

# CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

## Cultural Arts Commission Minutes

Wednesday, October 11, 2023

Members Present: Karen Askin (chair), Cristin Cash, Frances Bevington, Patricia Dubroof, Lydia Tyburski, Brian Rogers, Howard Jung  
Members Absent: Therese Capal, Spencer Knoll, Liz Ortuzar  
Councilmember: Absent  
Staff Present: Karyn Miller, Betty Wisda

### Call to Order

Chairperson Karen Askin called the virtual online meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

### Approval of Minutes

Frances Bevington made a motion to approve September 19, 2023 minutes; Cristin Cash seconded the motion. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously.

### Chairperson Report

- Karen did not have a chairperson report.

### Staff Report

- Karyn Miller gave the staff report.
- Karyn referenced the work being done by the resident companies and the civic arts groups. She also updated the CAC on some internal meetings about the Rockville Swim and Fitness Center's Art in Public Architecture project.
- Karyn discussed the October 2, 2023 Mayor and Council meeting during which a proclamation for Arts and Humanities month was given and the mural artists Katie Gigante and Shawn James were recognized for their recent artworks.
- Karyn also discussed updates to the Art in Public Places Implementation Plan. That document is nearing the end of internal reviews but will need to be reviewed by Barack Matite, Acting City Manager and then will go to the new Mayor and Council.
- Permanent and Temporary Art Subcommittees and the Ad Hoc Working Group were also able to meet. Karyn also noted upcoming City events as well as an economic impact study being released by Americans for the Arts.
- Karyn shared some broader city efforts including the website redesign, the Rockville Town Center Master Plan, and the Pedestrian Master Plan.

### Art in Public Places Subcommittees

### **Permanent Art Subcommittee**

- Patricia reported on the Permanent Art Subcommittee meeting. She discussed the Woodley Gardens Park project. Staff had reported that there are potential utility conflicts and that more information is needed before sites can be recommended and determined. Patricia and other CAC members emphasized the need to determine these conflicts. Staff said they will work internally to determine conflicts and report back to the CAC.
- Karyn reported out on the Rockville Swim and Fitness Center and recent internal meetings, logistical and practical needs, and the user profile. Karyn said that she and Betty have done a site visit, received some preliminary recommendations from the architect on sites, and then discussed that with the internal team. Karyn stated that the swim center is high traffic, all ages, and family friendly. Considerations include risk, health code, climate and environmental conditions, durability, and maintenance.
- Karyn discussed findings from the more general survey that was done for the Swim Center but said they would survey the community specifically for the public art. Karyn showed and discussed potential sites including places for murals, mosaics, and sculptures. Karen discussed what a high visibility location this is and how it probably will get more eyes than any other location in the city.
- Karyn reported that the subcommittee was most interested in the direction of the murals and the mosaics and less enthusiastic about the site for sculpture just outside the complex. The CAC discussed potential maintenance, durability, and risk issues for each potential location. Karyn also mentioned that it is possible to develop a Request for Qualifications that is open to a few possible locations and types of artwork so it does not need to be narrowed yet.
- Karen asked about budget and Karyn reported that it would be about \$100,000 for the project. Frances mentioned the idea of doing an artwork incorporated into the water slides. Karen asked if slides could be fabricated with art in mind or if something could be attached to the structure. Staff agreed to investigate the possibility of doing something and then report back. Karyn said that city staff is planning to do community surveying in the near-term.

### **Temporary Art Subcommittee**

- Karyn reported on the Temporary Art Subcommittee meeting. Karyn explained that the committee talked about three things primarily including the College Gardens Mural. The survey is live now and Karyn has been in touch with the College Gardens Civic Association. Karyn plans to attend their November 8 meeting. Karyn has posters and postcards and is doing in-person outreach.
- Karyn also discussed the Twinbrook Annex project and is working through logistics and technical needs internally.
- Karyn reported on the subcommittee discussion of the Pride Event.
- Karen asked about restoration and evaluation with the two Lincoln Park projects that need conservation – the mural and the Memory Walk project. Karyn discussed whether it made sense to put in the FY25 budget or to apply for funding from the Maryland State Arts Council.

