City of Pittsburgh
Art Commission

October 27, 2021 at 3:00 P.M., Meeting called to order by Secretary Goulatia

In Attendance
Moss (agenda items 4-6)
Goulatia
Leach
Parsakian
Young (agenda items 1-4)
Hornstein (DPW)
Lucas (DOMI) (agenda items 5-6)

Staff Present
Dash (agenda items 2-6)
Minnaert
Cavalline

Agenda Items Covered in These Minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Belasco T-Station Renovation</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Three Rivers Stadium Informational Markers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Regional Parks Signage Update</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Art in Parks: The Urban Conga</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Art in Parks: Marlana Adele Vassar</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Art in Parks: fAli Rufner &amp; Gwen Sadler</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Approval of Minutes

Roll call. Goulatia asks Commissioners to review and comment on minutes from September 2021. Parsakian motions to approve the minutes, seconded by Young. All ayes. Motion carries.

B. Items for Review

1. Belasco T-Station Renovation – Port Authority of Allegheny County Conceptual/Final Review

Julio Hernandez of CDM Smith and John Binsse of Port Authority give the presentation for this project, which is for the renovation of the current inaccessible low-platform T stop into an accessible high-platform station.

Leach asks if there will be lighting. Hernandez says yes and describes the lighting on site. Leach asks if the canopies are steel and glass, and asks if artists can be involved in the design of the glass. Hernandez says that etched graphics on the glass are being considered.

Parsakian asks about a wheelchair area in the renderings and if it can be moved so as to not interfere with the steps. Hernandez says the locations have been switched in the final construction documents. Parsakian asks if there is a warning signal for approaching trains. Hernandez says there is a lighted
signal pole with sound. Parsakian asks if there is Braille on the signage. Hernandez says they have not addressed that yet but they will consider it moving forward.

Leach asks if the ticketing location will be the same as in the renderings. Hernandez says that area has been removed from the platform and located on the inbound side.

Goulatia asks if they will consider Braille for all projects or just this one. Hernandez says they will implement it into this project and look into it for future projects. Binsse says they already include Braille on any directional signage.

**MOTION: Conceptual/Final Approval**

MOVED BY: Parsakian  
SECONDED BY: Leach  
IN FAVOR: All  
OPPOSED: None

2. **Three Rivers Stadium Informational Markers – Office of the Mayor**  
   **Conceptual/Final Review**

   James Hill presents this presentation for three informational markers recognizing the original locations of the home plate, pitcher's mound, and second base of the former Three Rivers Stadium, as well as an explanatory sign.

   Parsakian asks if there will be any recognition of the architects who designed Three Rivers Stadium. Hill says there were not plans for that but it is a good point. Parsakian asks if the plaque is two-sided or one-sided. Hill says it is one-sided as the back of it is a parking lot with a landscaped area around the edge. Parsakian asks if there will be Braille or a QR code to provide more background information. Hill says they will implement Braille and the QR code is a good idea.

   Leach asks about the materials of the plaques. Hill says the plaques will be aluminum but will be set in blue stone. He says he doesn’t think there is a specific reason that there are different colors of aluminum used. Leach asks why the explanatory sign will be in bronze and not aluminum. Hill says he is not sure but speculates that it is so that it is more impactful, and says he can get back to them on that if needed.

   Goulatia agrees with Leach that the aluminum should be the same color, and asks if they can get more clarification on how the blue stone will appear. Hill says that the stone will be about an inch border set into the pavement around the plaques. Goulatia asks if the aluminum will get dented. Hill says not as far as he understands, because it will be lying flat.

   Leach asks if the plaques are engraved or printed. Hill says engraved.

**MOTION: Conceptual/Final Approval**

MOVED BY: Parsakian  
SECONDED BY: Leach  
IN FAVOR: All  
OPPOSED: None

3. **Regional Parks Signage Update – Office of the Mayor**  
   **Conceptual/Final Review**

   Hill presents this update to the Regional Park Signage Standards to increase readability, reflect current branding systems, and recognize contributing organizations.
Parsakian asks if Braille or QR codes will be used. Hill says that he believes Braille is used in the trailer header signs, but not in the signs that hang at a taller height. He says that what they are proposing is re-skinning the existing signs, but if they are able to incorporate Braille they are happy to. He says it is his intention to put QR codes that link to the website.

