

REGULAR MEETING
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
PUBLIC ART COMMISSION
5:30 P.M. THURSDAY, SEPT. 14, 2006
TOWN HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: MIKE GILLESPIE, SARAH KUCHARSKI, PHILAN MEDFORD, PETER STERLING, KAAREN STONER, MARILYN SULLIVAN, NORRETTA TAYLOR, NICOLE WILHELM

MEMBERS ABSENT: GEORGE ESCARAVAGE

ALSO PRESENT: FRED BAKER, RON HUELSTER

Vice Chairman Mike Gillespie called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 6, 2006

Sullivan motioned to accept the Mission Statement as rewritten, only pertains to the first sentences. Sterling motions to accept, Sullivan seconded.

VISION FOR PUBLIC ART

Gillespie recommends talking about vision for the public art first. Sterling says he wants to talk about the process, rather than a particular process first. Get a question that the public can respond to – what do you love about Waynesville? Use media to get public participation. Stoner says she discovered many years ago she really like small towns, that's what drew her here – walkability. Taylor agrees, and mentions lots of cultural activities. Sullivan says proximity to the Smokies. Sterling says let's take that – what if we were to find a majority of people who were asked to respond picked the mountains? That might give us our first year's subject to throw out there. How would you do that in art? Not suggesting pick location, sculptor, painter per say. There's a lot of controversy about what's happening the mountains and this could lead to a terrific public forum. If we could engage the public in a real dialogue, we might produce more than a piece of art, might produce a sense of community. Go to schools, churches, civic groups, governmental organizations. Medford says when you utilize that kind of process that brings more stakeholders to the table to be stewards in public. Kucharski says that if you take the meetings to the people they are more comfortable with the process, rather than asking the public to come to the Commission. It helps get people involved who might not otherwise. Everyone has a valid opinion. Sullivan says maybe to get article in paper to introduce Commission and what they're about. Gillespie says he's from Sylva, moved to Waynesville by way of Chapel Hill, so he pulled Chapel Hill's bylaws as to their public art works. Medford says she started looking at other RFPs (request for proposals), she really started learning more about the process. Before we talk to much about operations, need to really focus on vision, Sterling says. Medford says it's important to her to celebrate the things that are unique just to us, to avoid the Anywhere, USA public art. Do

we ask the public what they think are those unique cultural, historical and social resources? Gillespie says his vision is something that the public can interact with, you can touch, play on, sit on, etc. He likes art that moves or make a sound, either by natural forces or human. Lots of murals in Chapel Hill. Something that can involve the public as artist. He's looking strongly at the mini-park, which he doesn't think people realize is public. Something to welcome people, invite people in would be good. Huelster said that the county was looking at something to do with the mini-park while they were restoring the old courthouse, maybe provide technical assistance, use them as a resource so that the Commission potentially didn't have to pay. Haven't heard anything more from county commissioners in regard to the mini-park. Tiles made by students or residents for the walks, benches maybe, an arbor, fence. His "pipe-dream" would be for Waynesville to have a downtown park, a green space, where you could have music, go eat lunch. Ideal location the old Pancake House, right across from the courthouse. In Blowing Rock there's a similar green space kind of park. Wilhlem agrees with the interactive concept. As a teacher she wants her students to be able to really get up and get involved with it, help them develop an appreciation. Something not fragile. Sterling says we can learn a lot from museums, particularly children's museums, which are far ahead of art and history museums in term of getting people to interact. Stoner said that she agrees with the park concept, would like to see one behind Wells Funeral Home where there is empty land. Always felt that Waynesville needed green space right downtown. Have talked about a walking trail akin to Asheville's Urban Trail, but don't wan to copy. Thinks one of the things unique about Haywood County is the Parkway is about half the border – is there anyway the name Parkway could be used instead of trail? Also, thought about uniqueness of town places such as Frog Level, the old train station area – could we build a train station façade? Would like to see Commission purchase the old hardware store and turn it into a museum. Taylor also liked the Frog Level, would like the mural to be repainted so it doesn't look like its peeling. Likes murals overall. Doesn't know how to encourage people to continue to enhance their buildings in Frog Level. Creation of more green space and places to sit would be great. Kucharski said that she also likes the interactive art and green space, and referenced Chicago's Millenium Park, which was waterfront property that the city decided to leave as green space so there's no reason a small town, without such valuable property couldn't do something similar. Sullivan says that she wants to really start getting our names and faces out there to encourage public support. Get something going to get the schools involved. Wilhelm says that it means so much to people to be part of things – really helps give them buy in to the project. Sterling says that it changes adults views of kids and what they can do, and adults view of themselves and their capabilities. Baker said that the community buy in process is something that will be used again and again, regardless of projects. One of the things Baker really remembers from one of the original public input sessions was Donald Davis references, plot hounds. Says that the Commission has been on a bit of a hiatus from doing anything creative in terms of the public art, that we've been focused on process and contracts and so forth. Just one public session isn't remotely enough. Have to look at the costs of things – Bill Eleazer had mentioned how expensive it would be to bronze cast human sized figures, maybe something smaller is viable. Huelster said that he had started thinking an old film in which the community helped paint a mural. Says he agrees with Sterling about the possibility of doing something meaningful in discussing what's happening to the

