

MINUTES
CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION
February 19, 2025

The Cultural Arts Commission (CAC) meeting was called to order at 3:59 p.m. in the second-floor conference room at the Bel Air Armory, 37 North Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeanne Close, Chair
 Nicki Jergensen
 Donna Kahoe
 Peg Lucas
 Carole Milan
 Natalie Weeks

IN ATTENDANCE: Catherine Butrim, Economic Development Coordinator
 Angela Robertson, Director of Economic Development
 Mary Chance, Town Commissioner
 Pam Moore, Recording Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Approval of Minutes – January 15, 2025

Ms. Milan moved, and Ms. Kahoe seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2025, meeting. All in favor.

The motion carried.

Budget Review

i. Marketing / Event Sponsorship

Ms. Butrim reviewed the Projected Budget Expenses for FY25. She advised that \$50.00 has been allocated for the digital ad to promote the Disco Sistas / Brothas scheduled for April 22, 2025, and \$50.00 has been allocated for the digital ad to promote the Ain't Misbehavin' Big Band event scheduled for March 26, 2025. The digital ad for the Ain't Misbehavin' event is currently running until March 25. The current balance for **Marketing** is \$1,586.15.

ii. Public Art

Ms. Butrim noted \$600.00 has been allocated for artist Megan Drumm to paint the Town Hall Utility Box. The current balance for **Public Art** is \$2,327.50.

The balance for both **Marketing** and **Public Art** is \$3,913.65.

Julia Potler, manager of the Bel Air Armory, advised Ms. Butrim that disposable black tablecloths will be needed for 20 tables for the Ain't Misbehavin' Big Band event. Ms. Butrim advised that Ms. Potler suggested ordering two (2) packs of 12 tablecloths from Amazon at a cost

of \$44.28; shipping is currently free. The CAC members present agreed to purchase these tablecloths.

Ms. Lucas moved, and Ms. Kahoe seconded the motion to approve the purchase of two (2) packs of black disposable tablecloths from Amazon at a cost no higher than \$50.00 for the Ain't Misbehavin' event on March 26, 2025. All in favor.

The motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Public Art Project – Town Hall Utility Box

Ms. Butrim distributed a street view of Ms. Drumm's concept drawing for the Town Hall utility box. She advised that Kevin Small, the Director of Planning, confirmed that the Baltimore Gas & Electric (BGE) "keep out" sticker must remain on the front of this electrical box.

Ms. Butrim advised that she provided Ms. Drumm with all of CAC's feedback regarding the concept rendering. Ms. Drumm confirmed that she will incorporate the recommendations from CAC members, including adding the brick texture and the butterflies, and Ms. Drumm confirmed that she will camouflage the BGE signs as much as possible.

Ms. Butrim advised that Ms. Drumm will complete this project in spring 2025 when the weather will be consistently above 40 degrees for the paint to bond to the utility box.

Little Free Art Gallery at Armory Marketplace - Update

Ms. Butrim and Commissioner Chance have both spoken to Dominick Slezak at the Harford County Woodshop about building the box for the Little Free Art Gallery, which will be installed in the mulch at Armory Marketplace near Suite 101. Ms. Butrim advised that Mr. Slezak will be happy to build this box according to CAC's dimensions and specifications. Ms. Butrim advised that the Harford County Woodshop is a non-profit organization and cannot accept payment for building the box; however, but they can accept a donation. Ms. Butrim attended the Harford Artist Association (HAA) board meeting last week to discuss the Little Free Art Gallery; however, the board members did not provide any suggestions regarding the design of the box.

Ms. Robertson shared a photograph of a Little Free Art Gallery provided by the Idaho Falls Downtown Development Corporation. The CAC members agreed that the dimensions and design of this box are similar to the appearance they would like for the Little Free Art Gallery at Armory Marketplace. Ms. Butrim advised that a stake will need to be constructed for the Little Free Art Gallery, and the CAC members agreed that Mr. Slezak should construct the stake as well as the box.

Ms. Butrim advised that she will forward the photo of the Idaho Falls Little Free Art Galley to Mr. Slezak, and she will contact the Idaho Falls Downtown Development Corporation for the dimensions of their box, which she will forward to Mr. Slezak.

