

Bloomington Arts Commission

Meeting minutes

Virtual meeting, Zoom

Attending: Babette Ballinger, Nick Blandford, Valeria DeCastro, Rachel Glago, Bryony Gomez-Palacio, Karen Hallett-Rupp, Elizabeth Licata, Essence London, Elliot Reichert, Quinton Stroud, Sam Sveen

Absent: None

Staff: Tyler Myles, Marnina Patrick, Sean Starowitz

Public: Nichelle Whitney, JaQuita “Joy” Roberts, Richelle Brown, and Erik Pearson with the Banneker Community Center Advisory Council (BCCAC), Elizabeth Claffey with Indiana University, Kira Domonique

Bryony Gomez-Palacio called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm. The minutes from the July 8th, 2020 meeting were reviewed. Rachel Glago motioned to approve the minutes. Quinton Stroud seconded the motion. The roll call vote to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

Sean Starowitz gave an update that there is no change in the financials.

Banneker Community Center Advisory Council (BCCAC) presentation by Nichelle Whitney: On July 15th 2020 the BCCAC voted to recommend the creation of two Black Lives Murals in Bloomington Indiana. The first is proposed to be on Elm Street in front of the Banneker Community Center and the second will be downtown in a location yet to be determined. The BCCAC is asking City leaders to establish points of accountability that citizens can and should expect them to hold as well as calling for a racial justice taskforce to review policies and programs, create statements of no tolerance for hate, and a strategic allocation of funds to black and brown businesses and neighborhoods. **Joy Roberts** stated that the mural on Elm Street will be more artistically sound than the downtown mural with black artists doing the creative design. The downtown mural will be in a more high traffic so there are constraints on the supplies and design. Ideally both murals will be completed close in time to one another for reasons so the community will know that they are tied into each other. **Erik Pearson**, the program facility coordinator at Banneker, explained that this is the first time in the past five years that the BCCAC has brought forth a recommendation and the first time there is a recommendation for a mural. A four step approval process was created to ensure that all the state and federal codes are followed. That approval process started with the Board of Parks and Rec that voted to approve the proposal on July 28th, 2020. The current step is the Bloomington Arts Council meeting with the next step being City Council with voting on a resolution, and the last will be the Board of Public Works. It is important to note that Elm Street is set to be repaved in two years. The desire is that the murals will be rededicated each year at the Black y Brown festival as well as the annual summer block party at Banneker. There is a BCCAC meeting next week where the location of the second mural will be discussed. The risk of vandalism is known so the expectation is that the City will continue to fund the murals in maintenance and upkeep. **Quinton Stroud** asked if there are materials that would make the murals more resistant to vandalism. **Elliot Reichert** stated there are graffiti abatement sealants. **Sean Starowitz** explained that those sealants cannot be used on the street. Also, there

are very strict guidelines to abide by due to the mural being in the street. Hopefully with public engagement and community involvement there will be more oversight and protection. Other communities that have done similar murals will be looked at to learn what works and does not work. **Joy Roberts** shared that the community will be invited to get involved and participate in some way so hopefully that will create unity around the project. **Sam Sveen** shared an idea about incorporating mosaic into the mural. **Nick Blandford** asked about who holds the responsibility of the costs for maintenance or potential vandalism repair and also, asked if a community committee should be formed to address those costs if and when they occur. **Sean Starowitz** explained that typically with art projects there are split departmental costs between the Department of Economic and Sustainable Development, the Bloomington Arts Commission (BAC), and Parks and Rec but the jurisdiction is always dependent on location. It is important to involve the BAC because if accepted into the public art collection, then BAC has a maintenance fund for public art. **Nichelle Whitney** stated that the BCCAC is the advisory group for the mural as it is their project and they have demonstrated a commitment to community and strategic partnerships so will keep the conversation open with many entities. **Essence London** asked if the Bloomington Black Lives Matter chapter was invited to partner. **Nichelle Whitney** said that they have neither partnered with Black Lives Matter Bloomington working group nor Enough is Enough. This is because the mural is not going through the actual sanctioned organization due to some complications with the establishment of the chapter in Bloomington. However, there will be strategic invitations to invite those groups to aspects of the process so they may be considered as partners in the future. **Babette Ballinger** asked for clarification on what exactly is being proposed to vote on and **Nichelle Whitney** iterated that the central recommendation is for a street mural with the statement of black lives matter be created on Elm Street with a second mural to follow closely in time and near the downtown area. **Bryony Gomez-Palacio** motioned to vote on approval of this project. **Babette Ballinger** seconded the motion. Roll call vote passed unanimously.

