

**City of Oakland
Cultural Arts & Marketing Division
Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) Meeting
Minutes
February 2, 2009**

Members Present: Jennifer Easton, Carole Jeung, Ernest Jolly (co-chair), Deborah Lozier, Cherie Newell (co-chair), Andrew Woodd

Excused:

Absent: Jacqueline Boggan (Cultural Affairs Commission liaison), Rick Moss, Devin Satterfield (Cultural Affairs Commission liaison)

Staff Present: Steven Huss, Cultural Arts Programs Coordinator; Kristen Zaremba, Assistant Public Art Coordinator

Public Present: Rocky Baird

* denotes partial attendance

Meeting Chair: Cherie Newell

1. Meeting called to order at 5:40 p.m.
2. **Open Forum:** No speakers.
3. **Staff Report: S. Huss.**
 - a. **“Unity” Sculptures at Mandela Gateway:** The sculptures are installed. Staff is coordinating a dedication date with Councilmember Nancy Nadel and Mayor Dellums’ offices. Community feedback to-date has been positive.
 - b. **Measure DD 12th Street Project:** Staff continues work with the artist team on design development and refinement. Huss and Measure DD Project Manager Christin Hablewitz met recently with the artist team: John Rogers, Todd Blair and his partner, architect Alex Ismerio. Mr. Blair is recovering from his accident. The team is working with architect-consultant Brian Laczko and lighting designer Alice Prussin to synthesize current lighting technology with the desired effect for the site.
 - c. **Luminous Oakland:** Public Art Program and Marketing staff are working with the Community and Economic Development Agency (CEDA) on an event tentatively scheduled for early May to promote the Uptown Arts District. The late afternoon/early evening event will involve the Forest City/Uptown residential development, the new Fox Courts affordable housing, the Fox Oakland Theater and the new Fox Square Park. The public art plan is to commission several temporary projects for display in the park and possibly the adjacent undeveloped lot facing Telegraph; complemented by projections on surrounding buildings. Participating in this one-day event will present an opportunity to experiment with the project area to inform future plans.
 - d. **Great Wall of Oakland:** The Great Wall program continues monthly and PAAC members are always encouraged to attend. The theme on February 6 will be “Love and Obsession,” an approximately one-hour program that will be screened several times.

- e. **City Update:** Budget implications are now leading the city to look at restructuring departments. Consultant Robert Bobb's report to the Mayor made many recommendations but did not directly address Cultural Arts and Marketing (CAM); it has been suggested, however, that most CAM programs may be incorporated within CEDA, with the Oakland Film Office moving under the Mayor and KTOP-TV joining a new-formed communications department.
- f. **City Council Updates:**
 - i. PAAC appointments: Approval of PAAC nominees Judy Moran and Julie Trosper has been temporarily delayed. The City Attorney recently determined that all appointments to advisory committees must be made by the Mayor and approved by City Council; in the past PAAC nominations went directly to Council. The Mayor's office is currently reviewing the nominees' qualifications.
 - ii. Annual Plan and Open Circle/Open Proposals Grant: The Life Enrichment Committee (LEC) will review the 2009 Annual Plan and Open Proposals acceptance of grant on February 10th. LEC members now include newly-elected Council President Jane Brunner and new Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan.

4. Minutes: J. Easton moved to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2008 PAAC regular meeting. A. Woodd seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Rocky Baird Mural Proposal. Action Item. Review and Approval of a mural proposal for Caltrans property. Caltrans requires the City of Oakland to approve and take responsibility for works of art on Caltrans property within city limits before such works can be reviewed and accepted by Caltrans. Councilmember Brunner proposes to commission artist Rocky Baird to paint a mural on the Caltrans wall of the 55th Street Underpass in North Oakland (District 1) in response to a community survey on desired improvements. Councilmember Brunner has agreed to set aside an additional 20% for maintenance of the mural, to be managed by the Public Art Program. Mr. Baird presented his proposal, of a Buddha in repose, which he believes could garner more respect for the area. Noting community concerns about conditions at the very large underpass site, Mr. Baird developed a concept that suggests being carved into or emerging from wall; neighborhood residents expressed support for his concept at a public meeting. Regarding the selected representation of Buddha, and whether all viewers would feel it was respectful, Mr. Baird explained that the image combines various representational images of Buddha, including the 'touching earth' Buddha, to convey a connection to the earth. Committee members did not object to the imagery, but recommended that the proposal be reviewed by the City Attorney, as the depiction of the Buddha in a publicly funded artwork could violate the separation of church and state, and suggested that the artist consult with Buddhist scholars at nearby temples or the Berkeley Art Museum to ensure the proposal was appropriate. Regarding the longevity of the work, and the maintenance set-aside, staff and PAAC members suggested establishing a pre-determined life-span for the work, after which time the City would not be obligated to maintain the work. Further, the Committee noted that Caltrans regulations would require the artist to waive his rights under VARA and CAPA. They complimented the artist on the proposal and stated that their concern was with protecting the time and work invested by Mr. Baird.

