

SPECIAL MEETING  
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE  
PUBLIC ART COMMISSION  
5:00 P.M., MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT: MIKE GILLESPIE, MARILYN SULLIVAN, CHRIS SYLVESTER, KAAREN STONER, NORETTA TAYLOR, KAREN KAUFMAN, SARAH KUCHARSKI, PHILAN MEDFORD

ALSO PRESENT: KAY WALDROP, BUFFY MESSER, JAMIE COGDILL, DONNA BUCKNER, FRED BAKER

**The mission of the Waynesville Public Art Commission is to engage the community and enrich public spaces through original art that celebrates Waynesville's unique historic, cultural, natural and human resources.**

The purpose of this meeting was a presentation by Jeffrey York, Public Art/Community Design Director for the North Carolina Arts Council.

Noretta Taylor introduced Mr. York and his presentation began with Design, Aesthetics and the Built Environment – Creating an artful identity for your community.

He stressed the need for artistic involvement for economic development. Surveys have proven that 18 to 39 year olds consider good design and art necessary in a community to be a desirable place to live. We saw several examples of functional spaces that lacked any interest that would draw people into the area. "Place" is a space people want to be, not just a space. Place = sociability, uses and activities, acreage and linkage, comfort and image.

Cultural Tourism was also emphasized. People traveling these days are seeking historic places. Tourism is a \$13 billion industry and in order to draw a share of this a community should have cultural places that are creative, attractive, safe, family oriented and special. These places should be historic and authentic.

Mr. York discussed the % for art program which currently exists in only 3 cities in North Carolina. He explained how the process works, that this is not a tax but is built into the cost of a particular project – if done properly as part of the overall design, part of the hardscape. Because of the potential misunderstanding of how this works, it requires a very strong advocacy group to implement successfully. He recommended starting with smaller projects.

Public art needs to be comprehensive. Art is a process of dialogue, involvement and participation that leads to a connection between art and community.

He emphasized the need to have artists involved in early stages of the development process. Within the construction allowance, is it possible to pay an artist to advise about

design. As an example, it could mean the difference in having 12, functional but uninteresting benches or having benches that are not only functional but pleasant to look at and add to the surrounding area.

We saw many examples of areas that were improved by art whether it was etchings in granite, ceramic sculptures acting as directional signs, sidewalks as “canvas” and many others including painted electrical boxes and ceramic sculpture created from items made by people in the community and brought together by an artist. There were examples of gateways which are important in giving first impressions of a community. The gateway can be into a park or an area of town.

Good public art planning is never about the plan alone. It’s about bringing the plan to fruition.

Mr. York closed his presentation by discussing the economic benefits to developers for including art in their plans.

Following a dinner break the program opened to questions and answers.

The first question concerned grants. Mr. York talked about the “creating place”, matching grant of up to \$15,000. In order to qualify, the artist and idea should be identified – as well as having the amount of money in place that you want matched. The grant applications are due March 3 of 2008. The review panel meets in May. Decisions are made but not made public until the end of July. Money is not allocated until October or November of 2008 and you have until May of 2009 to complete the project.

Of the 16 to 26 applications received, only 1 or 2 are funded in full. There is a tier structure based on population that is considered in the process. It is not an all-or-nothing decision. If you requested \$15,000, they could give something less.

Any project for which grant dollars are pursued must have an open call. The committee looks at how the artist was selected. He recommended that we have art professionals on our selection committee. Community input is also considered which means there should be something from the Town Planner, Mayor, etc. Also, ethnic diversity on the selection committee is necessary.

Other items discussed included the use of temporary art such as lights on buildings or garden works that are not meant to last indefinitely.

Open calls are always preferred; however, you could limit the call to Haywood County for example, for something simple like painting electrical boxes.

We talked about the call for artists that we just sent out. There have been some questions received by DWA from artists who did not understand the process.

Mr. York concluded by recommending that we consider promoting our projects based on “how do you want Waynesville to look in 2015”, rather than discussing public art.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 P.M.

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Mike Gillespie, Chairman

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Marilyn Sullivan, Secretary