mountains. He also agrees with Baker as to need to move toward making something happen. Says we are the people to motivate and nurture this into happening. But we also need to make sure to do something manageable.

NEXT STEPS

Hueslter says that if the Commission wants to engage the public in actually making the work, we can go ahead and move forward with that. Sterling says that if you took a concept such as love of the mountains, you could play on that and have a rather eclectic series of events to appeal to people. Says maybe look at the architectural features of the stone, such as stone, it could be something that also plays into the overall theme. Huelster says that we don't so much dictate what a project is, but provide guidance. Stoner asks about the old Gateway sign, could it be rebuilt, would the Commission be in favor of it? Medford says the nice thing about that is that it is very unique. But because of DOT regulations it can not be rebuilt. Had thought about reinterpreting the sign, applied for DOT enhancement funds to reinterpret the sign in the mini-park. Baker says that it might be a bit ambitious. Stoner says that one of the things she really noticed when she first came to town was all the rock walls and stone houses – what about murals out of river rock? The mural could include the reinterpretation of the Gateway to the Smokies. Kucharski says could those rocks maybe come from the rivers that were damaged in the floods, restore the river and have the historical significance of being involved in the floods of 2004. Medford says ask Haywood Waterways about the usage of the rocks. Says that there will be a new greenway section that will be on the old Dayco property, will be something that we could work with. Huelster says that traditional murals are very high maintenance, but a rock one wouldn't be. Sterling says that we could do a photographic essay on rock work and the people who did it around the county. Stoner says maybe ask people for stories, information, photos of the Gateway for the Smokies. Sullivan wants to start throwing something out there for the public to begin responding to. Wilhelm says that maybe do a call to the public to sketch ideas. Stoner says use public to collect information and turn it over to an artist to do an interpretation. Sterling says he thinks its boring – that President Roosevelt riding up the street will engage 1 percent of the population. Medford says there are way more people here who care. Sterling says that an event 30 some years ago just won't engage people. Baker says that the Roosevelt thing will only be part of it, that the rest of it would be more about the Parkway/Smokies. Stoner says she's just seeing it as a jump off point. Kucharski says that if it were a rock mural it could still be interactive, that it could include a bench to sit on as part of the picture and an arch to stand under. Medford says that there could still be a component to do part of the project in schools as well. Kucharski says that it's hard to create a process to accomplish something if we don't know what we're trying to accomplish. Gillespie says that some sort of skeleton needs to be in place so that there is some structure. Taylor goes back to Sullivan's idea of getting something in the paper, solicit ideas and public comment, pick a medium, hire an artist and go from there. Sterling says the "Gateways" idea might be interesting – more than one gateway. Sullivan volunteers to head the projects task force to get an idea of a process, to help create a starting point.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Commission set its next meeting for 5:30 p.m. Oct. 12, 2006.

ADJOURNMENT

Sullivan motions, Taylor seconded. Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Chairman Mike Gillespie

Secretary Sarah Kucharski