

Bedford Gallery Advisory Council
Learning Center, LCA
Tuesday, May 5, 2009
5:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present:

BGAC: Donna Arganbright, Kari Grape, Susan Helms, Rebecca Ines, Linda Kramer, Jim Pezzaglia, Pavel Soltys, Ann Weber

AC: Reggie Marshall, Jacquelyn Smith

Staff: Robyn Burror, Mel Chang, Barry Gordon, Carrie Lederer

Public: Betty Dunn, Docent Representative 2009-2010

A. Call to Order

1. Introductions

B. Public Communications

C. Approval of Minutes of March Meeting: Donna Arganbright moved to approve the minutes; Kari Grape seconded the motion.

D. Chair's Report: Ann Weber

1. Arts Commission report: Reggie Marshall

The Commission did not meet in April. There is nothing to report at this time

E. Public Art: Robyn Burror/Carrie Lederer

1. Presentation: Library Public Art

Robyn Burror and Carrie Lederer presented a report and slide show on the Downtown Walnut Creek Library Public Art project. The selection panel met for a second time on April 20, 2009, and selected 15 artworks by 12 artists for purchase, including 1 commission project with artist Marta Thoma. The selections will be presented to the Arts Commission at their May 18, 2009, meeting. The \$80,000 set aside for library artwork comes from the Public Art Ordinance allocation from the construction of the new library. Additional artists were also chosen to be part of an approved Library Public Art Pool, from which donors to the Walnut Creek Library Foundation can chose art for purchase for the new library.

2. Open discussion: Public Art Master Plan

Carrie Lederer stated that the Walnut Creek Public Art Master Plan is now 10 years old. In preparation for revisions and amendments to the Master Plan, she would like to capture BGAC feedback on various Public Art projects—both positive and negative. In late November 2008, City Council approved an amendment to the Public Art Ordinance to include a Public Art allocation for mixed-use development. At this Council meeting a number of issues surfaced, hence the Arts Commission interest in revising the Plan. The Arts Commission will appoint a task force to review the Public Art Master Plan and to make recommendations to City Council for revisions. Barry Gordon said that the Arts Commission must first go to the Council to get a task force approved. Ann Weber questioned if the timing was right to make changes to the Master Plan, given the current

economic atmosphere. Burror said that it is important to advocate for the public art program now, rather than waiting for economic turnaround, where we are potentially missing opportunities for public art that may arise in the future. Lederer stated that the revision process can be a lengthy one, and it may be a year before the amendments are approved. Gordon agreed that this is a good time to start this process, as there has been no decline in building permits, although construction has slowed. Pezzaglia added that long term, strategic planning should not be effected by short-term crisis, “It will be a benefit to the city to make these changes now so that when the economy swings back the city poised and ready to engage in meaningful Public Art projects.”

Lederer would like the BGAC to use their perspective and experience to create a punch list for the task force. Further discussion will take place at future BGAC meetings. Pezzaglia stated that he has already started a list that he will email to the BGAC members, and it includes the issue of an *arts administrative fee* that should be included in the public art allocation, as well as a consideration for maintenance of public art. Gordon said that several members of the City Council are strong advocates for public art and that the DRC, developers, planners, and the general public will also be part of the discussion.

3. Other Items: Centre Place

Burror distributed plans for Centre Place development on California at Olympic, and reviewed the project with the BGAC. The Centre Place Public Art allocation is \$11,000 because the project falls below the 25,000 square foot threshold stated in the Public Art Ordinance. Centre Place has requested permission to contribute to the In-Lieu Fund because the Public Art allocation is so low, making it difficult to realize a meaningful public artwork. The BGAC discussed this project, and past projects with low Public Art budgets, and unanimously agreed that it is appropriate for the funds to be diverted to the In-Lieu Fund. Jim Pezzaglia added that this is a good example of why projects should have an across the board 1% requirement without a minimum square footage.

The Mercer public art project was sited as an example of an \$11K public art project that afforded no fee to the artist, and no funding for engineering, installation, lighting or labeling. In addition the size and scope of the artwork are inappropriate in relation to the size of the building development. The BGAC members agreed that when projects are accessed with an allocation that falls under \$20K, they should be directed to the Public Art In-Lieu fund.

F. Curator’s Report: Carrie Lederer

1. Working in Wax: exhibition and programs

Lederer announced that *Working in Wax* will have an Opening Reception on Wednesday, May 6, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. and distributed exhibition announcements for the exhibition.

2. Exhibition review: Nature’s Beloved Son

Lederer presented materials from the traveling exhibition by California Exhibition Resource Alliance (CERA) entitled *Nature’s Beloved Son: Rediscovering John Muir’s Botanical Legacy*. The exhibition showcases the botanical collections of John Muir and the photography of Contra Costa County artist Stephen Joseph. *Our Beloved Son* is a retrospective of the extensive artifacts and specimens collected John Muir, who was a

resident of Martinez. In recognition of Muir's connection with Contra Costa, CERA is very interested in opening the show in the seat of the County, and they have offered to waive the \$10,000 exhibition rental fee to assure an opening at the Bedford Gallery. The exhibition will then travel internationally. Lederer will collaborate with the John Muir Museum in Martinez to borrow objects for display at the Bedford, and hopes to also include some of the actual flora Muir documented. The exhibition will likely be scheduled for late 2010. The BGAC agreed this was a strong exhibition and encouraged Lederer to pursue it, as it would help diversify the annual schedule. Jerry Leisure stated that this exhibition will be a wonderful opportunity for our local schools, and that it should bring a boost to our tour program.

G. Adjournment