**MOTION: Conceptual/Final Approval**

MOVED BY: Leach  
SECONDED BY: Young  
IN FAVOR: All  
OPPOSED: None

4. **Art in Parks: The Urban Conga – Department of City Planning Conceptual Review**

Sarah Minnaert of the Department of City Planning introduces the project, which is for the initial development of a public art project in Highland Park through the City’s Art in Parks program. Ryan Swanson of The Urban Conga discusses the engagement and planning for this project as well as some proposed locations.

Parsakian says he appreciates the thoughtful community process. He notes that the proposed location on Mt. Bigelow is often used for community activities. Swanson says that the community conversation included discussion of how the artwork could be a part of activities that take place instead of a detraction.

Leach asks how they have engaged with the community and how they plan to in the future. Swanson explains the community engagement to date.

Goulatia asks if they can put art in all of the proposed locations. Swanson says it would be stretching the budget but they have thought about it. He says that those are the kind of conversations they plan to have now that these possible locations have been identified. Goulatia says that spreading it out could activate the space.

Parsakian notes that there is another Highland Park artist in the Art in Parks program and asks if that splits the fee. Minnaert says that the artists do not share a budget between them, but are each given a separate budget from the $100,000 that was allocated to each park.

Young says she also appreciates the community engagement. She asks if there has been any consideration of the historical art pieces in the park. Swanson says that they were surprised that this subject did not come up often in the community engagements, and says there was more focus on responsive, educational, and playful art that allows the community to assert their voices.

Goulatia asks if there could be a conflict with there being more than one artist looking at Highland Park locations. Minnaert says that The Urban Conga and the other Highland Park artist, Marlena Vassar, have been in communication with each other from the beginning. Swanson says that from their conversations so far they are looking at different spaces in the park.

Leach says that community engagement can mean different things and asks who they are actually engaging with and how they can ensure that all neighboring communities are engaged. Swanson says they are trying to be as inclusive as possible and reach out to many organizations as Highland Park is a regional park that is used by a diverse number of communities. The Urban Conga tries to have an extended participatory design process to create something used and celebrated by everyone in the space. Leach asks how people find the Engage page. Swanson says it is on the City website but they have put it out through social media as well. Minnaert explains the minimum modes of community engagement that the City is promoting for each project in addition to the other engagements that each artist chooses to do.
Moss asks how someone might be aware of these projects if they are not connected to social media. He suggests posting in the park. Swanson says that they have been planning on flyerering as a next step.

Shaman Pomaj Chakmam Yajalaji introduces themselves as Grand Council Member of the Iroquois Confederacy of Aboriginal American People, Co-Chair of the Pittsburgh Food Council’s Urban Agriculture Working Group, member of the Three River Agricultural Land Initiative, and member of the Negley Run Watershed Task Force, and speaks from the audience about the inclusion of Native American voices in the project planning.

MOTION: Conceptual Approval

MOVED BY: Parsakian
SECONDED BY: Leach
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None

5. Art in Parks: Marlana Adele Vassar – Department of City Planning Conceptual Review

Marlana Adele Vassar presents conceptual plans for a public art project in Highland Park through the City’s Art in Parks program. She discusses the planning and community feedback stages of the process and presents conceptual plans for a sculptural work.

Leach asks what the size will be. Vassar says she would like to have the figure of a child be life-size.

Moss compliments the project and says he’d love to see the sculptures in bronze. Leach agrees and suggests they be at the entrance to the park.

Goulatia confirms that they will be three-dimensional, and Vassar says yes. Vassar says an approval for the location will help with the scaling. Goulatia agrees with the other Commissioners’ comments and says it is beautiful.

Parsakian says he is pleased that the proposal is for a sculpture and that it reminds him of the Alice in Wonderland sculpture in Central Park. He asks if Vassar envisions it being a sculpture that children play on and around. Vassar says possibly, but with the size being too small to climb on it may be more of a photo opportunity than a play spot. Parsakian says he’d love to see the public engage with the sculpture and if it is bronze it will allow for this more. He says they should consider the location. Goulatia says it should be in a prominent location.

Leach says she hopes there can be miniature versions sold in the future. Vassar says that she would love to but is unsure if the City allows copies to be made. Goulatia says that a few small changes will make it a different piece of art. Minnaert says she is sure there are ways for Vassar to translate this in a way that aligns with City agreements.

