

## Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 06/24/2020)

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
<b>Project Name/Address:</b> Art in Parks (Emerald View Park)	<b>Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident):</b>
<b>Parcel Number(s):</b> 4-G-295-0-2	Mt. Washington CDC staff and members
<b>ZDR Application Number:</b> N/A	Area residents
<b>Meeting Location:</b> Zoom	Applicant artists
<b>Date:</b> 2/24/22	Public Art & Civic Design (PACD) Staff (Sarah Minnaert)
<b>Meeting Start Time:</b> 6:30pm	DCP Neighborhood Planner
<b>Applicant:</b> Artist Ali Ruffner and artist team OOA Designs (Alison Zapata and Oreen Cohen); with Public Art & Civic Design staff (Sarah Minnaert)	<b>Approx. Number of Attendees:</b> 17 at start.
<b>Boards and/or Commissions Request(s):</b> Art Commission	

### How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

*Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.*

#### **Sarah Minnaert (Public Art and Civic Design Staff)** presented on the Art in Parks program:

There are 8 artists working across many parks and many neighborhoods. As part of the process to bring the art works to the Art Commission, artists are sharing about their work at Development Activities Meetings. Art in Parks is made possible by the Radical Impact Grant program, launched in celebration of the Allegheny Regional Asset District's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with goal of funding bold, forward-looking creative projects that will have a radical impact on the region. Each regional park was allocated \$100,000 towards commissioning new art works, which will become part of the City of Pittsburgh's permanent collection. This art funding is separate from other park development and maintenance priorities.

In spring of 2021, City issued call for artists to submit qualifications for Art in Parks program and received 74 artist/artist team application submissions. Each applicant was reviewed and discussed by selection committee, who eventually narrowed it down to eight finalists for expansion of the program in the five Regional Allegheny Asset District Parks. Sarah referenced the artists in each other regional park. In Emerald View Park, she shared that the two artist teams would be OOA Designs, and Ali Ruffner with Gwen Sadler.

The selected artists represent rising artists, more established artists, local Pittsburghers, and national and international artists. They each employ different mediums and scales of their work. The Art in Parks program is complemented by 5 commissioned story tellers who document the process and pivot who tells the story of public art and how center that experience in the communities. Sarah named the specific story tellers, including Sandra Bocchi (sp?), who is the artist working on the Emerald View project documentation.

Once artists were contracted and officially brought on board in summer 2021, each artist/artist team began working through a framework for community engagement. In consideration of pandemic times, staff asked artist(s) to participate in at least three community engagement opportunities. Staff created the Engage PGH (City's online engagement tool) pages for the overall program and for each of the artists/artist teams. Polls and forms and other

engagement tools were deployed and revised as artists' projects developed. Engage page links were listed in the chat. Each artist participated in community organization meetings as they developed their projects and formed their ideas. The artists met with some community organizations very early in the concept phase and made a point of bringing them back for additional discussions as their projects have developed.

In consideration of the broad use of the regional parks, the Public Art and Civic Design Division organized two public meetings in November 2021, which were on Zoom, for all artists to discuss their projects' development and hear from the public. The Riverview, Highland Park and Emerald View Park meeting was held on November 4<sup>th</sup>, and November 10<sup>th</sup> was a meeting for the other regional parks. The Engage PGH page has posted the recordings of those public Art in Parks meetings.

Each artist/artist team works differently and incorporates community engagement into its practice in different ways. Both artist teams in Emerald View Park have been making steady progress on design development over the past several months. It's important for their art works to consider community concerns and aspirations. All of the artists in the Art in Parks program will listen to specific community feedback, however, final design decisions rest with the artists. The Art Commission will be the reviewer and approver of artists' final designs. Artists are working through final design development with the intent to present to the Art Commission for final approval in the next couple of months. Pending Art Commission approval, artists will begin fabrication and installation immediately thereafter, with the goal to complete all eight art installations across the five regional parks by end of this year.

