City of Pittsburgh
Art Commission

May 25, 2022 at 2:00 P.M. Meeting called to order by Secretary Goulatia

In Attendance
Goulatia
Leach
Loftness
Parsakian
Quintanilla
Newman (DPW)
Lucas (DOMI)

Staff Present
Dash (Items 5-10)
Minnaert
Cavalline

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A. Approval of Minutes

Goulatia asks Commissioners to review and comment on minutes from April 2022. Loftness motions to approve the minutes, seconded by Quintanilla. All ayes. Motion carries.

B. Items for Review

1. Strawberry Way Mural – Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership
   Final Review

Morton Brown, consultant to PDP, presents the proposal for a limited-term (3 year) installation of a hardscape mural. He is joined by Jeremy Waldrup of PDP.
Parsakian compliments the project and the bringing together of students and artists. Loftness agrees and asks if it was possible to extend it to Liberty Ave. Waldrup says that the last mural iteration was extended to Liberty, but due to the high amount of truck traffic it presented a maintenance issue. He says they hope to develop another project for that area.

Goulatia asks if there was a way to incorporate a section of the mural within the crosswalks so as not to break up the composition. Waldrup says they considered this, but this would also require increased maintenance due to vehicular traffic. He says they’d like to find ways to extend the artwork off of the ground surface in these areas, without affecting the historic buildings nearby. Morton agrees and says that closing down William Penn Place for painting or repairs would be very disruptive, as well as being visually disruptive to the historic viewsheds when seen from other perspectives.

**MOTION: Final Approval**

MOVED BY: Leach  
SECONDED BY: Parsakian  
IN FAVOR: Goulatia, Loftness  
OPPOSED: None  
RECUSED: Quintanilla  

2. **Highland Park Super Playground Mosaics – Highland Park Community Council**  
Final Review

Sabrina Culyba of HPCC presents this proposal for the installation of a community-led mosaic artwork as part of the new playground construction. She is joined by Andrea Ketzel of the Department of Public Works.

Goulatia asks how the guide to identifying the individual mosaics will be made available. Culyba says there will be a visual map online. Goulatia asks if they will use a QR code. Culyba says they will consider that. Goulatia asks why it is called the Super Playground. Culyba says this goes back to the original construction of the playground. Goulatia asks if they will change the style of the children’s drawings as they make the mosaics. Culyba says the goal is to keep them within the spirit of what the children drew. Goulatia asks if they will keep the colors the kids used. Culyba says yes, the glass artists will replicate the drawings.

Quintanilla compliments the project. He says the colors of the mosaic sign are great, and wonders if the top should be an irregular edge to match the shapes of the flowers. Culyba says she is not sure how that would affect the secure mounting on the fence.

Parsakian asks if the lettering on the sign would be a mirrored glass. Culyba says yes, that they changed the white that is shown in the rendering to be mirrored, as it makes the letters stand out. Parsakian asks if the sign will be lit. Culyba says that was not discussed. Ketzel says that they did not include that as the parks are open from dawn to dusk. Parsakian says he loves the project and seeing the children’s words and images come to life. Goulatia says that she’d like there to be online access to see the drawings. Culyba says this is available on the HPCC website. She says that they selected twelve images but they wanted to celebrate all of the artists, so all are shown online. Goulatia asks if the writing on the sign will also be in mosaic. Culyba says yes, that the shapes are cut from acrylic backing but each one will be done in mosaic by a different community member. Goulatia says it is a beautifully done project.

**MOTION: Final Approval**

MOVED BY: Parsakian  
SECONDED BY: Quintanilla  
IN FAVOR: All  
OPPOSED: None
3. **Frick Park Extension Public Art – Tim Kaulen**  
**Final Review**

Tim Kaulen presents his proposal for a sculptural public art project to be located in a park space in the Summerset at Frick Park residential community.