Parsakian asks if Vassar has done cost analysis. Vassar says she has explored fabricator options. She says she has looked into materials other than bronze in case bronze does not align with the budget. Parsakian asks if the City has fabricators that other artists have used. Minnaert says that the program has a partnership with Casey Droege Cultural Productions as artist coordinator who is able to help artists with those details. Parsakian says they can recommend other artists who have worked in bronze.

Goulatia says she is looking forward to seeing this and would like to see it large and in bronze.

MOTION: Conceptual Approval

MOVED BY: Moss
SECONDED BY: Parsakian
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None
6. **Art in Parks: Ali Ruffner & Gwen Sadler – Department of City Planning**

   Conceptual Review

   Ali Ruffner and Gwen Sadler introduce themselves and present their conceptual proposal for a public art project in Emerald View Park, including the community engagement they have done with students at Brashear High School.

   Moss appreciates their work with students. He asks about the scale and construction of the proposed sculpture. Ruffner says it would be steel and approximately 9-10 feet. She says they are working with a structural architect on plans. Moss says he is concerned that this location is not engaging with the park and says there is an opportunity to place this artwork within the park landscape. He says the idea of the house is intriguing and wonders if the hands on the roof will be visible. Sadler says that she doesn’t think the height would be too great to see the hands. She views the platforms as high-accessibility spaces that have a lot of visitors but not many features to engage with.

   Leach says she walks there nearly every day and the platforms are very engaged. She says there are also houses there that would have their views obstructed by this project. She suggests some of the nearby parklets or an area to the right of the trolley as possible locations. Ruffner says that they can be flexible in terms of their location and have some other locations in mind, including the bandstand in Grandview Park. Leach asks if the piece can be activated with lighting or if the hands could be placed inside the piece. Ruffner says that those are possibilities.

   Goulatia says she loves the hands and their work with the students. She says the hands coming out of the roof seem like they are trapped or asking for help. Moss agrees. Goulatia says it might be problematic to have a structure placed to obstruct the views from the overlook.

   Parsakian agrees that the location is an issue and there should be more location options presented. He says that the view of the City is the way people engage with the space. He says he loves the hands and the artists’ engagement process. He suggests the hands could hang from the inside of the roof with lighting to dramatize it. He notes the proposed piece reflects the historic houses of the hillside and the cable cars that were used for the coal mines and says there are a lot of possibilities to explore with this structure.

   Goulatia says she’d love if the hands were able to be touched. Parsakian says that the aluminum of the hands allows for a neutrality of gender and color.

   Moss summarizes that the Commission loves the idea of the hands as well as the reference to the hillside houses. He wonders if the hands could connect houses together. He says the seeds of the idea are lovely and it just needs some additional work. Sadler says that they worked with wire sculptures with the students and there are possibilities of placing the hands inside the structure as well as including a wire or thread motif. She also notes the conversation they had with the students about the monument crisis and that they would like their art piece to reflect this. She notes that the Commission has indicated that they might like the artwork’s location to be in a less-used area of the park that could draw people to it. Moss says that the Commission has said no to the overlook platform as a location but does not want it to be hidden. Sadler says that the other location they mentioned was the bandstand area. Ruffner says they can focus on this location.

   Leach asks how much of the idea was informed by the students. Ruffner says that after casting the hands the idea of the house and roof came up in conversations with Sadler and with the students, and that the students chose the composition of the proposed structure. She says that the placement of the hands will have to be done in a very intentional way and they may need to have more conversation with the students. Leach asks if the hands can be different sizes, as that might change the interpretation of the hands trying to escape the house. Goulatia says that this could lead to other problems of whose hand is bigger than others. She says she loves the ideas of the row house and the hands, but not the placement of the hands. Parsakian says that possibly the hands could support the roof.

   **No Motion**
C. **Correspondence**

   None.

D. **Public Comment**

   None.

E. **Director & Staff Report**

   Minnaert goes over a proposed change to the Art Commission bylaws describing the Over-The-Counter review process.

   **MOTION: Approval of bylaw change**

   MOVED BY: Parsakian
   SECONDED BY: Moss
   IN FAVOR: All
   OPPOSED: None

F. **Adjournment**

   The meeting adjourned at 5:32 P.M.