

Bedford Gallery Advisory Council
Learning Center, LCA
Tuesday, September 1, 2009
5:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present

BGAC: Donna Arganbright, Rebecca Ines, Pavel Soltys, Ann Weber, Betty Dunn, Susan Helms, Jerry Leisure, Linda Kramer

Arts Commission: Fritz Brunner, Carol Fowler, Susanne Masella

Staff: Melanie Chang, Barry Gordon, Carrie Lederer, Robyn Burror, Scott Harriman (Planning), Steve Buckley (Planning)

Public: Chandra Cerrito (BART Project Coordinator), Nick Samuelson (The Guzzardo Partnership), Don Reber (BRE Properties), John Kosi (MVE Architects)

A. Call to Order

1. Introductions

B. Public Communications

C. Approval of Minutes of July Meeting: Linda Kramer moved to approve the minutes; Rebecca Ines seconded the motion.

D. BGAC Chair's Report: Ann Weber

1. Arts Commission report: Suzanne Masella

The Arts Commission was given a presentation on the BART Village project. They agreed that they would prefer to public art elements to be non-functional pieces that stand alone as artwork. They also reviewed the Neiman Marcus project.

E. Public Art: Robyn Burror/Carrie Lederer

1. BART project: Chandra Cerrito

Chandra Cerrito, the consultant for the BART village project, introduced the team working on the development.

John Kosi, from the architectural firm, said that the group wanted to start thinking about art elements early in the planning stages so they would be well integrated into the overall project. The transit village hopes to increase ridership and act as a hub for Walnut Creek, by enhancing connectivity to downtown, creating outdoor gathering spaces, and promoting a pedestrian friendly environment. The village will be mixed use: commercial offices, retail, residential apartments, and flex spaces. The design relates to nearby buildings, using contemporary details with respect to historical elements.

Chandra Cerrito presented the art plan for BART village. The developers have identified 7 priority sites for artwork based on impact, traffic, and visibility. They are numbered roughly in phases of construction and will be prioritized as such. Site #1 will integrate artwork with a bike pavilion building. This highly visible location acts as the main "entrance" to project and Cerrito hopes to acquire a landmark, gateway piece. Site #2 is a surface artwork for the garage façade. Site #3 is in the courtyard/pavilion area, which can accommodate a large freestanding work or be incorporated into actual pavilion architecture. Site #4 is on the corner of Pringle Ave. and California Blvd. It is a possible restaurant location and gathering spot, suitable for an intimate

artwork for pedestrians to discover. Site #5, on the corner of California Blvd. and Ygnacio Valley Dr., is highly visible and ideal for another anchor piece. Site #6 is on the main promenade, making it appropriate for a progressive work that incorporated multiple, continuous element. Site #7 is near the BART station entrance and apartments and might be well suited for a fountain piece. The objective of the art plan is to incorporate a diversity of styles, media, and scale that will accommodate the diverse audience of commuters, residents, workers, and visitors. Artist selected by Cerrito and the developers will be approved by BGAC and AC, before starting a contract with artist(s) to create final design(s), which will must be approve again before moving to fabrication.

For Site #1, Cerrito presented the artist Erwin Redl. The developers wanted something of significant scale (approximately 30-50' high and 50' in diameter) and designated a budget of \$350,000. Redl creates architectural scale LED installations that sometimes also include electronic sound compositions. He has been involved in several international public art projects. Redl seeks to create a symbiosis between structure and light, so the artwork can be appreciated day and night. The works evolve from distant and close viewing to engage visitors. Donna Arganbright questioned the longevity of an LED installation. Cerrito said that LEDs have a life expectancy of 10-15 years. Bulbs will need to be replaced as they burn out. Developers have the option of purchasing extra bulbs in bulk up front and they are responsible for maintenance of the artwork. The work will likely also be installed behind glass. Cleaning will be part of maintenance plan as well. Ann Weber said that she was pleased with Redl's breadth of experience.

Redl was selected by the developers from a pool of 15 appropriate artists chosen by Cerrito once the site had been established. Redl has already visited the site and Walnut Creek. Jerry Leisure thinks Redl's work is well suited and appropriate for the location. Fritz Brunner questioned the 2-step approval process and wanted to know what the City's options would be if Redl is chosen and returns with a final design. Ann Weber said that in her experience as a public artist, artists are generally open to redesigning their projects. Cerrito agreed that this process is ideal because the final design can be adjusted until it is just right. Leisure presented a motion to recommend Redl to the Arts Commission for approval as the project artist. Arganbright seconded and the motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Cerrito also have an introductory presentation on site #2, the garage façade. The developers are still reviewing the work of 2 finalists and would appreciate input from the BGAC. The location features large vertical surfaces that flank garage and face the BART tracks. The first artist being considered is the husband and wife team known as Wowhaus. They are inspired by ecological, historical, and cultural factors that surround the area where their artwork will be displayed. They work with a variety of media that range from interactive environments, functional objects, murals, and freestanding work. Cerrito showed ceramic tiles at Jack London Amtrak station in Oakland. The tiles present different images from various angles, which are fitting for an area that is viewed from obtuse angles or while moving. The tiles represent fabrics from local cultural groups and Wowhaus enlisted the community to help glaze tiles. The second artist is Victor Mario Zavalla, who has been a public artist since 1997. He works with metal, tile, mosaic, and print techniques, and often creates community projects. Panels at the 16th Street BART station and a parking garage in Sacramento incorporate imagery and themes from Meso- and Native American folklore. Arganbright likes that both artists incorporate the community and Weber agreed that such works will resonate well with the neighborhoods.

2. Design Review/Planning Commission Meetings: BGAC representative

Carrie Lederer wanted to know if there was an interest in assigning a liaison to attend Design Review Commission meetings when they are relevant to Public Art. The Arts Commission also sends a liaison. Carol Fowler believes that sending representatives is crucial to keeping involved. Robyn Burror can let the BGAC know when agenda items will be relevant. Rebecca Ines, Pavel Soltys, Donna Arganbright, and Ann Weber volunteered to be rotating liaisons.

3. Downtown fountain project:

Lederer reminded the BGAC that Emily Chang from Downtown Business Association had previously proposed projects for two fountains on Main Street. Chang has secured funding from Mechanics Bank and Wells Fargo and she would like the project to move along to maintain momentum. The City would use In Lieu funds to supplement the banks' donation. The BGAC hopes the upgrade the foundation to create significant place makers for downtown; a place to meet and greet. This is a new hybrid project; there is no existing process for private/municipal collaborations. The BGAC proposed the creation of a selection panel to be approved by the Arts Commission. Due to the limited budget and timeline restraints, staff will compose an invitational Request for Qualifications for strong, local artists that will enhance the existing fountains. Susan Helms motioned for the BGAC to approve process and project. Donna Arganbright seconded. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

F. Curator's Report: Carrie Lederer

1. Biennial Assessment questions:

Every two years, the Arts Commission asks the BGAC to evaluate the work that has been done and how the program has progressed. Lederer will email final questions and previous Assessment to the BGAC and asked the member to begin thinking about them for a discussion at a future meeting.

2. Exhibitions & programs update

Lederer distributed updated exhibition schedule for 2009-2010. The next opening is on September 24th, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. for *Art on Market Street*. The *Objects of Virtue* opening has been moved to Wednesday, December 2nd, so as to not conflict with Clay Arts Guild sale. Craft Fest will be held on November 14th from Noon – 5:00 p.m. *Objects* juror Julia Galloway, a master potter, will hold a demonstration at the gallery on November 30th. Lederer asked the BGAC to help spread the word about these events.

G. Adjournment