

Bedford Gallery Advisory Council
Learning Center, LCA
Tuesday, November 3, 2009
5:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present:

BGAC: Susan Helms, Jim Pezzaglia, Donna Arganbright, Rebecca Ines, Linda Kramer, Jerry Leisure, Pavel Soltys

Arts Commission: Jacque Smith, Reggie Marshall, Susanne Masella, Carol Fowler

Public: Steve Dolan (Art Consultant, Andrea Schwartz Gallery), Andrew Baker (Essex Alamo, LLC), Russ Naylor (Naylor & Chu Architects)

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

A. Call to Order

1. Introductions

B. Public Communications

C. Approval of Minutes of October Meeting: Jim Pezzaglia moved to approve the minutes; Rebecca Ines seconded.

D. Public Art: Robyn Burror/Carrie Lederer

1. Newell Project: Andrew Baker; Steve Dolan, Art Consultant, Andrea Schwartz Gallery: presenting artist Archie Held

Developer Andrew Baker introduced the 1500 Newell Project, a mixed use development on about 2 acres on the corner of Newell Ave. and Main St. Plans are for a modern building with clean lines and natural style, that will host upscale modern living units above retail shops and restaurants.

Steve Dolan, the art consultant for the project, wanted to find an artist who had not previously worked in Walnut Creek, but that was still to the caliber of other public artists with artwork around the city. The inspiration for the public art project came from the overall aesthetic of the development, while remaining complementary to the city's own aesthetic and values. The developers also considered the public experience, scale and proportion, environmental issues, and how to create a gathering place and strengthen the community. The public art allocation for the project is approximated \$180,000.

The proposed artist is Richmond-based Archie Held, an internationally recognized artist with many private and public commissions. Held works with bronze and stainless steel sculptures, often with water elements. Two locations were chosen for artwork. The first site is in front of the clock tower/staircase at north end of the building. It will be situated near a prominent courtyard area with strong sightlines along Main St. The proposed sculpture features four vertical elements, approximately 25 feet tall, above a pool, and will incorporate both smooth and textured bronze surfaces. The developers wanted something monumental in size, but the sculpture must also be situated close to the building to allow for flood control restrictions that require a certain amount of clearance to access the neighboring creek. The second site is the pedestrian bridge railing where Main St. crosses the creek and will provide an intimate experience for people walking across the bridge. Held would like to combine water jet cut, powder coated steel fence panels

with a leaf motif along the railing as well as several freestanding, sculptural elements that could also incorporate overhead lighting for the bridge. The art fence would be safe, while still allowing the creek to be visible. Russ Parker added that this would also serve as a gateway to future pedestrian creek side developments.

Ann Weber asked what the process was for selecting the artist. Steve Dolan said that they wanted to use a local artist for logistical reasons. He had presented several artists and styles of art to the developers, who were drawn to quieter, more meditative artwork and also desired a water element, for the cooling effect and to tie it into the creek. Dolan also examined artists' accomplishments to see if they were appropriate for Walnut Creek. Parker said that Held's forms, color, and materials were complimentary to the development and satisfied the goal of creating a meeting place for the community. Jim Pezzaglia asked if the site of the work has been approved by the Design Review Commission and if the Newell/Main intersection corner had been considered for increased visibility of the artwork. The location had been approved. Parker added that the building footprint does not allow much space for artwork at that intersection and artwork would be in competition with two existing large public artworks on other corners.

Donna Arganbright moved to recommend that the project moved forward to the Arts Commission approval stage. Jim Pezzaglia seconded. The motion passed with one dissenting vote (Ines).

Following the vote, Linda Kramer and Pezzaglia wanted clarification on the BGAC's role in the private public art development process. Pezzaglia felt that between the steps for approval with DRC, BGAC, and Arts Commission, and the developer's own timelines, that the process runs the risk of restricting the options for choosing artwork. Lederer reminded the BGAC that according to the Public Art Master Plan, the selection of the artist is the decision of the private developer, and that the BGAC serves to review the project for recommendation to the Arts Commission.

2. Review & discussion of the Public Art Master Plan priority sites and zone map

Lederer said that a Task Force is being gathered to review the Public Art Master Plan. Further discussion will be tabled for a future BGAC meeting.

E. Chair's Report: Ann Weber

1. Arts Commission Report: Reginald Marshall

There was no meeting in October.

F. Curator's Report: Carrie Lederer

1. Biennial Assessment questions and 2006-2008 Assessment review: Lederer distributed draft of Biennial Assessment, which she will be presenting at the January or March Arts Commission meeting. A BGAC meeting will be schedule for December 1 for a discussion and review of the assessment.

2. Exhibitions & programs update: Lederer announced that Culture+Cocktails for *Art of Market Street* will be on November 12 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. and invited the BGAC. The Craft Fest will be held on November 14 from noon to 5:00 p.m. Julia Galloway will be giving a pottery demonstration on November 30. Lederer will discuss the 2010-2011 season schedule in January.

G. Adjournment