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Museums & Cultural Affairs

The City of El Paso Public Art Committee (PAC)
Tuesday, December 13, 2016, 3:30 PM
MCAD Board Room

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order.** Meeting was called to order at 3:35 pm.

2. **Roll Call.**

Members Present: Kim Bauer, Derek Caulfield, Gregory McNicol, Isela Ocegueda, Abel Saucedo and Laura Turon

Members Absent: Edmund Castle, Ann Kruzich, Marina Monsisvais, Daniela Quesada Rivas and Stefanie Block Uribarri

Others Present: Ben Fyffe, Miriam Garcia and Misty Monteros

3. **Public Comment.** None

4. **Approval of Minutes.** *Ben Fyffe assisted in carrying out action items in the absence of the Chair.* Gregory McNicol motioned to approve the minutes; Kim Bauer seconded; all members voted in favor, none opposed, and motion passed unanimously.

5. **Discussion and Action on the Amended 2017 Public Art Plan.** Ben explained that although the 2017 Public Art Plan received approval from the PAC last month, there have been two amendments. He turned the floor over to Miriam Garcia, who continued to explain that the first change was to the Northgate Transit Terminal project, which received an additional \$100,000 in funding from Sun Metro. The second amendment is the addition of the Sun City Lights project, which has four pieces, one at each of four entryways. This is part of a larger initiative, which is the streetcar project. Gregory McNicol moved to approve both amendments to the current Public Art Plan. Isela Ocegueda seconded; all members voted in favor, none opposed, and the motion passed unanimously.

6. **Discussion and Action on the Chihuahuan Desert Habitat Project.** Ben began by saying the proposal was very exciting, and the artist, Andrew Dufford, joined in on a Go-To Meeting to walk members through it. Andrew started by noting that three things emerged in his discussions with zoo staff and the architects during discussions on the landscape architecture and exhibit design. First, the goal of the Chihuahuan Desert Exhibit is to help the community appreciate the beauty of the desert; second is to acknowledge the reintroduction of the Mexican Wolf after almost becoming extinct in the 50's and 60's; third is that water is the key player in these rich relationships and the artwork should speak to water in the desert. He discussed his concept via a PowerPoint slideshow, mentioning that the experience should be iconic, integrated with architecture and programming and the gateway should provide a sense of arrival and transition from other exhibits. Members were shown the layout of the exhibit along with an entry area with a gateway element. Rough, quarried stone would be set as a ridgeline that frames the entryway. A larger-than-life wolf carving would emerge from the stone ridgeline, creating an effective connection to the endangered species and providing a place of arrival, interaction and excitement, while providing a seating niche for young visitors with extra benches for adults. Andrew closed his presentation and opened the floor for questions and comments. General discussion followed, with Kim Bauer asking for his thoughts on evening lighting for this large-scale sculpture; Andrew noted that there was no plan for evening lighting as the zoo is not open in the evenings, but he is open to exploring it as they go into final design. Gregory McNicol added there are evening fundraising events, but he is unsure as to whether this particular area would be open at night. Kim expressed concern over points of access for the sculpture and whether they might be accessible to children; Andrew explained that the back of the sculpture would be nestled into the botanical gardens, which would limit access to the back ridgeline. He added that placeholder rocks and benches would be accessible and could perhaps hold signage for the exhibit. He further explained that he doesn't shy away from people touching and sitting on parts of the sculpture, but is conscious of avoiding an obvious way to climb it. Laura Turon asked if crowding and lines had been taken into consideration, expressing concern about possible entrance blockage. Andrew explained that circulation would be looked at in the next phase, possibly including the creation of a 'passing lane'. Ben asked about the width between paws on the sculpture, noting he was specifically thinking of children with mobility issues and whether or not they would be able to have the same experience as able-bodied children; Andrew said it was not something he had thought about in his drawings, but he appreciated it being brought up and would take it

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forward to the final design. Gregory McNicol motioned to approve the concept with the caveats that it not include any directional signage; the wolf not be shown in a straight profile, but rather some degrees toward the entrance, to be determined by the design team; and that accessibility between the front paws be included in the plan. Kim Bauer seconded; all members voted in favor, none opposed, and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment. Meeting was adjourned at 4:22pm. Next meeting scheduled for February 14, 2017.

Approved for content by:
Ben Fyffe, MCAD Assistant Director

Respectfully submitted by:
Misty Monteros, Administrative Assistant

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