Motion: J. Easton moved to approve the design and accept responsibility for maintenance for the mural with the qualifications that the proposal be reviewed by the City Attorney with regard to lawn on the separation of Church and State; that staff establish with the

Councilmember's office a reasonable lifespan for the mural; and that the issue of artist's rights be addressed. D. Lozier seconded. E. Jolly, A. Woodd, C. Newell voted in favor. C. Jeung abstained.

- 6. Fremont Pool Project Artist Selection. Action Item. Review finalists and approve the artist recommended.** K. Zaremba presented the staff report and shared images of work by the three finalists interviewed for the project. The selection panel ultimately recommended ceramic artist and painter Dakota Warren. His preliminary proposal depicts two abstract, organic, three-dimensional hand-made tile sculptures for the façade of the building. The artist proposes conducting a community workshop this summer to create an additional element, perhaps for a planter in the new sidewalk adjacent to the building. In response to the artist's proposal to explore working with a combination of concrete and tile, Committee members expressed concern, as concrete and tile age differently and must be cleaned with different methods. Committee members also stated their support for staff to encourage selection panels, other design team members and Council staff to accept artist recommendations based on interviews rather than preliminary proposals.

Motion: E. Jolly moved to approve the selection of Dakota Warren as the selected artist for the Fremont Pool Project. C. Jeung seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- 7. Broadway/I-880 Underpass. Informational Item. Review public art maintenance issues, concerns and potential remedies.** S. Huss reported that due to increased development in Jack London Square and renewed focus on the area, merchants (via CEDA staff) have complained about the Broadway Underpass project, requesting its removal and replacement with something else. A Public Works Agency crew cleaned the underpass area as a partial response. Huss stated that the area needs regular cleaning and that dedicated lighting must be replaced, regardless of what artwork is installed. He added that the current maintenance agreement is not tenable as it makes the City/Public Art Program responsible for remedying a pre-existing maintenance problem (bird droppings, trash and soot that collect in the underpass). While certain components of the project were never realized, the existing work could be reinvigorated through replacing the inoperable lighting elements and adding more lighting; alternatively, temporary lighting installations by other artists could be commissioned through the Luminous Oakland program. Huss stated that de-accessioning the Broadway Underpass artwork is not a reasonable option at this time. Co-chair C. Newell observed that the original proposal included additional lighting on the underside of the bridge deck which was rejected by Caltrans; therefore other light-art commissions may not be feasible. S Huss will bring the item back for discussion at a future meeting.

- 8. PAAC Advocacy Working Group:** S. Huss, C. Newell, A. Woodd and D. Lozier met on January 23, 2009 to discuss program advocacy measures. The consensus was that the program should focus on raising awareness of completed projects in the City's neighborhoods. Additional suggestions included regular 'featured project' displays in City Hall, promoting an Oakland Magazine feature article, and publishing the Public Art Guide. Huss noted that funding for printing the guide was in the General Fund allocation cut in October 2008 by City Council; therefore the guide, when completed, may be available only on-line. An advocacy association of Oakland arts organizations and individual artists has been formed, partially based on the Berkeley Cultural Trust and coordinated by Margo Dunlap, director of Pro Arts. The "Oakland

Cultural Trust” will convene monthly in the East Bay Community Foundation conference center and the next meeting will take place on February 17, 2009. Rather than continuing to meet as an advocacy working group, PAAC members are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings of the Oakland Cultural Trust. PAAC and CAC members are also researching additional funding and potential grant sources for public art. Huss noted that staff must clear grant solicitations through the Mayor’s office to rule out overlaps and inconsistencies.

- 9. Other business:** K. Zaremba reported that all her active projects, including Raimondi Park, the 81st Avenue Library and Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt, are proceeding with fabrication. Updates will be provided at a future meeting.

10. Announcements:

- 11. Agenda Building:** The next meeting will include artist presentations for the Fremont Pool, Fire Station 18 and East Oakland Sports Center, as well as a draft Request for Qualifications for the Open Circle/Open Proposals program.

- 12. Adjournment. E. Jolly moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. J. Easton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**