After Sarah's introductory overview, the **OOA Designs** artist team presented, which includes Alison Zapata and Oreen Cohen. OOA Designs has produced sculptures for Wightman Park in Squirrel Hill. They were established in 2018, and between the two artists they have collectively over 40 years of experience working in art on the public realm. Oreen especially focuses on metal work, and Alison works especially in painting and design. Together they have created a dynamic team.

The artist team is planning to install a sculpture at Anchor Green Garden beside the intersection of Grandview Ave and P.J. McArdle Roadway, and they showed a picture of the site. It is a location with flowers and gardening space and has a beautiful view of the city of Pittsburgh. They plan to use the quad of gardening space at the center to be activated with their work of art. They presented an aerial view of the location and the view upon the Monongahela River and hillside. They also showed a picture of the back view looking out to the intersection.

The team shared that they are creating a sculpture to honor the women who have worked in Pittsburgh's steel industry, and they are also honoring these women's labor at home. The artist team has done lots of research with the Rivers of Steel Heritage Area, and reviewed stacks of interviews and watched lots of documentaries, which explored how women working in the industry needed to wear leathers, aprons, and heavy boots and eat a lot to gain weight to work at certain positions. The research also showed how these women then made a transition into their home lives where they changed into dresses and lacey sleeve dresses. This revealed the grit and the grace of these women, and that is what the artists seek to showcase in the sculpture. An image of Fannie Sellins was shown on the screen, and the artists shared how she was an activist for women's and union rights who came from the Lawrence, Massachusetts textile union fights in 1812 and then moved to Pittsburgh, where she fought for women's union rights in the steel industry and was murdered during one of the protests. The artists seek to honor Fannie Sellins' legacy through the sculpture.

The artists are naming the sculpture "Grit, Flow, Grow," which is a phrase that goes back to a poem written by a Mr. Oppenheim that was an anthem for unionization for women. One of the themes was "Give us bread but give us roses too." Therefore, the artists are integrating roses and wheat into the sculpture.

The artists shared about their process of making the sculpture, which started with community engagement. The design of the sculpture was based off of the community engagement the artist team did. The artist team put out a vintage flyer from the 1920s-era that had sought to collect scrap metal from the community to melt down and make into military equipment, but in the artist team's version of the vintage flyer it was to have the scrap metal be about a community-based sculpture. The artist team shared it on social media with local neighborhood groups in Mt. Washington, Emerald View Park neighborhood areas, and Allentown and the local Buy Nothing group. Pittsburgh City Paper published an article about the project and this led to a huge response. They have a map of where people are and

what material they have and how to collect the material. They also connected with John Walters at Iron Eden in Bloomfield to consult with him on the construction of the sculpture as he has a lot of bolts, nuts, and rusty materials and were inspired by him. One of the models of OOA Designs is trying to work sustainably, so they are choosing to use scrapped materials. Female steel workers (e.g. Jan Loney, K2 Metalworks) in Pittsburgh donated laser-cut scrap pieces for the piece, and these will be manipulated into sculpture. The sketch of the design for the sculpture – a massive trellis cut into three sections – is thinking about the garden, growth, grace, but also the rigidity of steel and fabric flowing, because that was the original inspiration -- the clothing that women were changing into and out of. There are also pieces of wheat and roses throughout the piece, tying back to the poem about bread and roses. There are big orange circles that are giant plates of glass – these are decorative and durable for outdoor use. The majority of the sculpture will be created using metal strapping and the team will bend and shape everything by hand and tools. The artist team will create a base structure and on top of it will add the found objects and other decorative elements. It will be in 3 sections, with the center garden, and the left and right sides. This will allow for an entrance way. It will make the space visible. The team heard from the Parks Conservancy that vehicles like to drive through the garden, so the artwork will help make the space safer, which is lit by traffic lights. Hope to avoid those issues of vehicles in the future. The sculptures are 11 feet wide by 12 feet tall, anchored by concrete posts in the ground.

