

City of Bangor, Commission on Cultural Development
Minutes
December 11, 2014
8:30 AM
City Council Chambers

Commissioners Present: George Kinghorn (Chair), Judy Boothby (Vice Chair), Tom Avila, Jamie Ballinger, Mary Budd, Emily Burnham, Uli Guthrie, Kat Johnson, Kierie Piccininni, Elissa Young, and Caitlin Brooke (staff)

Guests: Anna Hepler, Chris Roberts

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Kierie and seconded by Uli to approve the previous meeting minutes. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

3. Review Grant Application from Anna Hepler

Eastport, Maine artist Anna Hepler applied for an Individual Artist Grant and presented her project in summary to the Commission. The application would, in part, fund the construction of a floating sculpture in the Kenduskeag Stream. The exact location of the sculpture would be near the footbridge that crosses to the UMaine Art Museum's entrance.

Anna explained that the tidal characteristic of the Kenduskeag is ideal. The sculpture will almost be a secret during low tide and more obvious to passersby during high tides. The material will be primarily fiberglass, same as a boat's hull, and brightly colored. It will coincide with an exhibition of the artist's work that will be on display at the UMaine Art Museum from June through September 2015. Caitlin noted that she and Anna have connected with the City's Environmental Coordinator to address any environmental concerns and work closely with the necessary organizations throughout the process.

Mary asked how the artwork will relate to the works in the exhibition? Anna explained that her work is both 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional—etchings, prints, sculpture.

Jamie asked if Anna is concerned about damage to the sculpture if it beaches on the rocks in the Stream at low tide? Anna said she is not. It will be the same durability of a boat hull and she knows it won't be pristine afterwards. Ideally, she'd like to move the piece to the Eastport waterfront in October.

Tom asked how the general viewers will figure out the connection to the UMMA show. Also, how will the process move forward since it's the first time the artist has worked with these materials? Anna answered that she intended for passersby to be curious and mystified by the sculpture's presence. She will work with consultants and other resources to develop workplans, etc. Caitlin noted that she has had experience working with Anna at the Portland Museum of Art and that the artist was receptive to the needs of the institution and openly communicated at every point of that process.

Uli asked how the public will be able to understand what is going on? Anna said that she hopes the sculpture will be more of a surprise for the general public while the connection will be more obvious for museum visitors. It isn't the artist's intention for the audience to interact with the piece in a specific way; there will be enough organic conversation because of the piece's abstraction. George did note that the piece will be described in the Museum's didactic material. He also commented that the Commission should note that the Commission funding would only cover a portion of the material cost.

Tom noted that the Commission should remember that these are public funds that are being utilized so the public should be served by what is being put forth.

Elissa asked if the image provided was the final design? Anna said she may choose a simpler form.

Commissioners voiced excitement about the project, its originality, and how it speaks to the Commission's interest in promoting the creation of more public art.

Mary made a motion to approve the funding of the grant at the amount requested (\$1,000), Kierie seconded. Six "yeses" with George and Kat abstaining from the vote.

A conversation was entered into that looked at the Individual Artist Grants. George gave a bit of background on how the grant was developed and some of the elements of the conversations that molded the grant into how it is presently. He noted that the reason individual artists have not applied to this grant, prior to Anna Hepler, is because it is not consistent with other individual artist grants from other organizations. It only deals with funding an artist's materials in the form of a reimbursement. He suggested the Commission look at reformatting the Individual Artist Grants to look at the artist's prior history of excellence and to base decisions on their past work—consistent with ways in which other grants and funding opportunities are evaluated.

