



**Public Arts Commission  
North Adams, Massachusetts**

Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2017

The North Adams Public Arts Commission held a public meeting on May 10, 2017 at the Eclipse Mill Gallery at the Eclipse Mill Artist Lofts, 243 Union Street #102, North Adams.

Members Present: Julia Dixon, Chairperson  
Erica Manville, Vice Chairperson  
Cynthia Quiñones, Secretary  
William C. Blackmer, Jr.  
Nancy Ziter  
Eric Kerns  
Gail Kolis Sellers

Absent: None

Also Present: City Counselor Eric Buddington  
Ramona Fabregas  
Joe Thompson  
Larry Smallwood  
Tammy Daniels

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dixon called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Ziter moved to accept the Public Arts Commission minutes from its April 26, 2017 public meeting, with a spelling correction to Krystal Henriquez's name. Manville seconded. All voted in favor. None opposed.

NOTRE DAME CHURCH INSTALLATION PRESENTATION – MASS MoCA

Larry Smallwood and Joe Thompson (of Mass MoCA) described the upcoming Luftwerk Cloudland Project in the context of the North Adams Exchange Project (NAX), a collaborative, cooperative event

between local merchants, the mayor's office, and Mass MoCA designed to increase foot traffic in downtown North Adams. The NAX will lead to several visual improvements to the downtown area, including cleanup of the lot at the corner of Marshall and Main Streets, laying clean white stone under the overpass, and tearing down the fence in that area.

Specifically, the Cloudland project will involve placing beacon-like lights atop the four prominent church steeples in North Adams, as well as the clocktower at Mass MoCA, for a citywide exhibit that will run from Memorial Day through Labor Day, with the option to extend until the end of November. The beacons will flash out, in Morse code, the famous Henry David Thoreau passage describing his experience at the top of Mount Greylock: "As the light increased / I discovered around me an ocean of mist.."etc. The beacons will appear to be in dialogue with one another, trading off lines, occasionally "speaking" in unison. Roof inspections will be done before the beacons are placed and after they are removed.

Ziter noted that Notre Dame may be up for bid at that time, and recommended factoring the potential sale into the planning of the exhibit. Dixon noted the potential for collaboration with schools to create learning opportunities in conjunction with the project.

#### RIVER STREET INSTALLATION PRESENTATION – MASS MoCA

Larry Smallwood and Joe Thompson presented plans for a Jenny Holzer exhibit scheduled to run from May 27 to June 25 (Wednesday-Sunday) along the Hoosic River side of the Mass MoCA galleries. Five large projections of scrolling text (specific poetry TBA) will cover the sides of the Mass MoCA buildings from dusk to 11pm. Two of the 10' x 8' projectors will be on city property. Mass MoCA will have two staff attending to the projectors during the running hours of the exhibit. Mass MoCA will repair any damage done to the grass by the projectors at the conclusion of the project. The museum website will contain extended information about the project.

Kerns moved to approve the Luftwerk Cloudland and Jenny Holzer projects as presented. Blackmer seconded. All voted in favor. None opposed.

#### PRAYER FLAG PROJECT PRESENTATION – RAMONA FABREGAS

Fabregas began her presentation by noting that she was not ready to seek the commission's approval, but rather advice on the planning of her project, specifically regarding site locations. She then presented an overview of her own artistic work, as well as a detailed description of her intentions.

For this project, Fabregas hopes to engage the local community as widely as possible in the creation of 3,000-5,000 interdenominational prayer flags, some of which would be block printed with Celtic designs and pre-selected positive messages, others of which would be written on and designed by community members with their own personal wishes and hopes. She projects the cost of the project materials at approximately \$2,000, and is researching a possible grant via Wal-Mart. Community involvement is critical to the project, and Fabregas had several ideas about enabling that engagement, from collaborating with local schools to setting up a table during Down Street Art. Fabregas would also like to have a celebratory installation event.

Regarding location, Fabregas indicated she would like to install the project in a place where the flags could be left on display for three years or more. (Typically, prayer flags are not removed; they hang until they deteriorate or are blown away.) Fabregas had identified several possible sites, including the footbridges in town, the Hoosic River, Eagle Street, and the former Johnson School. She shared pictures with the commission for discussion and feedback. Commissioners discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each site, from visibility to accessibility. Ultimately, Dixon recommended that Fabregas identify a location that means something to the project, and then create her proposal around that specific choice.

#### FINAL WEBSITE REVIEW

Dixon reported that the new Public Arts Commission website ([northadamspublicart.org](http://northadamspublicart.org)) is live, and gave the commission a tour of the various pages on the site. Commissioners who had not yet had their photographs taken by Staaf were asked to contact her within the next week to make arrangements. The website includes many practical features, such an option to complete and submit a public art application online. The commission agreed it would be valuable to add a resources page, as well as a place for upcoming meeting dates, times, and agendas. The arts commission email address needs to be updated so that emails are ultimately directed to Dixon, not Manville.

#### PUBLIC ATTENDEES CONCERNS

City Councilor Buddington noted that the commission should be sure to clarify the difference between giving advice and giving approval when discussing proposals with artists. Dixon reviewed the commissions stated core principles.

#### MEMBER CONCERNS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Future agenda items will include establishing a FAQ page for the website, reviewing the revised application, and a discussion of the responsibilities of members.

#### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Public Arts Commission will be held at 5:30p.m. on Wednesday, June 7, 2017, at the Eclipse Mill.

#### ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to discuss, Manville moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 p.m. Sellers seconded. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Quiñones, Secretary