Pittsburgh is launching an initiative or capitol campaign to revitalize Allegheny Square Park. The packets provided to the Commission prior to the presentation detailed the landscape architect design selection as well as the community involvement process and the estimated budget. Mr. Siefert reviewed the history of Allegheny Square and the significance of this area and project to the northside of Pittsburgh. Mr. Siefert explained that there is not a master plan for the park at this time and the City has encouraged partnerships with non-profit organizations in rebuilding and maintaining such areas over the years. Mr. Siefert described the park's current state as that of a sunken concrete plaza. He then went on to explain the new design filling in and returning the park to a vegetative state with accessible entry on all sides. Mr. Siefert introduced the public art pieces that were to be in the park.

The first piece is designed by Ned Kahn and is working titled Cloud Pipes. Mr. Siefert showed both conceptual drawings of the piece as well as pictures of a current Kahn piece on the Children's Museum and other work by the artist. The piece will be sixty-four stainless steel tubes, measuring thirty-two feet in height. The tubes are fitted with jets that release a fog or misting spray that would hover about 10 feet from the ground. Mr. Siefert explained that the wind would act to shift and move the fog/mist creating a living art piece. Mr. Siefert noted that the system being explored should create a cooling mist in the warmer months and a warming effect in the colder

The second piece is designed by Edwin Hamilton and is not yet titled. Mr. Siefert explained that the landscape architect is proposing low seat-walls made of blue stone or another indigenous rock. Mr. Siefert noted that there is a section of the park that is sectioned off for a second art piece. The Children's Museum will be meeting with Edwin Hamilton in a few weeks to discuss some possible stone sculpture pieces.

Mr. Siefert noted that there is a small utility building on the site. The building houses the water and electricity controls running into the park. Mr. Siefert stated that this building would need to be maintained.

Mr. Siefert stated that the Community has asked that the new design include a plaque of some kind denoting the historic center of the park. At this time the design team is exploring a series of LED lights in various constellation designs referencing the Bulle Planetarium with the North Star at the Center of what was Allegheny City.

Mr. Siefert explained that the park is being seen as a sustainable project. One edge of the park will be developed as a bio swale or rain garden to deal with storm water run-off. Mr. Siefert further explained that the vegetation will be native; they are exploring lighting generated from solar power, and rammed earth structures.

Mr. Siefert addressed a piece of art that is currently in the park, entitled Cubed Tension. This piece is a blue painted steel sculpture. It is at the intersection of Federal and Ohio Street. Mr. Siefert explained that the Children's Museum is proposing to move the piece from its current location, return it to its original design and to reinstall it near the current site. They request to work with the City to reinstall the piece after it is restored.

Mr. Costa asked if they had been working with Allegheny Center Associates. Mr. Siefert stated that Allegheny Center Associates has attended private meetings with the museum as well as some of the community process. Mr. Costa asked if they were supportive. Mr. Siefert stated that he would not want to speak for Allegheny Center Associates.

Mr. Costa noted that there has been a push to reopen Federal and East Ohio Streets to return them to their former state. He asked what sort of an impact such a move would have on this park. Mr. Siefert admitted that this would have an impact on the park; however the plan proposed has taken into this possibility into consideration. He explained that the Children's Museum had completed an engineering study to explore the park with the street open and parking on both sides and instructed the design team to work with the amount of space needed to maintain this street. Mr. Siefert stated that Federal Street could not be reopened through the proposed park area as there is a building in the right of way.

Mr. Costa asked if there was a cost estimate and where the funding would be coming from. Mr. Siefert stated that there is a budget and the schematic design is currently with an estimator. It will be available on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Siefert explained that the funding will be coming from the corporate and individual foundation community. The Children's Museum also receives DCNR and redevelopment assistance money from the State. The budget is in the 5.5 to 6 million dollar range. The Children's Museum is raising 22 million dollars for several projects, this being one. Mr. Siefert noted that the museum is planning on creating an endowment to maintain the art work as well as the park. They are currently in discussion with Mike Gable of Public Works on the details.

Mr. Costa asked if the estimates were much higher than the museum had planned for how they would proceed. Would they look for more funding or cut back the project? Mr. Siefert stated that he was not sure at this time. At this time the project is conceptual and changes may come about.