Loftness asks about the colors. Kaulen says the base materials will start in darker tones but he will exaggerate the natural colors of the heron to have a whimsical quality. Loftness says she appreciates the concrete footer being buried.

Parsakian says he is reminded of Kaulen’s installation at the Children’s Museum and asks if it will be colorful like that sculpture. Kaulen says that one of the sculptures there is also a heron, but is made of acrylic signage so is much bolder. He says this sculpture will strike a balance between raw metal and color accents.

Parsakian asks what feedback he has gotten from the community. Kaulen says the community feedback leans toward a playful and colorful palette and the creation of a unique signature piece for the park.

Goulatia asks if he has considered using glass. Kaulen says there are some logistical concerns but he loves the idea. Goulatia mentions a public sculpture by OOA Designs which uses glass. Goulatia asks about the visibility of the base. Kaulen says the goal is for none of the concrete to be visible.

Goulatia asks what the pipe is for. Kaulen says he has asked for a pipe to be included in the foundation in case lighting is possible in the future.

Goulatia asks about the tree structure. Kaulen says it will be solid but will be an organic and tapered shape. Goulatia says that the edges should not be sharp in case it is climbed on, and it is important that guidelines be followed to ensure children cannot get their head stuck.

Quintanilla says he loves the sculpture and says it feels light and airy, so maybe the colors need not be so strong.

**MOTION: Final Approval**

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

**Final Review**

Suphitsara Buttra-Coleman presents her proposal for paneled wall murals to be located at the Sportsplex in Schenley Park as part of the Art in Parks program.

Loftness says it is a lovely piece of art. She asks if it is possible that the substrate would be pulled apart, and Buttra-Coleman says no, that she is working with a company that handles heavy mountings. Goulatia asks if the panel is aluminum or acrylic. Buttra-Coleman says that the substrate is aluminum.

Goulatia asks about the type of paint. Buttra-Coleman says that it is a high-gloss oil-based enamel and is weather resistant. Goulatia describes anti-graffiti coating and suggests using this.

Quintanilla says it’s a fantastic idea. He says the area near the soccer field is mostly about sports and asks if another location was considered. Buttra-Coleman says that the mural needs a wall and there are not many in the park, and this location has a lot of people resting and walking nearby. Quintanilla says that a more contemplative area may be better. Buttra-Coleman says that they had considered another location but had all agreed on this location during earlier planning. Goulatia asks if Buttra-Coleman considered the wall by the tennis courts. She notes that the Commission discussed the current proposed
placement at an earlier meeting. Buttra-Coleman says she would like to put the artwork where people can see it from far away, which makes this a good location. Quintanilla says he is unsure of the context of birds near a soccer field. Goulatia says it should be in an airy space and asks if there is another possible location. Buttra-Coleman says that there was but notes that at the first Art Commission hearing the Commission agreed on this being the best location. Goulatia asks about the other sides of the building. Buttra-Coleman says there is not a lot of space on the other walls so she prefers these two.

Minnaert notes that the octagonal building is hard to represent in images, but the selected walls are not squarely facing the soccer field.

Loftness says that the Commission did give Conceptual Approval of this location with this subject matter previously, and says it would be a positive addition to the park. Parsakian agrees and says it will be an uplifting addition to a dull building. He notes that some previous public comment addressed whether the species were native. Buttra-Coleman says that in her design all depicted birds will be those that can be found in the park.

**MOTION: Final Approval**

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

5. **Sans façon & Steve Gurysh in Riverview Park – Public Art & Civic Design Division Conceptual Review**

Tristan Surtees and Charles Blanc of Sans facon, along with artist Steve Gurysh, present their proposal for a series of art installations to be located in Riverview Park as part of the Art in Parks program.

Loftness asks about the manpower needed to execute the projects. Surtees says that their collaboration with Tree Pittsburgh and the City Forester has been critical for elements of the project, and they will also be subcontracting a carver to do the fallen tree sculpture. Loftness asks for clarification on the sculpture. Surtees says the carver will work onsite and the tree will not be moved at all.