IU MFA Photography Project presentation by Elizabeth Claffey: A past project given out to MFA students included volunteer work in the community to get the graduate students out from behind their cameras. This semester the hope is to further engage with the photography skills of the students along with community engagement. The idea is to collectively identify an organization(s) and in some manner engage with the community by means that the students will devise. Possibilities are collecting stories of citizens of Bloomington or creating portraits of citizens but whatever is done, the students will then identify local buildings where these images and/or words can be projected onto. Lastly, the students will be responsible for presenting a proposal to the BAC. The desired outcome is to get the students engaged with the community, have them get to know Bloomington better, and to learn the logistics involved with public art.

An inspiration for this project is the Four Freedoms billboard project that highlights politically driven art for civic and art engagements. Suggestions and feedback from the BAC is being requested. **Sam Sveen, Essence London, Rachel Glago, and Nick Blandford** asked questions, provided feedback, and suggested potential partnerships which clarified and encouraged the project. **Sean Starowitz** stated that the BAC could be utilized as a reference for information about specific sites. **Elizabeth Claffey** said that the hope is to have the students submit a rough proposal at the next September 4th, 2020 BAC meeting.

Public Art Projects: BLM mural at People's Park was given initial approval by the owners of the Bicycle Garage. The historical marker about the Black Market was installed at People's Park. There has been negative feedback from the LGBTQ community about the City's response to the vandalism of the current mural as there is a Pride flag and a Trans flag that was painted over so the hope is to have inclusion of those community groups in the new mural. **Nick Blandford** clarified that the feedback was anonymous so that complicates the ability to get additional feedback and to work collaboratively with the providers of the negative feedback. The project cannot get started until August 31st, 2020 so the timeline is not entirely known at this time. **Essence London** asked if there has been talks with the BCCAC in regards to this mural and the other proposed murals. **Sean Starowitz** shared that there has been conversation with them and they do not want to have the downtown mural too close to the People's Park murals.

Trades District Garage RFQ update is a discussion of the finalists' submissions from Esteban Garcia, Ana and Maria Meza, and Aurora Robson and Jeremiah Teipen. There may be a public comment period. **Switchyard Park** should have drawings by end of the week, **4th Street** signed the contract and sent it off, and **Trades Sculpture** had a little redesign but nothing that will distract from the sculpture.

Miscellaneous: The letter about the Waldron has been completed and all commissioners were reminded of the need to review and sign it as it will be sent out on Monday. **Bryony Gomez-Palacio** asked for everybody to consider what the role the BAC should be with the Ivy Tech awards and the role that played with the community.

Strategic Plan update - Karen Hallet-Rupp stated they are ready to share with the entire commission as it is almost completed. There will be a week or two for commissioners to read, review, and give feedback.

Grants Phase II - Notice given that there is a new grant program from the Indiana Destination Development and it is asked to share this opportunity. As for BAC grants, in April there was an emergency COVID grant and now this phase will be for sustaining the grant recipients. Additionally, venues need support as well. Lastly, there was a grants call last week with the grant recipients from phase I where they provided updates on their organization's work since receiving the grant. **Tyler Myles** work in analyzing the 26 grant recipients encouraged collaboration and resource sharing.

Staff report: postponed till next meeting. **Sean Starowitz** shared that there is a City Council budget hearing meeting and if commissioners could intend or share to interested parties it would be helpful.

Bryony Gomez-Palacio asked if anyone had attended the hospital redevelopment meeting and will continue viewing it online with plans to share about it at the next meeting.

Commissioner Announcements: **Rachel Glago** shared that Midway Music Speaks is doing a virtual summit all week long with many panels about information on the business side of the music industry.

Bryony Gomez-Palacio adjourned the meeting at 6:34 PM.