As part of the design process, the artists will use a hand plasma process (images were presented from example works in past). The artists shared images of trinkets and trophies and things they collected at the archive of Rivers of Steel, and that inspired the idea for a trellis. They got wiring from the National Engineering Center at CMU. They showed on screen examples of wheat and roses they had sculpted, which were twisted up and added to the sculpture. They showed pile of coins that will be used to make wheat that were from Iron Eden. They showed images from books that had interviews with women in metalworking clothes with torches and an example of the one female rigger metalworker on a work group using chains and hoisting things, and in parallel showed images of women at home. The photographs of the home wallpaper especially impacted the artists. This led to the artists doing another community engagement where they put out another flyer seeking for people to send images of lace from one's home or family. People scanned the lace or took a picture and emailed it to the artists, and shared the stories of where the lace came from. The artists are digitally tracing the lace and then plan to laser-cut them – sent out, fabricated and add lace pieces to the sculpture for roses and other plants to grow up the trellis. Goal is to create a graceful, elegant site that people will utilize, since Anchor Green Garden is an underutilized space, and to highlight the vista. The artists shared their contact information.

**Ali Ruffner**, the second artist to present, introduced herself. She is a Pittsburgh native born in Pittsburgh and raised in the area, and is a PA-based artist and cultural worker, and her work is especially dedicated to youth involvement and youth voice in public art. She has a B.F.A. from University of Delaware and is currently obtaining her M.E.D. from Tyler School of Art and Architecture.

Ali showed a photo of Emerald View Park and the three pieces of art that are there. She described having an authentic community engagement process with students at Brashear High School (grades 9-12) to bring sculpture-making materials into the classroom, link an urban public high school to a green space, and create a monument to Pittsburgh youth. She worked to provide students with materials, resources, input in the design, a multi-series of workshops, and being the voices of what they wanted to see in the park. She worked with them in August through December 2021. Due to Covid interruption, was not with them in January-February, but will be going back to do wrap-up with them through end of school year as well.

She described doing a monument lab workshop, which explored and looked at monuments with students, looking at what they noticed, mapping the space, looking at what histories existed, what histories didn't exist, expanding the pedestal and seeing what collaborations went into a monument of a single person or idea and what that looked like for themselves and for their city, and they also did analysis of historical sites in Pittsburgh at various historical scales (10 years, 50 years, 100 years, 400 years ago). Students proposed a new monument and then designed own monument.

The monument lab took the approach of youth-led participatory action research – an innovative approach where youth design things themselves and she as the artist served as a facilitator to help make sure those designs happen. Students individually designed monuments but then as a whole student group they came up with what a monument to and for them might look like.

The location review was conducted with DPW, DOMI, Citiparks, Zoning, ADA Coordinator, PLI, Law, Public Safety, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, and many agencies. Images were shown of entrance to Emerald View Park trailhead. The location was informed by the Pittsburgh neighborhood project, which is looking at different communities and their access to green space, how place matters in determining long-term outcomes for children, including the consequences and persistence of neighborhood-level advantage and disadvantage and racial segregation over time. Ali showed the location chosen at greenway spot, which is roughly near the edges of Mt. Washington and Allentown. A lot of students at Brashear High School come from Knoxville, Allentown, Mt. Washington, Duquesne Heights, and Beltzhoover.

She did community outreach on zoom, and the project was well attended. Comments in chat on Zoom were shown on the screen...and there were lots of very positive comments. There was support for the authentic representation of youth voice in public space. People liked how Emerald View Park is well-connected and so hope this project will bring more attention to that specific location and bring more traffic to that area and be a respite for those using the trail. The design was developed by incorporating ideas from students themselves, from a variety of feedback from community meetings and from art commission meetings.

Ali showed an image of the site on screen. There will be a large enough area such that the site could be used for a variety of things – possibly an outdoor picnic space, classroom space, and space for rest along the trail to appeal to people of a wider variety of backgrounds. Incorporated the option for a bench, since otherwise nowhere to sit. Elders and families emphasized needing a welcoming space to rest or be, and that this might draw more users. The art work would also be a bright colorful monument to Pittsburgh youth. Students chose to each cast one of their hands. She showed images of a concrete pad with signed student tiles, existing boulders in space, and colorful pedestals for hands. They looked at the idea of each individual person being important and monumental to the city, as well as inclusion and having themselves be part of the monument. They also looked at market research by William Penn Foundation about how to make trails more inclusive, which included recommendation to extend an overt welcome and build an urban oasis. Residents noted that they want trails as a respite, with glimpses of water and sound of birds etc., so color and water was added by her and students to add pop of color to green space.