Mr. Costa asked how soon the project would begin. Mr. Siefert stated that the current schedule would enable demolition to begin as early as May-June of 2009, but it will need to run parallel to fundraising. It will be clearer in January.

Mr. Costa requested to work closely with the museum as the possibility of reopening streets would require conduit work. Mr. Siefert explained that they have been working with the City and will continue to do so when it is needed.

Ms. Klavon asked if the Children's Museum wanted the street to reopen. Mr. Siefert explained that they feel that the street could reopen if it were designed well. They would also prefer to be involved in any work to that. Ms. Klavon asked for clarification that the museum did not wish to reopen the street at this time. Mr. Siefert explained that there is a drainage problem in the area. At this time the Museum has included some design to address the drainage issue. In this design the possibility of a future street has been addressed.

Mr. Serrao asked who would be responsible for the maintenance of the park. Mr. Siefert stated that the museum had expected that the city would take the lead in maintenance as it is city property; however the museum hopes to establish a fund to supplement the maintenance. Ms. Ismail noted that this was addressed in a previous meeting with the city and the legal department was currently looking into this. Mr. Serrao noted that the City was not in a great financial situation to accept additional expenditures. Mr. Serrao stated the design will take the park from zero maintenance to an issue.

Ms. Haskell asked about the Kahn Cloud Pipe piece and how the existing Kahn piece on the Children's Museum had withstood weather. Ms. Haskell specifically asked what the proposed sculpture was dependent on. Mr. Siefert explained that it was a very small amount of water. The water is released at 1000 psi and moved through a special jet made by a company called Kool Fog. It is a very small amount of water at high pressure in the fog state. In the misting state it is lower pressure, but about the same amount of water. It is similar to the misting you might encounter in a green house.

Ms. Haskell asked if it was active during museum hours. Mr. Siefert stated that the current thought is to run the water 24 hours a day. It would be a computer controlled system located in the aforementioned utility building. It could be changed to meet the time of year and day.

Ms. Haskell asked if there had been any mechanical or electrical problems with works of this nature. Mr. Siefert said that similar systems had been in use for 20-30 years quite extensively. Mr. Siefert showed an illustration of a similar piece in Pasadena and described them as very hardy and tested. There have not been any major maintenance costs or problems with the artist's current work to date.

It was noted that similar Kool Fog systems in use at the Zoo have had clogging problems and been out of commission. How would this piece look if it was not working? Mr. Siefert accepted that anything with water would require maintenance. The commission encouraged the museum to consider the piece without the water and how the piece changes aesthetically.

Ms. Haskell raised a point on a similar piece installed at the airport, using steam. It was discussed that the piece ultimately failed. Mr. Siefert stated that steam is difficult to work with, but steam will not be used in this piece. Mr. Siefert further explained that he could not speak to the piece as the artist who will be available at the next Commission stage to discuss the piece in detail. Mr. Siefert did state that the piece has been designed with the absence of water in maintenance time considered.

Ms. Hall commented on the enormity of the project and the need for more information. She requested additional information on several aspects of the proposal. She asked how the reinstalled art piece would be maintained. How will the center of Allegheny City be noted during the day? The identified "gathering" spot in the park is near an active bus stop and the size and location may limit its use as well. How will this park remain active? Is the park at a slope? What happens to the anchor art piece currently in place

and the tables if a road is built? Mr. Siefert explained that the park is at a gradual slope, not unlike Schenley Plaza which works. He also stated that the anchor would remain unless the road was developed at which point we, collectively, would need to discuss the replacement. The chairs and table belong to the museum and will be addressed as the development occurs.

Ms. Hall pointed out that the project is rather large and the city would ultimately own and maintain regardless of any endowments. Given this it would likely be a requirement of the Commission to complete a site visit prior to granting conceptual approval.

It was stated that there needs to be a letter or something from the community illustrating support. The Children's Museum agreed.

Mr. Cooper asked what requirements aside from sustainability were taken into consideration in reaching a final conclusion. Mr. Siefert stated that particular attention was paid to storm water management and soil specifications. The park will also focus on using sustainable, natural, and native resources.

When asked about the dealing with the demolition and existing concrete the museum stated that they have been working with contractors on how to deal with this problem. We may be able to crush and create a drainage system or perhaps remove the concrete from site and recycle it off site so as not to disturb the community.

