

MINUTES
CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION
January 18, 2023

The Cultural Arts Commission meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. in the second floor conference room at the Bel Air Armory, 37 N. Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kristien Foss, Chair
Sandy Schlehr, Vice Chair
Carole Milan
Peg Lucas
Pat Fielder
Jeanne Close
Nicki Jergensen

IN ATTENDANCE: Angela Robertson, Economic Development Coordinator
Donna Kahoe, Town Commissioner
Trish Heidenreich, Director of Economic Development

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Approval of Minutes – November 16, 2022

Ms. Milan moved and Ms. Fielder seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2022 meeting.

The motion carried.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Ms. Schlehr moved and Ms. Foss seconded the motion to elect Ms. Close as Chair and Ms. Fielder as Vice Chair of CAC for 2023.

The motion carried.

FY23 Budget Review

Ms. Robertson reported that CAC had an expenditure in the amount of \$400.00, which was paid on January 4 for the Armory rental sponsorship for Ballet Chesapeake's *Nutcracker* performance in December. There were additional expenditures for the holiday CAC gathering and to One Main Creative for the Living History performance ad design.

The remaining balance in **Marketing** is \$969.00. However, this account will overdraw with funds in the amount of \$540.00 allocated to the Take a Chance on Art Armory rental fee and \$500.00 allocated to the Ain't Misbehavin' Big Band and Comedy Show sponsorship. Funds from the **Public Art** account will be used to cover the overage.

There have been no expenditures from the \$4,000.00 in the **Public Art** account.

Ms. Robertson advised that the CAC members should consider any public art projects they would like to fund before the end of FY23 in June.

Ms. Kahoe inquired about any further developments with the Z Vault mural. Ms. Robertson advised that she has not heard from Z Vault since CAC sent feedback regarding the mural concept they submitted.

Ms. Robertson advised that she has heard nothing further from The Nest on Main after providing CAC's feedback on their mural concept. She advised that the owner had informed that she would like to move forward with a project.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Office Street Sculpture Signage

Ms. Robertson reported that she checked with Leopold Gallery about renaming the *Twister Star* sculpture in the Office Street Pocket Park. They advised that it is customary to keep the name given to the artwork by the artist.

Ms. Robertson advised that she received a quote in the amount of \$190.00 from AllSigns for a 6' x 8" satin silver aluminum plaque engraved with black enamel. She advised that the plaque will include the name of the artwork, *Twister Star*, the name of the artist, the materials used to fabricate the sculpture and the year installed.

Ms. Fielder suggested that the two letters "s" in *Twister Star* be reversed to reflect the name. Ms. Robertson advised that she will inquire if this can be done by AllSigns.

Ms. Milan moved and Ms. Close seconded the motion to purchase the 6" x 8" satin silver aluminum plaque with black enamel engraving from AllSigns in the amount of \$190.00.

The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Bond Street Pocket Park Sculpture Review

Ms. Robertson reported that the Bel Air Downtown Alliance (BADA) has plans to install a pocket park in the parcel next to Newberry Café and is seeking approval for a sculpture design from CAC. BADA will be seeking funding from the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) for the sculpture. The parcel is located at 138 N. Bond Street, and BADA has obtained permission from the landowner, Harford Mutual, to install the pocket park. The sculpture is a permanent

installation and the artist is Thomas Sterner, a Carroll County artist with a studio in Westminster. Mr. Sterner created the fish sculpture in Havre de Grace.

Ms. Robertson shared a photograph of the concept design, which was superimposed on a photograph of the existing parcel. She advised that there is a landscape plan for the area beneath the sculpture.

Ms. Robertson read aloud the description submitted by BADA. The pocket park site is long and narrow and has good sunlight. The parcel is mostly exposed except for two (2) trees along Bond Street, which provide shade for the 12' x 20' edge near the sidewalk. There are plans to include picnic tables, chess tables, lounge chairs, landscaping, bike racks and a sundial.

The sculpture proposed would be installed entirely above the ground creating a space to sit underneath or walk through. The sculpture is designed as an aerial sculpture out of reach and safe and durable with a strong presence viewed at a distance from all vantage points and from within. The sculpture is a murmuration of birds of many species, all native to the region but normally not flocking together—a representation of coming together. The sculpture is currently designed to be comprised of 300 birds, all made from 1/8" thick aluminum, formed not flat, and ranging in size from 5"-35". The sculpture will be interactive in the sense that interesting shadows change and move as the sun crosses the sky and the birds are animated. The birds will be held from above with long and somewhat horizontal ascending steel cables threaded through short-sleeved tubes, which are welded to the back of each bird on the top and not visible from the ground. They will have collars on the cables holding each bird's position longitudinally. A breeze will allow each bird to rock and flutter from side to side bringing a wave-like life to the entire sculpture. The aluminum will be surface sanded with swirls on the birds to capture and reflect light and clear-coated to prevent oxidation. There is an opportunity to light the sculpture for evening viewing.

The sculpture will be 57' long x 39' wide ascending from 10'-30' occupying the middle to front portion of the 160' deep park.

Ms. Fielder advised that whoever provides the picnic tables should work with the artist for a more unified visual, perhaps with aluminum tables.

