

Town of Waynesville, NC
Public Art Commission – Regular Meeting Minutes
Town Hall, 9 South Main Street, Waynesville, NC 28786
Date: October 10, 2013



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

In attendance:

Chairman Ann Melton (first meeting as Chairman)
Jan Griffin
Charles Mills
Micah McClure
Nick DePaolo
David Blevins
Bill King

Also in attendance:

Mayor Gavin Brown
Town Manager Marcy Onieal
Town Manager Assistant Alison Melnikova
Intern Andrew Bowen
Secretary Ginny Boyer

Absent:

Treasurer Sarah Jane League
Vice-Chairman Diana Laursen

1. Minutes of the September 12, 2013 Regular Meeting

Charles Mills made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 12, 2013 regular meeting as presented; this was seconded by Nick DePaolo. All were in favor.

2. Treasurer’s Report

Jan Griffin made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented; this was seconded by Micah McClure. All were in favor.

3. Signage for Mini-Park: Wildflowers of the Smokies Wall Art and Gateway to the Smokies Arch

Commissioners discussed signage for both Grace Cathey’s newly-installed Wildflowers of the Smokies metal art and the Gateway to the Smokies arch of the Depot Street mini-park. David Blevins read a draft for both signs and passed his work on to “wordsmith” Bill King for revisions or additions. Bill King agreed to work on wording for both signs and bring it back the

commission. Commissioners agreed the history of the original arch, which is already part of the railing (Salamander Splash) signage, while important may or may not need to be duplicated in the current signage projects. A to Z signs of Waynesville fabricated the Commission's most recent signs.

4. Public Art Projects—ideas for new piece, location and fundraising

Town Manager Onieal reported there are not very many places to place public art in Hazelwood. The parking lot is not owned by the town, it is leased, and technically the lease has expired so it is currently being leased month-to-month. The town is not interested in pouring public money into privately owned property.

Ms. Onieal showed commissioners a layout of the existing parking lot, which is largely an unmarked free-for-all, alongside a concept design for improvements and maximization of best use for the entire area. In the design, a couple of on-street parking places would be lost, and there would be an overall shrinking of the street with the installation of curbs, sidewalks, planting islands and bump-outs to slow traffic. The bump-outs may present an opportunity to locate public art.

Another opportunity for public art (and safer pedestrian intersection) according to the concept design plan, may come at the major intersection of Hazelwood and Brown Avenue, but this would require the First Citizens bank's driveway to go away. This property is currently for sale but no negotiations have begun.

Ms. Onieal said that she understands Chairman Melton has mentioned a Plott Hound with the Plott Balsams behind, but without negotiations underway, the commission will probably be ready to acquire their next piece before the town could be ready for placement. Whatever the commission decides, the chosen piece should be one that could be moved or find a new location entirely. Chairman Melton was concerned about the lack of green space in Hazelwood in which to place public art.

Micah McClure asked if on South Main Street public art could be included as part of the South Main Street Corridor plan. David Blevins said that as part of agreement with Cedarwood Development, there are two places for public art in Waynesville Commons. One is behind Verizon Wireless, the other beside Hardee's driveway. Mayor Brown said "we can call that in at any time" and Manager Onieal agreed there is room at either place for public art. Mr. Blevins said the space behind Verizon lends itself to something, but the art would have to be massive in order to see it due to the eye clutter, buildings, and pedestrians. Jan Griffin said a lot of kids frequent the area so if placed there, the art would have to be something that couldn't be damaged easily.

Bill King asked if the town would develop the Hazelwood area under lease--only terms. Ms. Onieal said the town would consider improvements to the Forga parking lot only with a very long term lease. The town has been in touch with Ms. Forga and purchase of the property is not Ms. Forga's first choice, however, she is amenable to public art and with her permission the town may use part of her property for public art. Ms. Onieal reiterated the piece would have to be

something moveable or, if the town continued with this design project, it would still be befitting this space.