Student Art Exhibit at Bel Air Library - Update

Ms. Butrim spoke to Dawn Stone, the art curriculum specialist for Harford County Public Schools (HCPS), regarding a student art exhibit this spring at the Bel Air Library. Ms. Stone advised that HCPS teachers are interested in participating, and she inquired if the exhibit is planned for April or May. Ms. Butrim volunteered to collect the artwork and take it to the library, and Ms. Butrim and CAC members are available to hang the art at the Bel Air Library. Ms. Butrim advised that Ms. Stone feels the students should be asked to submit artwork that has already been created.

The CAC members agreed to hold this exhibit in May 2025 if the library exhibit room is still available for that month.

Public Art Master Plan - Update

Ms. Butrim advised that she spoke to Todd Bressi, a public art consultant, about creating a Public Art Master Plan for Bel Air. Mr. Bressi advised that a full-scale Public Art Master Plan consists of three (3) components:

- Vision - Why is public art important to your community?
- Opportunities - Identifies the different locations for public art and the best opportunities for partnerships
- Rules and policies

Mr. Bressi advised that, because Bel Air is a small town and already has a vision and rules and policies in place for public art, a tighter “scope of work” plan would be appropriate. Ms. Butrim advised that a scope of work plan would take approximately 3-5 months to complete. Mr. Bressi explained that he would travel to Bel Air, meet with the stakeholders and then submit his recommendations. Ms. Butrim advised that Mr. Bressi quoted a full-scale Public Art Master Plan at \$25,000.00 and a “scope of work” plan at \$12,500.00. Ms. Butrim advised that there is not enough funding in the CAC and Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) operating support grant to fund this project in FY25.

Ms. Butrim advised that she spoke with the Havre de Grace Arts Collective. She advised that Havre de Grace did not work with a consultant to create its Public Art Master Plan; rather, a committee of stakeholder was assembled to create the plan. Ms. Close inquired if the Harford County Cultural Arts Board (HCCAB) has worked on public art opportunities. When Ms. Weeks was on the Cultural Arts Board, the group received a \$5,000 grant for the large sculpture on the Ma & Pa Trail from the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) that the Cultural Arts Board matched. Ms. Robertson noted that the CAC has created a list of potential locations for public art in the past that could be revisited.

Ms. Robertson advised that she recently presented Economic Development’s FY26 budget request to the Town Administrator and the Director of Finance, which includes the CAC budget. For the last several years, CAC has received \$5,350.00 for marketing and \$3,000.00 for public art. After presenting her FY26 budget, the Town Administrator and the Director of Finance asked Ms. Robertson what projects the CAC has planned to sponsor and how they intend to spend their \$3,000.00 allocation for public art in FY26. Ms. Robertson noted that the CAC

must decide on a FY26 public art project to justify receiving the \$3,000.00 allocation in their FY26 budget and that they should be planning their projects in advance to justify their budget requests.

Ms. Robertson advised that \$3,000.00 is sometimes too much for the smaller projects CAC has sponsored; however, it is not enough money for a larger public art project. An opportunity for the CAC is the Public Art Amenity Fund, which requires developers to spend a percentage of their development costs on a public amenity such as a park or public art. Ms. Robertson advised that the Art Amenity Fund currently has funds available which could be used toward an FY26 project. Ms. Robertson advised that the CAC may use the \$3,000.00 allocated from the Town and may utilize funding from the Art Amenity Fund for a larger FY26 public art project. Ms. Robertson advised that now is the time for CAC to identify FY26 public art projects, which can be presented by Ms. Robertson to the Town Commissioners during the budget process in late April / early May.

Ms. Close suggested that CAC hold work sessions in the fall or winter to discuss possible public art projects for the following fiscal year.

Some possible public art projects include the following:

- Music Land – Because the exterior of the building is textured and cannot be painted, Ms. Schlehr had previously proposed a mural in three (3) sections that could be mounted on the wall on Music Land.
- Ms. Kahoe proposed a sculpture at the gateway on Route 22 near Rockfield Manor. Ms. Robertson noted the next step would be to identify and contact the property owner to see if they are willing to have a sculpture installed on their property; Ms. Butrim will contact the property owner to begin this discussion.
- Ms. Jergensen advised that Bel Air High School (BAHS) is still interested in painting a mural on the building across from their cafeteria. Ms. Robertson noted that project would be almost exclusively for the BAHS community as it is not an area easily accessible to the public.
- It was noted that Kevin Small, the Director of Planning, has recommended that artwork be installed in the stairways of the Hickory Avenue parking garage.

The CAC members were asked to email Ms. Butrim ideas regarding public art projects and to bring public art recommendations to the March CAC meeting.