In the process, Ali asked a guiding question: what would teenagers build as a public sculpture if they were given access to the money, materials, and public land the way that adult artists are? She described how she was listening to the youth and following what they wanted made. In her conclusion, Ali shared how this project will bring student art into the public realm, and create a social space for community use along the Emerald View Park trailhead. She emphasized the importance of taking the external grant funding to bring materials directly into classroom, and then to bring the objects students were making back out into the public display, as this disrupts the typical flow of art projects where students’ projects are only seen in school and not typically shown publicly or permanently. Showcasing youth art in a public way can make the space feel more inviting. The aim was to bring these voices to the site and ensure youth voices were not ignored or treated as less special than adult artist work.

### Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>[initial question for OOA Designs]</p> <p>Could you get the City to put a barrier between the street and the sidewalk to avoid cars from driving into the art installation?</p>	<p>OAA Designs: That would be great, but it’s not our ability. Maybe Sarah could speak to that.</p>

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>[Initial question for OOA Designs] How did you find out about the danger?</p>	<p>OOA Designs: The Parks conservancy told us.</p> <p>Sarah Minnaert (PACD Staff) to OOA Designs: And you have also been talking with Parks Conservancy about the plantings and intentional collaboration about how everything coexists...</p> <p>OOA Designs: Yes, we're looking at how any types of plantings would work in unison with design and not cover up the sculpture, et. And we would use perennials so it would be lower maintenance and could come back every year.</p>
<p>In my mind, it seems as though the thought behind the sculpting or the presentation of the sculpting has been very well thought out. The one of the women is quite appropriate for our day and time. And to involve the youth in something like this that they can be proud of is a wonderful thing to do. I don't know of it to have been done anywhere. But I commend both of you for what you're doing. Having been involved with Friends of Grand View Park when we were an organization, a lot of people had negative things to say about the Art Commission, and from what I've seen is that none of that is true – rather, the Art Commission has done a great job of bringing you to the front. I'm anxious to see the art.</p>	<p>Thank you!</p>
<p>I think the art is absolutely beautiful. What are the hands actually made of?</p>	<p>Ali Ruffner: They are made out of aluminum, and then they will be cast and powder-coated so that they will be gold. In classroom, they were made out of wax, and then I can in turn make them more permanent – so half done in classroom but then still permanent outside. They will be metal and mounted and threaded and bolted down so nobody can take them, because that was one of the concerns.</p>
<p>That was my concern, how easy are they to be damaged, since they are such individual pieces being a human hand...and since they are in a secluded area, there could be vandalism.</p>	<p>Ali Ruffner: It's something we've thought about. Hopefully in fabrication it would be very difficult to vandalize or take them. One of our work-arounds is for each student to sign a tile with own name on it that is embedded into concrete. One of our concerns was about tagging, and so we're preemptively expecting that and having students sign it. It also will be lit, which may help prevent it from being such an issue. Height may help too. Arts Commission wanted them to be low enough to the art to be interacted with, but they will be 4-5 feet at their highest.</p>
<p>I just had a concern of vandalism.</p>	