Ms. Onieal said that when this concept design plan was sketched, there was no specification for a dedicated art space. Since then she has learned the commission seems committed to the location of Hazelwood Avenue and the topic Plott Hound. Bill King asked Town Manager Onieal to keep in mind as the town goes forward the Public Art Commission has established its role in the city pretty well. Mr. King added it takes time to bring something to fruition and doesn't see this happening in less than two years. Mr. King said, unless the public really wants it, the Public Art Commission is not committed to a Plott Hound. If that is the direction we are going, the money will have to be raised in the Hazelwood community. How fast we move, Mr. King said, is dependent on our fundraising, the Hazelwood community and your negotiations.

Manager Onieal mentioned the building for sale at corner of Brown and Hazelwood, what was First Citizens Bank. The property, with the building demolished, could serve as a main entrance to the business district. As it is, there is no pedestrian connectivity. If the property were town-owned and maintained, this area would serve as a place for public art especially when you think about what will be spent over time leasing Forga parking property. Manager Onieal also mentioned the entrance my shift toward the industrial section near Elysinia Avenue; "We need to talk about redevelopment, not where we are going to put one piece of art" Manager Onieal said.

Mayor Brown mentioned his personal goals being Hazelwood and Frog Level resembling Main Street in their economic activity. Mayor Brown also mentioned Grace Cathey's art, how beautiful he thought it was and his wife Jackee, an artist, confirmed.

Fundraising is a big issue with a new public art piece. Bill King said if the public art is to be placed in West Waynesville/Hazelwood village most of the money will have to come from there. Chairman Melton said Kevin Duckett is considering a street festival with Balsam Range as performers. Charles Mills mentioned using Plottfest as a vehicle to raise money. Bill King said a percentage of restaurant proceeds for the weekend could go toward funding public art. Nick DePaolo suggested having artists create different renderings of historical buildings related to Hazelwood, different visions of the buildings through history, then auction these. Mr. Depaolo has seen this successfully done elsewhere.

David Blevins showed slides of Jackson Hole, Wyoming public art, many of which were large, bronze statues visitors interacted with (attached).

David Blevins said the public art in Jackson Hole is scattered around town and has developed a summer trade. He mentioned the PAC "compromised" when the "Gateway to the Smokies" arch was commissioned rather than having a call to artists and if the Public Art Commission ever wanted to do something big in bronze, it may want to compromise and look at bronze as an alternatives. Mr. Blevins said large art in Wyoming, conservatively, could cost \$50,000, but you can buy "off the shelf" reproductions for half that. The art is for sale, can be leased or financed. "Art draws people but people facilitate purchase of art" Mr. Blevins said.

Alison Melnikova then read the Commission's mission statement: *The mission of the Public Art Commission is to engage the community and enrich public spaces through original art that celebrates Waynesville's historic, cultural, natural and human resources.* Ms. Melnikova said if the Public Art Commission wants to pursue this route, it may want to change its mission statement.

Bill King suggested a large bronze Plott Hound treeing a bear. Nick DePaolo said a bench with bronze would draw people for photos since the public wants to interact with art. Bill King agreed and noted Old Time Music at the corner of Main and Miller streets as a Waynesville example.

5. Other Business

David Blevins mentioned lighting for the Wildflowers of the Smokies art. Jan Griffin will discuss with Public Works Director Fred Baker how the newly-installed art will be illuminated.

6. Adjourn

Jan Griffin mentioned this October, 2013 meeting was Town Manager Assistant Alison Melnikova's last meeting with Waynesville's Public Art Commission since she has been hired as Laurel Park's Town Manager. Ms. Griffin thanked Ms. Melnikova for being the biggest supporter of public art and for all she has done to help the commission. Ms. Melnikova said she is amazed at how productive the commission has been and as a citizen appreciates what the commission does. With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Ginny Boyer, Secretary

Jan Griffin, Chairman