Loftness asks how the project is put together in a long-term sense. Surtees says that it is about discovery and the activation of the place rather than individual objects. He says that the monument will be a framing device that will lead to noticing the heritage trees. He says that the drawing instruments and map will expand this invitation to see this place through a different lens. Blanc notes that the artist film will also help to explain and connect these gestures. Gurysh says that a legacy of the project is the partnerships formed between the collaborators.

Leach asks why the tree markers are nine feet high. Surtees says that it is a combination of keeping them away from vandalism and also inviting viewers to look upward to get a sense of the magnitude of the trees. He says that it could be moved down a bit if desired.

Parsakian says he is very impressed with how the project connects together and how it addresses sustainability. He says that the shape of the park looks like a bird and asks if they've thought of tying that in.

Surtees says that Riverview Park is a special place and through the many conversations they've had they determined that instead of adding something to the park that needs to be cared for, their job was to help frame the existing processes of ecology and create new ways of looking. Parsakian says they are very successful at what they are trying to do and their storytelling is superb.

Goulatia asks what the monument is fabricated of. Surtees says it will be carved from an existing fallen tree. Goulatia asks if they'll be working with each fallen tree. Surtees says they will be working with one. Goulatia asks if they will be able to see the markers at nine feet high. Surtees says that they will
have to see how it looks after one is produced and hung, and if it is hard to see they will adjust it. Goulatia says it is a wonderful project.

**MOTION: Conceptual Approval**

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

### 6. Pittsburgh Pedestrian Wayfinding Locations – Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership  
Conceptual/Final Review

Kathryn Schlesinger of PDP presents the final locations for 164 assets of the wayfinding system. The design of the system previously received Final Approval, with the condition that the final locations were reviewed at a separate hearing. She is joined by Chris Watts of PDP and consultants John Nicholson and Zack Kaczmarek.

Loftness says that the amount of preparation they have done is very evident, as is the need for the signage. She says that she is concerned with the proliferation of poles and the coordination with other signage. Schlesinger says that they have made it a priority to utilize existing poles. She says that when there are a lot of existing assets they work to find solutions so as to reduce the amount of clutter. Watts adds that the cut sheet for each asset will make recommendations to reduce clutter in that area, and that each asset must be approved by the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure.

Leach asks why the Hill District is not considered an asset. Watts says that this is not the way they feel, but that this project was conceived in 2013 as a result of neighborhood planning that was happening in Oakland, North Side, North Shore and Downtown. He says that they have had communications with the Hill CDC about options and they could integrate this into their system if they thought it was appropriate.

Parsakian asks if the project would be expanded to other neighborhoods in the future. Watts says that the project has been privately funded to this point and that the City or other community groups could seek funding for iterations of the system if they wished.

Goulatia says that isolating three neighborhoods highlights them from all others, and that it would be nice to incorporate other neighborhoods in this system to unify the City. Schlesinger says that an expansion of the project would be ideal and that advocating to the City for this would be the next steps. Watts says they have had communications with Port Authority to improve wayfinding as part of transportation channels as well, and that they would work with other neighborhoods who are interested in taking this on.

Dave Demko of Scenic Pittsburgh gives public comment in opposition to the project.

Cate Irvin of Oakland Business Improvement District gives public comment in support of the project.

Loftness asks if the signage identifies what neighborhood you are in. She says that City neighborhoods have rich character and it would be a shame to have a uniform system that does not acknowledge this. Watts says each asset will have neighborhood and district identifiers. He says that this was a point of discussion when the design was approved by the Art Commission in 2018.

Minnaert notes that the application is specifically for the locations, with the system and design being previously approved.