Ms. Lucas advised that the BADA Design Committee is spearheading this project, and the landscape plan will include picnic tables that will be coordinated with the entire project plan.

Ms. Robertson advised that she can provide feedback about the picnic tables; however, the landscape plan is beyond CAC's scope.

Ms. Milan inquired about the maintenance of the sculpture. Ms. Kahoe inquired if the sculpture can be taken down in the event of high winds. Ms. Robertson advised that the sculpture is permanent and cannot be taken down. Ms. Fielder advised that Havre de Grace be consulted about the maintenance of the fish sculpture as it is similar to this sculpture.

Ms. Close inquired if the types of birds in the sculpture can be identified in some way. Ms. Robertson advised that she will provide this feedback to BADA.

Ms. Jergensen moved and Ms. Fielder seconded the motion to approve the sculpture design submitted by BADA for installation in the Bond Street Pocket Park.

The motion carried.

OTHER:

A&E District Update

Ms. Robertson advised that the A&E District Advisory Board met last week and reviewed its FY23 Task List, which is making progress.

Ms. Robertson advised that Maryland Arts Day will take place virtually on February 16 from 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. She advised that she will not be in attendance as she will be participating in the Minority and Small Business Resource Fair at Harford Community College (HCC) on that date. Ms. Robertson advised that Maryland Arts Day is organized by Maryland Citizens for the Arts and is typically attended by over 500 artists and arts advocates from across Maryland. It is an opportunity to gather, network and advocate for a budget for MSAC and for the arts from the State legislature. Ms. Kahoe advised that she will attend, and Ms. Fielder advised that she will let Ms. Robertson know if she will be able to attend.

Ms. Robertson advised that Harford County Arts Week is being rebranded as it will encompass two (2) weeks (proposed September 15-October 1) in 2023. She advised that the committee is in the process of choosing a new name and is awaiting approval from the Havre de Grace City Council for the dates of the Havre de Grace Arts Festival. The 2023 event proposed dates would kick off with the Bel Air Festival for the Arts and end with the Havre de Grace Arts Festival.

Ms. Fielder inquired about CAC's involvement with the Harford 250 planning. Ms. Robertson advised that there have been no discussions about CAC's involvement in Harford 250

thus far. The first event will be held at the end of March 2023, and the last event will be held in March 2024. Ms. Robertson advised that a work of public art will be unveiled, so all Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) from artists have been received. She is a member of the committee that will review the RFQs. The committee will choose three (3) of the six (6) submitted. The three (3) artists chosen will create a design that will be put to a public vote. Ms. Robertson advised that all of this will occur by the beginning of March, so the Harford 250 Committee can apply for an MSAC grant due by March 22.

Ms. Robertson advised that Bel Air's 150th anniversary celebration will begin in March 2024.

Letters of Appreciation

Ms. Robertson advised that CAC received a letter of appreciation from Authors and Artists regarding its sponsorship of the Armory rental fee for the event. Ms. Robertson read aloud the letter from Chair David Jennings. Mr. Jennings wrote that Authors and Artists showcased 38 vendors offering unique arts, crafts and book sales to the community. Mr. Jennings wrote that Authors and Artists is a success greatly due to funding provided by CAC to sponsor the Armory rental and due to the members being the first friendly faces to greet customers with tote bags. Mr. Jennings wrote that he received numerous positive comments from vendors from a post-event survey with 97% of respondents having a positive or very positive feeling about the event. Mr. Jennings wrote that one respondent noted that the event has become a community for both vendors and guests with people putting the event on their calendars so as not to miss the sale. He wrote that another respondent liked the diversity of the vendors and that most of the people he spoke with at the event liked the friendly atmosphere. Mr. Jennings wrote that the positive feelings from many shoppers are a direct result of interaction with the members of CAC, who make the first impression. Mr. Jennings wrote that the efforts of CAC and Ms. Schlehr, Ms. Lucas, Ms. Milan, Ms. Jergensen and Ms. Grubb are much appreciated. He wrote that Authors and Artists is exploring opportunities to make the event even better and is looking forward to working with the CAC members in 2023.

Ms. Robertson advised that she provided feedback given at the November CAC meeting to the Authors and Artists Committee, and they were very receptive.

Ms. Robertson advised that CAC received a letter of Appreciation from the Maryland Center for the Arts (MDCFA). She read the letter aloud, which express MDCFA's gratitude for

CAC's generous support of the Plein Air Festival. The letter stated that MDCFA supports many other community arts activities, including the Bear Legacy Bluegrass Festival, the Bugs, Birds and Beauty program, and the Rejoice! community choral celebration. The letter stated that MDCFA is still working to build an arts center for the regional community at large to enjoy dance, music, theatre, art exhibits, lecture series, workshops and special cultural arts events. The letter stated that MDCFA is forever grateful for CAC's generous giving, attendance of events and advocacy in the community for building the Maryland Center for the Arts. MDCFA thanked CAC for believing in the power of the arts to strengthen the community.

Ms. Close inquired about the progress of the Center for the Arts building. Ms. Robertson advised that she will check on their progress and report back to CAC.

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Fielder moved and Ms. Milan seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

The motion carried.