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<p>Will there be on site plaques explaining the process of the art or similar?</p>	<p>Sarah Minnaert (PACD staff): As a whole for the program, we haven't been talking about site-specific contextual information. The City has about 170 works in its permanent collection and we do a lot on the City website to share about each individual work and narrative and storytelling about it. As I shared, we're engaging storytellers to help add layers and depth to how we tell the stories of each of these pieces. It's not a requirement to physically have something at the site telling the story, but we could discuss further what might be at the site in that regard. At a minimum there would be a label at site saying what the art work is.</p>
<p>Alison, what is the life-span of your project? It is steel and glass and maybe some other materials, and some of it looks like it will be pretty thin. What is the life-span?</p>	<p>OOA Designs: The main foundation will be 2-inch thick steel bands by quarter-inch thick bands, which will be strong. The thinner plates will be manipulated and formed. A public art sculpture is considered "permanent" when it lasts 10 years – that's the best I can say. I have many projects outdoors that are still standing to this day for some time.</p> <p>The metal is thick and sturdy and I don't foresee wear and tear happening.</p> <p>Sarah Minnaert (PACD Staff): With these becoming part of permanent condition, City staff do at least an annual assessment of wear and tear and condition. Artists, as part of their engagement, are required to do materials specification assessment so City staff is equipped to know how to prolong and extend the life of the works.</p> <p>OOA Designs: They look delicate but will be strong. They are robust.</p>
<p>Ali, what are your pedestals made of?</p>	<p>Ali Ruffner: They are made of thick welded steel frames and quarter-inch plates, and they are mounted and drilled into the concrete. They're heavy. Nobody is picking up themselves.</p>
<p>I share the concern about the top of the roadway. If they put a standard railing in with 12-inch metal, it would destroy vision of the place. Maybe they need to put something less obstructive but strong to protect the area from cars, since you know somebody is going to run into it. I would hate to see it destroyed 6 months after put in, and that would be tragic. People come up that hill and make the turn too fast. It's right that that is a terrible thing. Both ideas seem very nice and they've come up with something that will enhance the neighborhoods and I appreciate that. Thank you.</p>	
<p>I am a licensed contractor and built in addition for a house in Virginia and I finished it in October of one year and a tree fell on it in the February of the following year. It's an example of how one's own glorious work can be damaged over something of which have no control. Did you consider</p>	<p>OOA Designs: There are trees in the back space that could overshadow the design. We thought about utilizing the center/concrete pad there, so it's set back, but then if so set back it could get dark, and we considered lights, but the cost of installing lights and using city utilities far</p>

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>moving it further away from street to adjust or mitigate problems of people driving into park?</p>	<p>surpassed our available budget. Another option would be doing side panels and not the center one, since if something went through it would probably be through the center one. There are not too many options – it’s an awkward shaped park. If it’s a trellis and a barrier fence maybe that’s sadly what it has to be.</p> <p>We’re giving the best sculpture that we possibly can to the City and within the realm of what our assignment is to produce that sculpture. And perhaps the City could look at how to protect it...we can ask and hope and see what happens. Perhaps that is something to talk about more as we continue to work on this design in this space.</p>
<p>I work with Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and happy you have connected with some of our field staff to discuss the garden space. I have a comment about vehicles jumping the curb. Comment for Sarah. I can share on some communication with DOMI and Public Works alerting them again to the issue and there was some conversation about pilot interventions that DOMI was working on in other areas of city with different types of signage. Of course curb signage is difficult because we don’t want to block the view either, and so there are challenges. I can share this information with you, Sarah, and maybe there is some way to solve the problem in the context of the artwork.</p>	<p>Sarah Minnaert (PACD Staff): Thank you. That would be great. DOMI and many departments have been involved in reviewing proposals as they are refined. We have some great colleagues there in DOMI to circle back with in light of this conversation and see what our options are. Alison is right, this is the City’s issue to acknowledge and solve and work on. We’ve asked them to do something and they’re doing an awesome job of it, and now we need to have a City conversation about what to do around it.</p>
<p>My question is about timing – what is the approximate timeline for installation? I’m thinking about volunteers in the garden, planting annuals this spring...are these things to hold off on because of installation and construction in garden?</p>	<p>OOA Designs: We are hoping to install end of August. We are in conversations now with Conservancy about plantings. I think it would be smart to hold off on plantings. You could do maintenance. But we will need to bring in trucks to install the trellises and do concrete etc., so it would be good to uproot any plants that need to be saved. We plan to do a site visit with Conservancy to identify where exactly everything will go. So I would recommend you hold off until we have that meeting.</p>
<p>Ali, we did some work close to the school in Grand View Park. We left it in the evening feeling it was a wonderful project. By the next morning, it had all been destroyed by vandalism. That has to be uppermost in many minds. Can you get a feel for the students about the placement of your sculpture and the identification of the students involved and how that may have an impact on anyone in the community who chooses to vandalize, for example, one group of youth who oppose another group...and they see the name of someone prominent in one or the other and then they want to destroy that. Is that anything you can get a feel for from students who you’ve worked with? Do you have a feel for that, having worked with the students at Brashear?</p>	<p>Ali Ruffner: Yeah, so one of the strengths of this is the number of students we were able to work with, and so some of those concerns are alleviated when you do include everyone and there was such a large number of students included. In terms of it being a targeted site, I don’t foresee that happening since right down the hill is a large private land that is currently pretty unpoliced and unregulated that is really tagged and is a site near the overlooks that many young people hang out at. Originally it was a site that I planned to build there but it was private. That location gets a lot of attention and it’s right by the water and people take pictures. Our location on the other hand is small and is more of a trail spot that is not very big. The sites that are more of a concern are if they’re big and are notable spots to hang out and have fun things to climb on, but this site we’ve chosen is near houses really close by (neighbors we’ve been talks with who</p>