It was asked if the Children's Museum could consult with the original artist of Cubed Tension on the replacement of the piece to which they agreed and planned to defer to the City as it was a part of the City collection.

It was asked how the park was impacting the Children's Museum and how they might use it. They would use it for groups. In addition they would like to view the park as an extension of who they are as well as a tie in to the community. It really is nothing so much on a practical level, but rather on a contributory way.

It was stated that the access to the park could be more playful. Perhaps the Children's Museum could take a more active role and play into the design more.

Ms. Klavon reiterated that the tie-in to the museum seemed to be missing. Mr. Siefert asked for clarification. It was suggested that some of the design aspects be reviewed to better relate to the Children's Museum.

Ms. Klavon questioned the need for so many art pieces in the work. She pointed out the work by Kahn, Hamilton, and the LED lighting on the ground as separate works, wondering if it might be too much. Mr. Siefert responded that this question had come up in the past. It was stated that the plan has become simpler as this has been raised. The plan, in particular, as it pertains to art is still very young and fluid.

The Commission requested more detailed plans from the applicant detailing vegetation uses as well as slopes and elevation levels.

Ms. Ismail requested information regarding securing the site for development. It was pointed out that the community support as well as local property owner support needs to be illustrated as well. Again a site visit was requested prior to conceptual approval being granted. Ms. Klavon requested that Mr. Siefert coordinate with Ms. Martz to schedule a site visit prior to returning to the Art Commission.

**MOTION:** The application has been tabled pending a site visit and further information presented.

**c. Mt Washington Olympia Park Mosaic, Conceptual and Final Review**

- o Morton Brown, Consultant  
City Parks

Mr. Brown referred to the packet as well as additional pictures of the site that were passed out to the commission. Mr. Brown explained that this started with the Roving Art Cart program and is similar to a mosaic work completed in Highland park the previous summer. The program involves a community process that allows children an interactive part in the art work. Children work to insert tile into a pre-designed fashion. This will be part of an after school program that is currently being advertised throughout the community. This work will take place over a two day period.

Ms. Haskell asked for clarification on the site. Mr. Brown described the site as a large community park with a playground, meeting building, and a soccer field. He went on to detail that the mosaic tiling would only take place in a small concrete semi-circle surrounding a recently refurbished water fountain. The tile is relieved so that it will not be a slipping hazard.

There was concern regarding a tripping hazard at the edge. Mr. Brown explained that there would be beveled concrete after the workshops to both protect the piece and safety. Mr. Brown stated that they may use a metal rim around the piece as well. It was noted that there is in existence a Schluter system available designed specifically for tile works.

Ms. Hall asked if all of the permissions to work in this site were in place. Mr. Brown answered that the property was owned by the City and that the Mt. Washington CDC was in support. Given that the applicant was the City they did not require further permissions. Mr. Brown also showed letters of support from the CDC as well as local schools.

Ms. Hall asked if this was a part of a strategic plan for a bigger art site. Mr. Brown replied that there is a desire to position art and art driven programs through out the city, but there is not currently a budget to allow for this.

Ms. Hall asked how and why this site was chosen. Mr. Brown stated that the Mt. Washington CDC approached City Parks. It was determined that the size was small enough to fit the small budget, but would make a great impact.

Ms. Piechocki asked if the piece will be considered to be a part of the City's collection and who will maintain the piece. Mr. Morton replied that the piece will be on City property so it will be included in the City's art collection. It will be maintained by City Parks.

**MOTION:** To grant conceptual and final approval to City Parks for a tile mosaic in Mt. Washington's Olympia Park.

**MOVED:** Astorino

**SECONDED:** Serrao

**IN FAVOR:** All

**OPPOSED:** None

**CARRIED**

**d. Meadow Street Bridge Mural Project, Conceptual and Final Review**

- o Kyle Holbrook, Art Director  
MLK Mural Project

The mural proposed on the Meadow Street Bridge is a part of a Community Plan developed and identified by the ELCCC, the URA, the Green Up Initiative, and a private consultant working on the project. Both the location and the design for the proposed mural were selected by the Larimer community. The design is the same as a mural in East Liberty. The process takes pictures of community members taken by the consultant in the planning process as well as photos of past Larimer community members. The pictures are used to create colorful portrait blocks along the bridge. The paint used has been proven to withstand the elements and will be further protected with a clear coat. The MLK Mural Project in partnership with the URA, the Kingsley Association, and ELCCC will maintain the mural.

