

**PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA
November 15, 2023
Palm Springs City Hall
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
Large Conference Room**

Pursuant to Assembly Bill 361, this meeting was conducted by teleconference and in-person.

A. CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Palm Springs Public Arts Commission was called to order by Chair Gary Armstrong on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Tom Burns, Carlos Silveira, Christopher Ramirez, Vice Chair Newkirk, and Chair Armstrong. (Commissioners Melissa Shelton and Shawnda Thomas Faveau joined on Zoom);
City Staff: Jay Virata

C. PRESENTATIONS: The PRIDE Sculpture, by Karen & Tony Barone (Richard Noble)

Richard Noble shared two photos of sketches by the Barones – one showed four figures holding a rainbow flag and the second was of a dog named “Happy.” Noble presented the idea for a permanent installation in Frances Stevens Park. The installation would include a 10-foot-tall sculpture of the four figures holding the rainbow flag plus another sculpture of “Happy” beside it. All would be installed on a cement base and the work would be lit up at night. Mr. Noble said he had shared additional notes and information with Jay Virata by email, which included the estimate for the project – between \$125,000 and \$150,000. He offered to share the link to a video, “Soundbite Story – A Walk Across America,” if interested.

D. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER RAMIREZ, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER
NEWKIRK, CARRIED 7-0 TO ACCEPT THE AGENDA

E. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR:

Chair Armstrong shared his assessment of the projects that Jay and he have been working on over the previous week. He noted that there are a lot of projects in the pipeline, and all have hit some type of roadblock. Since whether large or small, the projects take the same amount of time to manage and with the Engineering Department being backed up, the Chair proposed a push toward bigger installations as the best use of everyone’s time. He also shared that the roadblocks mentioned will likely result in projects that were approved last year for October installation being pushed to January or February 2024.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Logan introduced himself as an artist who had sent a proposal to Jay to be considered for the sidewalk art project. Also, Mr. Jeff Solomon, another artist expressed interest in working on the asphalt project.

G. REMARKS FROM THE VICE CHAIR:

Vice Chair Newkirk expressed his support for the Chair's proposal to concentrate on bigger projects. He noted that since the elimination of the role of Arts Coordinator a few years back, the commission has functioned without a dedicated staff member to push projects along. Much of the duties of that project management role have fallen to the Chair, but since not every chair will have the bandwidth to handle, it means the commission can take ideas only so far.

H. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from the meetings of July 19, 2023, August 21, 2023, September 20, 2023, and October 18, 2023.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BURNS AND SECONDED BY CHAIR ARMSTRONG. THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/APPROVAL:

1. Ad hoc committee for the Richard Wyatt mural – Chair Armstrong shared some photos and background about getting the mural refreshed over the years: The mural, which has been touched up several times since its installation 26 years ago, is due for another refresh. Instead of another round of touch-ups by Mr. Wyatt, the Commission had discussed doing a tile artwork. An engineering study was done to determine if the building the art is installed on could withstand the approximately 1,100 five-pound tiles estimated by the artist. The study determined it could and both the Arts Commission and the City Council voted to approve the funding for the tiled "refresh." Mr. Wyatt, however, is no longer interested in working on the project and so the commission would like to create a sub-committee that will interface with the community to determine how they would like to proceed. The Chair said that any solutions the community offer will have to go through the committee, the city council, and the procurement process once again. Christopher Ramirez, Shawndra Faveau, and Carlos Silveira volunteered to be on the sub-committee.
2. December's Commission meeting - The commissioners discussed whether to have a study session, a special session, or to stick to a regular meeting in December. Director Virata mentioned that as of January 2024 the Commission may be required to have all meetings in person and is expecting a decision on this by the City Attorney in December. The Commission agreed to keep the December 20th regular meeting and to look at dates for a study session in the first two weeks of January. The Chair asked Director Jay to send links of the current ordinances to everyone.

3. **Utility Box Project** – Chair Armstrong shared feedback from Engineering regarding the use of utility boxes as artwork: All boxes are subjected to maintenance, and to removal and replacement in their entirety without prior notification to anyone. Commissioner Burns expressed concern about putting more money into the project given these constraints. Commissioner Faveau thought there were benefits to continuing the project on a limited basis and Commissioner Shelton agreed. Commissioner Ramirez wondered if there are other infrastructure items that might serve the same purpose of bringing opportunities to new artists as well as being more permanent, such as asphalt or light posts. Chair felt that the Utility Box project had run its course and that the Commission can find other ways to keep young artists engaged using “canvases,” like the benches, i.e., platforms the Commission had more control over, and unlike the utility boxes, would/could be considered art.
4. **Airport Mural design** - Commissioner Ramirez presented the two concepts that he received for the *“Palm Springs Welcomes You”* sign design. The artist for one of them (Option A) was at the meeting to share his vision. The Commission requested revisions on both designs and asked Commissioner Ramirez to work with the artists to get the revisions, and in two weeks, to set up a quick special meeting for the commission to review the changes.
5. **Red Dragon** – Chair Armstrong mentioned that he asked Jay to put together a \$4,000 signage budget that the Commission could tap into as needed for current and future signage requests.

MOTION MADE BY VICE CHAIR BARRETT AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SILVERIA TO APPROVE THE \$4,000 FUNDING. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

J. PROJECT UPDATES:

1. **Beautiful Shade** – Chair Armstrong explained the vision for this sustainability project: like the 2014 Bike Rack program, the commission would partner with the Parks Commission as well as the Sustainability Commission to develop the program. The Shade structure would require one funding which would cover multiple artists working on the same structure. Still in the idea stage, the Chair is staying open to scope and size of the project/budget. Chair Armstrong also shared that he was able to get on the agenda for the next Sustainability Commission meeting scheduled for the week of November 20th.
2. **Pillars of Palm Springs** – Chair Armstrong stated that all the artists have signed their contracts and that City Hall had hired a Communications firm to do press for the project.
3. **Art Collection Inventory** – Vice Chair Newkirk shared that he and Commissioner Faveau were working on updating the master inventory list which currently stands at just under 100 pieces. They will need to update the list to add newer pieces and

missing data and hope to have this completed to share an updated list in the January Commission meeting. Chair Armstrong said that at some point the inventory list will need to include whether the City has a signed agreement for each work and that the Commission will need a separate list for miscellaneous art types such as utility boxes, benches, and murals.

4. Asphalt Art – Commissioner Ramirez said he had conversations with the president of James O. Jessie Community Center plus two police officers. From those conversations he senses the support is there to make the Asphalt Art functional by incorporating safety features.


K. REPORT FROM DIRECTOR/STAFF:

Jay Virata reminded everyone that the Bill passed during COVID allowing the Commission to have hybrid meetings would expire in December. Once he hears back from the City Attorney he will update the Commission about new meeting requirements. The Commission is also looking to change the day of the week it meets.

ADJOURNMENT: The Public Arts Commission will adjourn to a meeting on December 20, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Large Conference Room of Palm Springs City Hall located at 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way.

MOTION BY CHAIR RAMIREZ, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SILVEIRA, CARRIED 7-0 TO ADJOURN at 7:09 PM TO A REGULAR MEETING ON DECEMBER 20, 2023, AT 5:30 PM IN THE LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM OF CITY HALL LOCATED AT 3200 E. TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY.

Respectfully submitted,



Jay Virata, Director
Community & Economic Development Department

APPROVED BY THE PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION: DECEMBER 20, 2023