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
	<p>already maintain the trail, and we've been in talks with Conservancy) and there is a tight connected visibility around it. Those neighbors do a good job of maintaining the trails – there is a tight network around it. The youth I worked with were lovely, very excited and loving and appreciative of the project and see the value in the space. Getting youth to buy into a project is pretty cool. If they see the value it has, it would be unlikely they would destroy it.</p>
<p>It's not those who create that destroy, rather it's those who are envious of those who create that tend to destroy. Kathryn was working with us when we did that, and literally overnight, we finished Saturday night and Sunday before noon it was destroyed completely and brought tears to our eyes. I wanted to get a feel for the fact that it wouldn't happen to this beautiful sculpture.</p>	<p>Ali Ruffner: I don't think so. Maybe small things like spray painting...which will be part of our maintenance plan for removal. That's part of why we built so heavy and the size of what we're building. And building and mounting in concrete will aid with major concerns. It's also pretty far away from school, so they will still have access, but that's why we're in this community meeting rather than Beechview...because of the way the park wraps around we were looking at connecting different areas. Let's hope not [the serious issues]. But our maintenance plan will look at lighter vandalism.</p>
<p>Are the neighbors on the unnamed road...some people call it Lava or other names...for the neighbors who utilize that as access to the backs of home, have you had direct interaction with them? With the neighbors who have been mowing that area?</p>	<p>Ali Ruffner: Yes, so the one site right down the hill of that unnamed hill/site is directly in the backyards and so we avoided that to avoid imposing. And the site that we're at is up bit up, and so those back yards are a decent ways away. We're in communications to include them in the project and they like the project and what is going on and its size. It's a bit off to the side so it won't be in the way for access. I would love for them to come and hang out as we build so they can maintain it and mow around concrete, and I've been reaching out to ensure all in communication.</p>
<p>That's great – important to have extra eyes on the space to protect it over time. Fabulous. Thank you.</p>	
<p>[RCO Lead:] Sarah, if people have additional questions and they send them to me, can I send them directly to you?</p>	<p>Sarah Minnaert (PACD Staff): Absolutely.</p>
	<p>OOA Designs: If anyone has any additional lace to send over, you can upload pictures on the survey site, but you can also send it over to Sarah too. We would love to include.</p>
	<p>Sarah Minnaert (PACD Staff): I appreciate you making this meeting to have this conversation and the extensive time available. Please send to me any and all additional comments/questions and I will connect those back with the artists. The artists are working on getting their final information together, as they are anxious to get through final approvals so they can get started. Art Commission can be watched via Zoom, recordings via YouTube. All the</p>

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
	artists hope to be at the March meeting and we'll see how that moves forward. That's another opportunity for folks to learn more and say more.
[RCO Contact]: Thank you everyone. I look forward to the next steps of these projects and how they turn out.	

**Other Notes**

There was strong community support for the art projects. There were some questions/concerns about how best to protect the public art once installed.

**Planner completing report:** Thomas Scharff