Watts adds that the locations are still subject to the review and approval of DOMI and PennDOT, and there are a lot of technical factors that determine the possible locations.
Goulatia says that she was the only Commissioner present when the design was approved in 2018 and says that a refresher may have been useful. She asks how the individual neighborhoods are being addressed. Schlesinger says that the design was not gone over extensively in the presentation under advisement of staff, as the design elements have already been approved. Loftness says she would like to see a mock-up of the signage from a pedestrian point of view, particularly in Oakland, to see if it is an enhancement. Watts says that in addition to the City reviews, due diligence was done with institutions in each neighborhood to review each asset and its location and these at times led to modifications based on their feedback.

Goulatia asks if the signs are different for each neighborhood or are generic. Watts says they were designed as a standard that could be used in any neighborhood across the City, but have pictograms and narratives that describe each neighborhood and district.

Parsakian notes the number of kiosks in each neighborhood and says that those are large items on a sidewalk. He asks how they justify placing that many items in each neighborhood. Watts says that there was a methodology to identify kiosk locations at key neighborhood gateways.

Lucas says that the applicant classified this as a City project, but clarifies that it is not in fact City-led, and that the specific choice of geographic locations are due to it being led by other organizations. She says that at the City they are committed to getting easily around the City and that wayfinding is an important component of that. She says that a critical mass of wayfinding assets is needed to make that kind of system work. She says that Art Commission approval of the locations is not the final step, but that DOMI will be reviewing the exact locations as part of the permit process to make sure that the signage is not in conflict with existing signage or has a negative impact on the usability of the public space.

Parsakian says that it would be hard for the Commission to give a final approval when DOMI is still reviewing. Lucas says that from DOMI’s perspective, Art Commission approval is one step of the process and that it would not be unusual for something to come to Art Commission prior to DOMI reviewing and issuing a permit.

Loftness asks if each location has been vetted with the owners of the buildings adjacent to the signs. Watts says that each location has been vetted within the community, with property owners, and stakeholders as much as possible. He says that all have had the opportunity to be engaged and is not sure what other forum would be appropriate to review the quantity of these assets. He says that the requirements from PennDOT are very stringent, so between that review and DOMI’s review, each asset will be thoroughly vetted. He notes that this location review by Art Commission was a requirement of the previous concept and design approval. Schlesinger also says that the signage calls out locations within a ten to fifteen minute walk and does not just point to locations that can be seen adjacent to it.

Lucas notes that the reason items come to Art Commission to be placed in the right-of-way are when they are non-standard, whereas standardized items are routinely placed in the right-of-way utilizing DOMI review. She says that it is difficult for the Commission to offer feedback on 165 locations because typically in cases like this they would approve a design standard, with the final locations undergoing DOMI review.

Goulatia asks how far one sign is from another. Schlesinger says the directional signs are typically at opposite corners of intersections. Watts says there are roughly one set of signs or a kiosk on every other block. Goulatia says that is quite a lot. Schlesinger says many of them are being placed on existing assets. She says that info on each location was included in the full application.

The Commissioners discuss what is necessary for their complete review of the project locations. Minnaert confirms with the Commission that an additional month of review time with the submitted materials will be sufficient, and that the applicant can return for a decision the following month.

MOTION: Table

MOVED BY: Leach
SECONDED BY: Parsakian
IN FAVOR: Goulatia, Loftness
OPPOSED: None
RECUSED: Quintanilla
Lucas asks Watts if the decision today will have a negative impact on the federal grant received for the project. Watts says that in order to keep on track for the funding they would like to have a fully approved package by August.

7. Jane Seymour Open Heart Sculpture – Mount Washington Community Development Corporation Conceptual Review

Gordon Davidson of MWCDC presents the proposal for the installation of an Open Heart sculpture by Jane Seymour on a Mount Washington overlook.

Quintanilla says it’s generally a great opportunity to bring in a piece of art, but that the overlooks should not have any pieces of art on them. He says that the platforms are meant to view the City as art, not host a piece of art. He suggests another location may be better for this piece.