It was asked if Mr. Holbrook met with Highland Park and East Liberty as well as Larimer as the Meadow Street Bridge accesses these neighborhoods as well. Mr. Holbrook stated that he had not and explained that ELCCC had been working with East Liberty. It was pointed out that Mr. Holbrook would need to show the design to and secure a letter from both the Highland Park Community Club and East Liberty Development Inc. Mr. Holbrook stated that this would not be a problem.

The applicant stated that the Meadow Street Bridge had been identified as a gateway into the Larimer Community by the master planning team. The commission stated that the bridge is also a gateway to both Highland Park and East Liberty. Mr. Holbrook stated

that ELDI and Highland Park community members had attended some meetings. It was stated that the Commission would need to see letters of support.

The applicant was asked to clarify where the mural will be on the bridge. It is pointed out that there is a wall on the bridge and a jersey barrier under the railing. Mr. Holbrook explained that the mural would be on the wall not the barrier.

Clarification was requested on the mural picture provided. Mr. Holbrook explained that the mural sample provided was a picture from the similar work in East Liberty.

The Commission asked Ms. Ismail what the process would be to gain permission to work on the bridge. It was also asked what sort of safety precautions would be used to protect the children working on the project. Ms. Ismail stated that she assumed some permission would be sought through public works. Mr. Holbrook stated that they would need a sidewalk obstruction permit only which is secured from DPW for a small fee.

The location of the sidewalk was clarified. It was further clarified that the retaining wall would be painted on the opposite side of the sidewalk.

Ms. Haskell asked for clarification in regards to the design, where did the design originate and who was the artist? Mr. Holbrook stated that the piece would be portraits of Larimer residents taken in the planning process.

Ms. Hall asked why the same design was chosen for Larimer as what has already been done in East Liberty. Mr. Holbrook explained that he did not choose the design and that it was selected by the community group following a series of meetings.

Ms. Hall asked if the green up plan that was mentioned is a master plan. Mr. Holbrook stated that it was.

Ms. Hall asked if the community plan included several murals. Mr. Holbrook explained that the community has put a lot of thought into this process as well as the placement of public art. He explained that he does not have all of the information on the plan as he has only been involved as the selected artist for this mural. Ms. Hall stated that she found it strange that a community that went through all of this planning would select a mural that had already been done. Mr. Holbrook agreed that it was surprising, but believes that the design will be good in that it uses community member's portraits in the art.

Ms. Hall asked if Mr. Holbrook had permission to paint on this wall. Mr. Holbrook stated that he had a contract with DPW to work on city property. Ms. Martz stated that the permissions would likely need to come from the finance department. Ms. Ismail stated that we are currently working with the city law department to determine the necessary permissions for such work. It was explained that this was different than art commission approval as it gives permission to be on site and change public property.

It was asked at what time the artist knows what the final art piece will look like. Mr. Holbrook explained that it is a five week process and the final design is decided in week two.

It was stated that the commission would need to see the final design prior to granting final approval. Mr. Holbrook argued that the design in question had already been approved by the art commission in the previous year. The commission stated they do not hand out mass approval for art throughout the city. It was stated that this site is different and in order to grant or deny approval there needs to be a design mock up. The Commission needs to see in scale what this piece will look like. The Commission provided an example in the jersey barrier blocking partial view for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Mr. Holbrook stated that the Larimer community is very excited about the project and has really been left out in the City in the past. He went on to stress the importance of this for the community. He stated that he felt that the presentation was everything that was needed for the submission and that he had always followed process in the past. Mr. Holbrook stated that he felt that the Art Commission was upset over the past problems in Beechview and he did not wish for Larimer to suffer due to this.

It was stated that there will be a plan prior to painting the wall. It was suggested that staff review the plan. The Commission should not be in a position where they have not seen and approved the final plan.

Ms. Haskell stated that she has a problem with the color. She stated that the colors are glaring and it is not aesthetically pleasing. The community process is wonderful; however the design and process should be better quality. Mr. Holbrook explained that he respected the opinion, but the City Paper readers did vote the East Liberty mural as mural of the year.

