

## City of Missoula Public Art Committee Minutes March 17, 2015

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
  - a. Present: Doug Olson, Peter Lambros, Kia Lyszak, Kathi Olson, Linda Richards, Ted Hughes, Jeff Rolston-Clemmer, Taag Petersen
  - b. Guests: George Ybarra, Tom Benson
3. Approval of minutes. Postponed.
4. Public Comments:

Chair sets forth context and criteria for voting on a location for the Ybarra % for Art piece in Silver Park. Chair reviews history of process. • three funding sources, City, MRA, Private (Silver), • committee must also weigh voices of non-funders, ie voices from selection committee, in particular the developer, • while the selection had strong support from 2/3 of funders in the selection committee, Chair represented that site selection would be sensitive to selection committee opinions, • Upon awarding the commission, Chair advised artist that artist opinion would be considered, but that site selection was not the artists choice due to the scale of the piece—artist agreed, • selection committee upon site visit determined three acceptable sites for consideration, east, central, and west, • artist preferred central, • Silver with weight of developer funded a site/photo composition to determine their impression of central site, • Silver rejects central site based on its overweight to the center and competition with future 'tribute' piece in near proximity—Silver deems West site only acceptable site, • Developer supports West site as well. Further detail on Silver and Developer perspectives to be articulated with letters submitted from this meeting.

The artist had represented different assessments of the various sites during the process. Peter asks artist to articulate final opinions of site selection, even though the decision is not the artist's.

George Ybarra, artist, discusses placement of *Perseverance and Passage*. He spent time surveying the park to select a place that would not interfere with other objects and has appropriate soil make up for the footings. Ybarra strongly prefers the central location, with the boat ramp knoll second, and the west end of the park third. His rationale for the central location includes:

- Ideal for public interacting with the sculpture due to level ground and slight distance from path.
- Level ground also allows sculpture to be placed 20 feet from pathway.
- Trees will grow up around sculpture over time creating a space within a space.
- Visually, better interaction with the California Street Bridge to the west.
- Soils are some of the best in the park for this purpose.
- Soils on the west end are problematic and would require additional testing and deeper footings to support.
- West end site slopes quickly away down to drainage area. This is problematic for placing the sculpture.
- The boat ramp knoll is also solid ground, removed from the Old Sawmill developments, right on the river, and visible from across the river.

The chair clarifies that the Public Art Committee ultimately decides the placement of the sculpture, and thanks the artist for his patience during the deliberative process.

Chair asks artist to put numeric weight to the location choices, both in terms of artistic merit and also soils.

Ybarra clarifies again that the central location is his preferred site and thanks committee. To summarize, on a scale of one to five (1 the least ideal and 5 the most ideal), for aesthetics he gives the west end a 2 and the soils a 1, the central location a 5 and a 5, and the boat launch a 4.9 and a 4.

### **SILVER PARK SITE DELIBERATION**

PAC discusses the locations listed in the original Silver Park art call (see Exhibits PDF pg. 6): #1 is the knoll above the boat landing, #2 is the higher knoll on the SE corner of the park, and #3 clearly states any other site other than #1 and #2 as long as it is clear of the drainage zones. Initially, there was concern of placing artworks in the west end of the park due to vandalism. This is less of an issue now due to the increased development occurring near that side of the park.

Chair reminds PAC that the selection committee included interested parties from the community and it is our prerogative to give weight to their opinions when PAC votes.

Jeff Rolston-Clemmer, PAC member, offers his opinion, that the canvas is inseparable from the piece, and that PAC should weigh the artists opinion heavily to realize the fulfillment of the artistic vision.

Chair reviews the perspectives of three parties, developer, Silver (1/3 funder), and MRA (1/3 funder)

Ed Weatherbee of the Old Sawmill District submitted a letter to PAC (see Exhibits PDF pp, 3 & 4) in support of the west end.

Karrie Montgomery of the Silver Foundation submitted a letter to PAC (see Exhibits PDF pg. 2) in vehement support of the west end and strong urging against other sites.

Ellen Buchanan of the MRA submitted a letter to PAC (see Exhibits PDF pg. 1) stating that the decision about where to locate the artwork is ultimately between the Public Art Committee and the artist. The MRA supports the knoll above the boat ramp, agrees the central area respects the prominence of the artwork, and sees the west end as problematic due to the soils makeup, as well as degrades the artistic merit according to the artist.

Chair asks PAC to consider both: the park as a canvas for the artist, and respect the artist's selection, while also acknowledging that *Perseverance and Passage* is a large, commanding artwork that will look, in his opinion, excellent wherever it is placed. PAC's charge is to weigh the opinions of all stakeholders in addition to ourselves.

**Committee thoughts:**

Doug Olson: Karrie and Ed have been included all throughout the process and there has been accommodation, including repeating the art call and removing the knoll in the SE corner from consideration of a potential site in light of developer concerns. Doug supports the central site.

Linda Richards: Linda supports the site recommended by the artist.

Taag Petersen: Taag feels it inappropriate that a committee would supersede an artists’ vision of the placement of art in context. Taag supports the central site selected by the artist.

Kathi Olson concurs: Also, the west end was considered more vulnerable to vandalism at the time so no art was designed to fit that end of the park. She also doesn’t see the tension with the Pavilion and the Silver Commemorative artwork mentioned in both Ed and Karrie’s letters.

Ted: I believe George made a better argument for his site and against the west end site.

Doug Olson motions to accept central site. Linda seconds.

**Call for discussion.**

Chair recognizes the piece is ambitious and exciting and thinks the west end not only acceptable, but is a good site. Chair favors a solution that has the most overlap of support, even if it is not the first choice of the artist.

Kathi agrees the west end will eventually become a more central location as the area is developed, but is leery of the soils and spacing issues (the site is on a slight slope).

Taag states that supporting the artist’s choice is easy for him.

Doug again motions to vote for the central location with the amendment of then sending the selection to the Parks Department for final approval.

- Vote results 5 in favor, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention.

Motion passes to place Perseverance and Passage in the central location.

Taag will inform Parks Department to begin dialog.

**TRAFFIC SIGNAL BOXES**

The art call for the next round of TSB is approved by a unanimous vote.

April 9<sup>th</sup> is the informational meeting.

**PINEVIEW PARK**

The deadline for Pineview Park submissions is March 20<sup>th</sup>.

**PUBLIC ART GUIDE**

Deadline for advertisement submission is April 1.