Leach agrees and says that this art would conflict with a space that is used for many events as well as viewing the skyline. She suggests a nearby green space.

Loftness agrees and says that it would be a problematic location. She says that if a new location was chosen the new pedestal should be round as in the image.

Goulatia agrees. She says she is opposed to the artwork and notes that it is a design that the artist produces on a line of jewelry and other products.

Parsakian agrees and says he does not feel that this sculpture belongs anywhere in the City. He says it is not a unique piece of sculpture and it feels like this would demean the platforms, which are named after notable City figures. He says that the community has been overwhelmingly against this and is upset that the community group has not listened to their concerns. He says to put anything on the pedestals would block the view.

Goulatia says she is opposed to putting this sculpture anywhere in the City.

Jaye Gennuso gives public comment in opposition to the project.

Lisa Goedert gives public comment in opposition to the project.

Pat Gianella gives public comment in opposition to the project.

Dave Demko gives public comment in opposition to the project.

James Ackerman gives public comment in opposition to the project.

Davidson asks to give a final statement. He says that MWCDC cares what the community thinks and have followed City approval processes for a Conceptual Review. He says MWCDC would like to withdraw the proposal.

**MOTION: Denial**

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

8. Homewood Park – Department of Public Works Conceptual Review
Andrea Ketzel of DPW, along with Sara Zewde, James Smith, and Phil Syvertsen of Studio Zewde, present the proposal for the renovation plan of the existing Stargell Field and expansion of the park onto the previous Homewood School property. They are joined by Adria Longenderfer of Digsau. The proposed improvements include combined sports fields, cultural/performances space, playground and multi-purpose courts, stormwater management, and improved pedestrian connections.

Parsakian asks if the community wanted basketball courts. Zewde says that it came up a few times but that there was a strong preference for football. Parsakian asks if there will be a cover or utilities for the performance area. Zewde says the design is meant to accommodate the possibility of temporary cover. Parsakian says Pittsburgh is driven by the arts and a project this size should give consideration to the performing arts space. Zewde says that is possible.

Loftness compliments the project, its amenities, and its connection to the busway. She wonders if the football field could be designated as being for soccer and other sports as well. She says that the pool has not been given as beautiful a space and does not have grass next to it. She says the building is skewed toward the football field instead of the other activities. She says the project overall is very football-centric. Zewde says they are tailoring the building’s roof to have a presence toward Hamilton Avenue. Loftness says the facades should be opened up.

Ketzel says they have worked very closely with Homewood Community Sports, who are the primary user and community liaison for the project. She says that football is the primary focus of the park and the community’s use of the park. She says the building responds to the need to control access and views when there is a game. Gouliaia says she agrees that safety comes first but asks if there is a way to make the pool seem less like an afterthought. She asks if the seating could be moved to create more open area for the pool and playground. She asks if the blue on the playground rendering is the actual color to be used. Zewde says the blue is the color of the play surface.

Goulaiatia says that the art should be integrated earlier and not be an afterthought. Ketzel says it is not an afterthought, but that the way the funding cycles work is that they need to have a finalized construction budget before they are able to hire artists using that funding, and the design of a project is underway before the construction budget is finalized. She mentions the walk of fame as being a community-driven part of the project which will be integral to the project.

Leach asks about lighting. Smith and Ketzel describe all of the locations of lighting. Gouliaia asks if you can enter the field through the pool area. Ketzel says there is intentionally only one access point. Gouliaia asks how big the pool is. Smith says there are two lap lanes and a play area. Leach asks if most of the lighting will be provided by lights on poles. Syvertsen says no and describes where it is integrated into the amphitheater, steps, pool, and other locations. Leach further clarifies where lighting poles are located. Smith says that the lighting designer has emphasized safety.

Gouliaia asks if people can jump over the railing from the football field into the pool. Smith says that everything 30” or taller has a 42” guard rail. Gouliaia asks if they can put grass around the pool. Ketzel says yes, the City has requested that the retaining wall be moved to create a larger grass area.