- Karen discussed the need to have a conversation with the community about the Lincoln Park projects. Karyn is waiting for a little more information on the conservation needs and costs. Karyn said that Hjarman recommended that she just go and listen and learn at one of the meetings and then go to a subsequent meeting.
- Karen asked if there were updates on who within the city would be leading the Pride event next year. Karyn said that she has been talking with Tyree about the event and discussing goals, direction, and how best to integrate it. Karen is concerned that there might not be enough commitment in the event for the CAC to invest in it. Karyn said there has been no indication that there would not be a Pride event next year.
- Frances mentioned the idea of doing a mural in the tunnel under Maryland Avenue as a possible mural location. It is a frequent site for teenage graffiti and a mural could be a good anti-graffiti tactic. Karen asked about ownership of that space. Betty said that is likely the City's tunnel and that staff can investigate and report back.

#### **Ad Hoc Working Group**

- Karen relayed the Working Group's discussion around creating a process for community input into ideas for projects. She also talked about the need to get ready to interact with newly elected officials who will be starting soon and may not know what Art in Public Places is or understand the importance of art.
- Cristin recapped the discussion on community engagement and balancing need to do that in a way that does not limit the creative process. The working group identified surveying as the first priority and getting people engaged in the process. Cristin said that the second priority of the group is to put together some briefing materials.
- Karyn said the group also discussed the creation of a pop-up toolkit for additional community engagement. Karen relayed an interest in working with businesses to identify space for artists to create projects and expressed a desire to do more projects that are not just tied to city properties.
- Karen discussed the excellent work that Spencer Knoll did and Karyn explained that he had created a couple of documents that give an overview of the city's arts and culture programs.
- Patricia talked about the need to think beyond just visual arts and how this group can think more about dance, poetry, theatre, and more. Karen discussed the issue around the ordinance and limitations around how funds are used. Frances discussed the idea of small community grants as a way to marry advocacy and projects. It is a way to put taxpayer dollars back into the community to create their own work. It is a way to create art in new spaces and invest in the community through the arts.
- Karyn expressed a need to understand and establish goals and priorities because there are so many different things the city could be doing. She said that it will be good to focus and determine what is most important to the community and what we can be done based upon

where resources have been historically invested, where they are currently being invested, and where they could be invested in the future both in terms of time and money.

## Human Right Commission Liaison Report

- Brian Rogers reported out on the Human Right Commission and said that the commission created an email. The email address is HRC@rockvillemd.gov and there are some discussions whether to make it public or not.
- Brian also mentioned the Pride event and the HRC role in the event. The HRC is also still having discussions about the possibility of proposing changes to their ordinance.

## OLD BUSINESS

- Karen discussed the city's budget process and mentioned that it is earlier and faster than it has been in past years. She discussed the need to get ready for a new Mayor and Council. Karen also said that for Karyn to have capacity to work at a high level, she needs more support for the tasks that she is doing.

## New Business

- No new business was reported

## Announcements

- Karen announced that VisArts will run a program on November 14 called Empty Bowls. Students and teachers will make bowls to bring awareness to food insecurity. VisArts is donating all materials and costs and all proceeds will go to Stepping Stones shelter. Students from Wootton and Richard Montgomery are making bowls. VisArts will also be having an art materials garage sale.
- Patricia reported on the F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival and a recent play reading event that was successful and created specifically for the festival. She mentioned the short story awards at the Rockville Memorial Library that will be held 6-8pm on September 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Patricia said she is curating a new show at the Capital Workspaces in Bethesda.
- Patricia stated that numbers are still low for the F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival and Patricia asked for the CAC members to help spread the word and encourage people to sign up for workshops. Patricia mentioned the bus tour with Eileen McGuckian, Rockville's unofficial historian.

## Next Meeting

Karen asked for a motion to adjourn and a second. Patricia moved to adjourn. Howie seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:26pm.