It was stated that this is a separate project and it must be viewed separately. The Commission has been supportive in the past and fully supports the work with children. There simply needs to be more information.

It was stated that leeway needs to be given to an artist as the creative process may change, however in the past MLK has provided schematics of the design. The applicant is asking the Commission to approve a design on a completely different scope based upon information provided a year ago for a different site. In the past the applicant has provided schematics of the specific site. Mr. Holbrook agreed that this was true and he did bring photo shopped site plans.

It was stated that the communities of Highland Park, East Liberty, and Larimer need to show support. With all art there will be people that like it and people that do not. The Commission needs to be able to show that they have seen the piece and that they have seen proof that the communities involved were supportive.

Mr. Holbrook apologized for having not brought the same materials for a presentation as in the past. He stated that he had not because the design was the same as in East Liberty and on the same scale. Mr. Astorino stated that the problem was with the jersey barrier and the vehicular and pedestrian experience being very different in this site. Ms. Klavon stated this is easily photo shopped to show how the piece will look.

It was stated that the commission asks the same out of each presentation. Mr. Holbrook asked if he might see the Olympia Park presentation to understand what they were talking about. Mr. Holbrook was shown the presentation.

Ms. Hall inquired about the process and stated that the Commission needed to be sure that the work was right for the community.

Mr. Serrao stated that the previous mosaic presentation was perfect. The presentation showed a picture of the site as it is and a picture of the site as it will appear with the mosaic in place. This is what the Commission would like to see for this project.

Mr. Cooper asked how the community process happens. Mr. Holbrook stated that they explain the mural process to the community and then request feedback from the community on what they would like to see. It was explained that the mural needs to be representative of the community. At a second meeting sketches of the community ideas were presented and discussed. Changes were proposed and returned on another meeting. Finally the community voted on and chose the final design.

Mr. Cooper asked Mr. Holbrook what role he saw himself in as the artist in this project. Mr. Holbrook explained that he saw his role as a steering role. His role is to explain public art and to create a visual of what the community verbally communicates and to assist in appropriate site selection.

Ms. Ismail asked if Weed and Seed was part of this project. Mr. Holbrook stated that they were not directly involved.

**MOTION:** The application has been tabled pending letters of support from Kingsley Association, Highland Park, and ELDI and final design schematic.

- e. Conservation Consultants Inc Banner, Conceptual and Final Review**
  - o Ed Heal, Omni Assoc.

Banners proposed on East Carson Street. The banners are 4' by 2' and promote a one day event in the Southside for energy conservation. The banners should be up by October 1 and meet all requirements of Public Works.

Ms. Klavon asked if the signs needed to be so busy. The applicant stated that they could probably be scaled back as the fliers that went out included all of this information.

Ms. Hall asked if the banners were made out of vinyl. The applicant stated that they were. Ms. Hall asked if they would be recycled after they were used. The applicant stated that they would be and mentioned that his company promoted environmentally sound work. The reason CCI works with them is because of this. Were there more time the company would use organic cotton. Ms. Hall asked if there was a way to promote that the banners would be recycled. The applicant agreed to advertise that the banners would be recycled.

It was asked if corporate logos were allowed to be on banners. Ms. Martz answered that they were not admissible on permanent banners, but temporary banners were ok.

It was asked how many banners there would be. The applicant stated that there would only be eight banners.

No one here to speak against or for banners.

**MOTION:** Approved with recommendations.

**MOVED:** Serrao

**SECONDED:** Hall

**IN FAVOR:** All

**OPPOSED:** None

**CARRIED**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland is installing bollards along William Penn Way in loading area as per Homeland Security regulations. Proposing a design consistent with the design of current bollards, the design team is the same and complimentary to what is there. The Commission suggests that the bollards remain consistent.

There was a letter sent to the Art Commission regarding pieces from a bridge and placing them in Point State Park. The park is State Property so it is a state issue. A letter can be drafted to inform the constituent of our existence and invitation to attend a meeting.

There is a letter going to the historic review commission regarding a mural on a private wall on Penn Avenue stating the Art Commissions position. There was approval from the Commission on the content of the letter.

Ms. Ismail requested that final approvals not be placed on staff review following a commission submission. It was decided that all submissions need to get final approval from the Art Commission.

