

Public Arts Commission of Oxford
Virtual Meeting
Tuesday, March 9, 2021, 4:30PM

Minutes of the meeting

Present: Steve Sullivan, Chair; Edna Southard, Vice-Chair; Robert Benson, Recording Secretary; Stefanie Hilles, Carole Katz, Norm Krumpe; Joseph Prescher
Guest: Stephen Smith (Inside/Outside Studio, Hamilton OH)

1. The virtual meeting of the Public Arts Commission of Oxford (PACO) was **called to order by Steve Sullivan at 4:34PM.**

2. The **Agenda** was approved

3. The **Minutes** of the January 12, 2021 PACO virtual meeting were approved.

4. New Business

A. Presentation by Stephen Smith (Inside/Outside Studio, Hamilton OH)

Stephen Smith described his Inspirations Studio, a non-profit entity sponsored from 2006 by the Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities, became sponsored in 2015 by the Cincinnati Easter Seals organization; but in 2021 became a completely independent operation.

Inside/Outside Studio has complete lots of public art in a variety of projects. These include painted fire hydrants in downtown Hamilton; and alley pavement painting and chemical sealed used for outdoor eating with permanent tables and chairs.

They have also done interiors for such companies as Kirsch CPA Group where they mounted fused glass and ceramic “wheels” on an interior brick wall, with the company employees working with the artists. They have also worked in Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine neighborhood at Furniture Solutions.

Mr. Smith expressed his interest in integrating artists from Inside/Outside Studio into the Oxford community. In addition to the kinds of projects listed above, the artists could do mosaic, low-relief murals and applied ceramics. They do not work in metal or with lighting. However, they work very collaboratively. They have worked with a metal fabricator and welder named Nick Bauer and a craftsman named Joshua Morrow who works in Hamilton but lives in Middletown.

5. Old Business Updates

A. Status – Police Department Bike Rack

Stefanie Hilles reported on the status of the project. There have been hitches in the progress because COVID-19 has caused dramatic increases in the price of metals. Stefanie provided examples that were quite surprising in terms of cost.

It seems that the cost of the bike rack, including materials, fabrication, installation and artist fees could rise to budget of \$4K-\$6K. However, it is also possible to reduce the cost by using pre-fabricated components. This could reduce the cost to a more reasonable \$2K.

Stefanie asked for advice about how to word the call for entries so that entrants would realize that there could be no flexibility in the design once accepted due to the cost of materials and fabrication.

Entrants will be asked to Google examples and best practices in order to understand the constraints.

Joe Prescher moved that Stefanie send the call to all PACO members with the best wording she can come up with and that once approved by the members, the call for entries be sent to Jessica Greene and Doug Elliott for final approval with copies to Chief John Jones and Mike Dreisbach. Edna Southard seconded and **the motion was approved unanimously.**

B. Update on New Comprehensive City Plan

The City of Oxford will hold a meeting for heads of all municipal commissions and committees along with any other members of those groups to learn how the City will put its new comprehensive plan together. Jessica Greene will host the meeting on behalf of the city administration and explain the process that has been set up along with answering questions. Steve Sullivan and Edna Southard will attend the meeting. Bob Benson offered to attend as well. We will learn how we can bring our interests to the table, especially the notion that art should be proactively a part of all city planning. We will base our contributions on our vision statement and founding documents.

Adjournment: The meeting was **adjourned at 5:49PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Benson, Recording Secretary

Minutes of the meeting

Present: Steve Sullivan, Chair; Edna Southard, Vice-Chair; Robert Benson, Recording Secretary; Stefanie Hilles, Carole Katz, Joseph Prescher; excused: Norm Krumpe

1. The special virtual meeting of the Public Arts Commission of Oxford (PACO) was **called to order by Steve Sullivan at 10:03AM.**

2. Announcement

Stefanie Hilles announced that the Oxford Police Department (Chief John Jones) and the City of Oxford (Mike Dreisbach, Director of Services) have approved the plan for the bicycle rack. The only thing left to do is to determine what the deadline for submissions is in the Call for Entries.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that the wording in the Call for Entries would be July 31, 2021, with the proviso that, if necessary, PACO would continue to accept submissions until an award was made.

2. The **Agenda** was approved

3. New Business

Comprehensive Plan Update & PACO's role in the planning process

Steve Sullivan suggested that we go through the template provided by Assistant City Manager Jessica Greene and brainstorm ideas based on our vision statement, our founding document, and our experience on the commission as well as short- to long-term residents of the Oxford community.

To begin the discussion, the commissioners defined the current conditions in the most general way: Oxford is divided between a substantial number of arts advocates and an outspoken group of people resistant to public art. The town is unusual in that it has no conventional daily or weekly newspaper while the student newspaper (*The Miami Student*) and the online student weekly (*Oxford Observer*) have not demonstrated any sustained commitment to public or even campus art.

Thus, this seems to be a situation that has to do with the culture of Oxford as a town/gown community as well as with a lack of a public forum for presenting and discussing the arts. This has led to a misunderstanding about the multi-valent value of public art.

Aspirational goals that were discussed included finding ways to engage already extant groups of varying sorts: Enjoy Oxford, the Chamber of Commerce, civic clubs, the Oxford Visual Arts Connection, OCAC. A public meeting in which citizens could offer their own ideas and respond to suggestions from others could help bring attention to some of the important aspects of public art support.

Members of PACO also suggested that creating public/private partnerships could have a very positive effect and could help generate such community activities as an art fair during summer months.

Steve Sullivan suggested several items for further development:

- Art should proactively be part of infrastructure planning.
- Art should be among the first things that greet people who are arriving in Oxford.
- Art should be understood as integrating the best features of our town and supporting infrastructure and citizen interaction.
- Art “trails” facilitate and enliven wayfinding throughout town with major installations at transportation hubs and gathering areas.

Steve Sullivan promised to publish his notes on the discussion for review and development at the forthcoming regular meeting of PACO on Tuesday, April 13, 2021.

Adjournment: The meeting was **adjourned at 11:12AM**
Respectfully submitted,

Robert Benson, Recording Secretary