Leach asks if the bench is standard or was selected by the community. Ketzel says it is the standard right-of-way bench.

Parsakian says a children’s area in the pool would be important. Gouliaia adds that a sprinkler system would also be possible. Smith says that will be added and they will have more details later.

Mubarik Ismaeli gives public comment in support of the project. He describes the community-led process and what has been prioritized in the design.

Gouliaia asks if they can include a track. Smith says that there is a walking area. Gouliaia says they could make it more of a track with a surface that is better for running.

**MOTION: Conceptual Approval**

**MOVED BY:** Loftness
9. **Enright Park – Department of Public Works Conceptual Review**

Andrea Ketzel of DPW and Eric Brightman of Pashek+MTR present the proposal for the renovation of Enright Park. Improvements include the creation of open flexible space with a variety of uses, including play structures, courts, seating, shelter, and pedestrian connections.

Goulatia asks about the different materials. Brightman explains the various materials used. Goulatia points out a black railing and asks if it would be possible for it to be blue. Ketzel says that the images of equipment are just examples and that the color palette is referenced separately. Loftness says the materials look dated and she would like to see more planting. Ketzel says there will be a number of trees planted and they do what they can with perennial plantings, but they are limited to only installing what they are able to maintain. Leach says there are great offerings for the community but the design is not cohesive. Loftness suggests that the use of wood could be a cohesive element and that the metal that is introduced could be more modern. Ketzel says they are discussing public art on the fence and so that may be used to tie things together as well.

Ketzel says the community was fairly passionate about reusing the wood that was removed in the development and having a more natural aesthetic to the play equipment. Brightman points out the design of the ages 2-5 play space.

Parsakian says that the space is currently a sad and neglected piece of property and it needs brightening and more connection to the community. He says that he does not know what the community needs. He says that it is sad that the trees that were removed will be used as a memorial of things past. Brightman says that one thing the community wanted was a flexible lawn space. Ketzel says that all of the details of the project came from the community’s feedback and the master plan.

Parsakian asked if there will be lighting. Ketzel says there will be lighting for safety but like other City parks it will be open from dusk to dawn and so there will not be other lighting.

Goulatia says that she understands that there are budgetary constraints but says that an RFP can be issued and an artist brought on from the beginning of the project. Ketzel says that there is actually not a way for them to do that. Minnaert speaks to this further and confirms that the City’s procurement process dictates when they are able to bring on artists. She says they are hiring artists as early as possible for Percent For Art projects, and that DPW brings the project to them as early as they are able.

**MOTION: Conceptual Approval, with the condition that consideration is given to lighting, cohesion, materials, and enrichment of the landscape.**

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

10. **Salem’s Art Park – MLK Mural Courtesy Review**

Kyle Holbrook of MLK Mural presents his project of an art park on the exterior grounds of Salem's Market, to include a series of murals, seating, sculptures, mosaics, and digital art.

Parsakian asks for clarification on the budget, which Holbrook gives. Parsakian asks if Holbrook is connecting with artists in the Hill. Holbrook says they will be working with all of the Hill organizations. Parsakian compliments the project.
Loftness says that its beautiful work and will animate the blank walls. She says that bringing in artists at $3,000 seems to be low compensation. Holbrook says that food and board is taken care of in the compensation and that the artists will only be coming in for one week.

**MOTION: n/a**

C. **Correspondence**

The Commission previously received two letters of support for the Highland Park Super Playground Mosaics; two letters of support for the Strawberry Way Mural; a statement from Commissioner Moss opposing the Open Heart Sculpture; 28 community letters opposing the Open Heart sculpture; 1 community letter supporting the Open Heart sculpture; and 1 letter supporting the naming of a Grandview Overlook.

D. **Public Comment**

None.

E. **Director & Staff Report**

None.

F. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 P.M.