Emily asked what the process was to change the language in the grant. Caitlin noted that the Commission would have submit suggested changes to the Business and Economic Development Committee for approval that would then go to City Council for final approval. Tom noted that it is important to keep in mind that these are public funds and that the Commission needs to come up with ways to evaluate artist's experience and integrity with facts. Uli asked about compensating artist's time and Josh said that the reason we, as a City Committee, cannot do that is because of labor restrictions. Caitlin suggested adding a requirement of a resume submission and integrate questions about an artist's experience and past funding into the line of questioning during the grant review. Mary also suggested an interim reporting requirement. Elissa asked if there was a requirement for signage with a piece of artwork that utilizes funding from the Individual Artist Grant? George said there is none at this time but, if the Commission thinks this should happen, it should happen as the group expands the criteria for the grants. Jamie asked if this is required by other granting organizations? Tom noted that in the acceptance letter to the artist we could stipulate any crediting requirements. George suggested that the Commission tackle this in the New Year.

4. Project Grants from Maine Artist Commission (MAC)

After meeting with Julie from the Maine Arts Commission, George received an update that MAC has expanded their criteria to include municipalities as applicants in some grants.

5. Committee Reports (Arts and Cultural Policy)

Kierie and Uli have sent out invitations and a press release for the January 7 Self-Employment Taxes and Tax Issues Workshop at the Bangor Public Library. They've also listed the event in community calendars throughout the region. They are now focusing on February's grant writing workshop. Kierie asked George or Caitlin to forward the name of someone at the Maine Arts Commission who would be a good resource on grant writing.

Kierie attended the December meeting of Bangor Arts and the group overwhelmingly supported the workshops. It was suggested that the workshops be scheduled at different times of day to accommodate varying schedules. Meg Shorette (Central Gallery/Launchpad) offered to host a workshop. Caitlin will create a Facebook event for the taxes workshop.

Elissa and Emily met to begin outlining strategies for the goals in the Marketing section of the Arts and Cultural Policy. They hope to update and clarify the language on the individual artist grants, and to utilize the Bangor Arts website and Facebook page more consistently to push information about arts in Bangor. They also would like to: create a monthly events calendar; utilize in a more efficient way the platforms to which the Commission has access; create a Cultural Commission email address (Caitlin to find out if that is okay); and initiate a “call to artists” campaign for workshops, grants, and ways to learn more about what the Commission on Cultural Development does.

It was requested that a final copy of the Arts and Cultural Policy be sent to Commissioners via email.

6. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The slate provided on the agenda was from the nominations made at the November meeting: Jamie Ballinger (Chair) and Mary Budd (Vice Chair). George noted that he would encourage the new Chair and the City Liaison, in consultation with the other Commissioners, to write “job descriptions” for the Chair and Vice Chair and move forward with creating a “board orientation” for newly appointed Commissioners.

George opened the floor for other nominations for the Chair. Being none, nominations were closed. George opened the floor for other nominations for the Vice Chair. Kat nominated Kierie.

(Caitlin stepped out of the meeting for a brief period of time to determine who the Ex-Officio members of the Commission were. The Ex-Officio members are non-voting members unless appointed to vote by the Chair in the absence of a voting member. She found that Uli and Elissa are the 2014 Ex-Officio members.)

Before voting began, Mary withdrew her nomination. The new slate of officers is Jamie Ballinger, Chair, and Kierie Piccinnini, Vice Chair. Kat made a motion to elect the slate of officers, Judy seconded, and all were in favor.

Thanks were given to George and Judy for their efforts leading the Commission for the past year.

7. Other Items

The Commission reviewed previous signage designs for the “Continuity of Community” statue on the Waterfront. The signage was originally proposed in 2013 and approved by the Commission, but the process was waylaid. Emily made a motion to spend Commission’s funds to purchase signage for the statue, Jamie seconded, all were in favor. Emily noted that the sign should be proofread before being brought before the Business and Economic Development Committee.

Commissioners scheduled a workshop on January 14 at 5:30 p.m. to review the Individual Artist Grant Application. The location is TBD.

Kierie encouraged everyone to attend the public forum at Husson University that evening regarding the development and future plans for the Broadway traffic corridor.

The Commission requested information and an update about the Optional Investment Fund for the January meeting.

To watch a full version of the Commission on Cultural Development’s December 11 meeting, please visit: <http://bangormaine.pegcentral.com/player.php?video=bbd431be2d8f87d0e3609c2d47c7aad7>