Regarding the proposed Route 22 Gateway sculpture, Ms. Robertson suggested consideration of two (2) sculptors:

- Thomas Sterns created a sculpture in Havre de Grace of a large metal fish made of small fish. Mr. Sterns designed a bird sculpture spearheaded for the Bel Air Downtown Alliance for a park on Bond Street; however, this park was absorbed by the Standard on Bond project, and that sculpture project was abandoned.
- Matthew Harris created the “Queen Anne’s Lace” sculpture on Hickory Avenue next to the parking garage.

Ms. Robertson advised that Wayne Goddard, the Standard on Bond developer, must provide open space and a Public Amenity for his project. He intends to install historical markers that tell the story of Bel Air. Ms. Robertson expects that he will submit these plans to the CAC for their review.

NEW BUSINESS:

Review of Proposed Mural at Raising Cane's

Ms. Butrim advised that Raising Cane's restaurant is currently under construction on the corner of Atwood Road and Baltimore Pike where the former Pete's Cycle was located. They are proposing to install a mural entitled *One Love Heart*, which is installed on each Raising Cane's restaurant. Ms. Butrim advised that the mural graphically relates the story of Raising Cane's with items important to the owner and founder, Todd Graves. Ms. Butrim distributed a one-pager with explanations of the meaning behind each component of the mural. She advised that the red background of the mural is painted along with the name of the city where the restaurant is located. Ms. Butrim advised that the components of the heart are constructed of brushed metal pieces, which are pin mounted to the painted wall to give a 3D effect. This mural will be installed next to the drive-thru at the rear of the building and facing the parking lot.

Ms. Weeks moved, and Ms. Milan seconded the motion to approve the Raising Cane's mural. All in favor.

The motion carried.

Take a Chance on Art Armory Rental Sponsorship Request

Ms. Butrim advised that Harford Artist Association (HAA) has submitted their Armory rental sponsorship request in the amount of \$540.00 for the 7th Annual Take a Chance on Art event which will be held on March 29, 6 – 9 p.m., at the Bel Air Armory. Tickets will cost \$95.00 for the lottery and dinner, or \$35.00 for dinner only; no couples' tickets are being sold this year.

Ms. Lucas moved, and Ms. Weeks seconded the motion to sponsor the Armory rental for Take a Chance on Art on March 29, 2025, in the amount of \$540.00. All in favor.

The motion carried.

TOWN UPDATES:

Town of Bel Air

Commissioner Chance advised that the Town Commissioners are beginning the budget process, which will end on May 19, 2025. Earlier today, Commissioner Chance attended a ribbon cutting for Chocolate Moonshine, 106 North Main Street, which is owned by a Kingsville, MD couple and managed by their son. The ribbon cutting was hosted by the Bel Air Department of Economic Development.

Commissioner Chance advised that Harford Mall is in transition and that the owner of the mall will soon present their ideas for that property and its future.

A&E District

Ms. Butrim reported that she attended Maryland Arts Day in Annapolis on Thursday, February 13, along with 600 other arts advocates. Lady Brion, the poet laureate of Maryland, was the keynote speaker. Ms. Butrim and her group visited Harford County Delegates Mike Griffith and Lauren Arian, and Senator Mary-Dulaney James. They advocated for the following:

- Fully funding the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) for \$31.2 million in FY26, the amount proposed by Governor Moore which is level funding from FY25.
- Keeping the Arts and Cultural Capital Grants Program at \$3 million in FY26.
- Rejecting the proposed elimination of the 1994 Art Stabilization Act funding formula for building MSAC's budget each year. If that funding formula is eliminated as requested by Governor Moore, MSAC would not know what their budget would be until the end of the legislative session. As a result, arts organizations would not know what they could request when they submit their grant applications to MSAC, and they would not be able to plan a budget for the next fiscal year. If the 1994 Arts Stabilization Act is eliminated, it will become possible for the current administration or future administrations to drastically cut or even eliminate funding for MSAC.

Ms. Butrim noted the House has a hearing on these matters on February 27 at 1 p.m., and the Senate hearing is February 28 at noon. Ms. Butrim advised that she will email information needed for the CAC members to register to speak or to submit a statement urging the Maryland Legislature not to eliminate the 1994 Arts Stabilization Act.

Other

Ms. Lucas and Ms. Milan volunteered for the Ain't Misbehavin' Big Band event on March 26, 7 – 8:30 p.m. Ms. Butrim advised that they should plan to arrive at the Bel Air Armory at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Lucas moved, and Ms. Kahoe seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:14 p.m.

The motion carried.