



**Public Arts Commission
North Adams, Massachusetts**

Meeting Minutes

July 25, 2017

The North Adams Public Arts Commission held a public meeting on July 25, 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, acting Secretary for this meeting
William C. Blackmer, Jr.
Gail Kolis Sellers
Eric Kerns
Nancy Ziter

Absent: Cynthia Quinones

Also Present: Tammy Daniels
Stephanie Vanbramer
Larry Smallwood
William Oberst
Vincent Melito

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dixon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Ziter moved to accept the Public Arts Commission minutes from its June 29, 2017 public meeting. Vice Chairperson Manville seconded. All voted in favor. None opposed.

CULTURAL PLAN DISCUSSION

Chairwoman Dixon proposed a cultural plan discussion as an idea, because major cities do this through their cultural commission such as ours. Sellers questioned the responsibility of our commission as proactive, and questioned soliciting for such activities. Dixon discussed our proactive stance. Ziter then asked how we raise the money, since the city does not have funds specific to the Public Arts Commission so she suggested calls for the arts. Dixon responded by suggesting we could just solicit for funds through grants and donations instead of needing a Friends of the Arts Commission nonprofit since we can do that already. Kerns suggested that was too broad of an all call, and suggested we create a roster and solicit sponsors so that the commission does not need to manage funds. Commissioners then discussed as a whole the ramifications of such an agreement. The end result was that we would need a document to establish the ideas for the “ask” so that donors knew where the money was going. Kerns suggested the North Adams Partnership act as our fiscal sponsor and volunteered to reach out to this body. Ziter suggested a bullet point list for the document. Sellers mentioned she was not interested in fundraising. A motion was called, to accept the creation of such a document and plan. Ziter motioned. Manville seconded. All voted in favor, none opposed.

BILL OBERST/CHRISTINA KING APPLICATION REVIEW

Bill Oberst and Stephanie Vanbramer discussed their application which requested approval to remove a section of grey paint from the pillars at the former location of their mural (please see June 9, 2017 minutes for details). Oberst explained that the restorers from the Clark in Williamstown would try a patch study to see if removal of the top layer of paint would work. There is no contract with the *Harmonic Bridge* sound installation artists or Mr. Oberst that protects either installation.

Ziter expressed concern that Mr. Oberst’s application did not specify the size of the paint section to be removed. Kerns suggested that all the artists meet, which was planned for later this month, to agree on a plan. Oberst said that both installations were not permanent, and suggested that the *Harmonic Bridge* artists had their time. Larry Smallwood, speaking on behalf of MASS MoCA, prefers that Mr. Oberst find another location to paint a new mural and that MASS MoCA would help in this endeavor. Public attendee Vincent Melito added that he has spent 14 years on city council in North Adams and the people he knows in North Adams would like to preserve the mural in any way we can.

Sellers motioned to approve a six-inch square patch test, Ziter seconded, motion did not pass with no others voting in favor. Motion denied 4-2.

Dixon urged Mr. Oberst to reapply for the restoration test after meeting with the *Harmonic Bridge* artists and agreeing on a path forward.

STREET ORNAMENTATION DISCUSSION

Dixon presented the commission with the information that the Eagle Street Initiative proposed ornamentation and parklets on Eagle Street. She does not want to dampen the project but would like reciprocal communication between the Eagle Street Initiative and the Public Arts Commission. Kerns volunteered to write an email to those stakeholders. An update will be added to the next agenda.

PUBLIC ATTENDEES CONCERNS

Vincent Melito asked about a historic painted sign that used to exist on a building on Eagle Street. He asked about the historical preservation society revamping the faded mural. He mentioned that Ben Lamb, City Councilman, was interested in this prospective preservation.

MEMBER CONCERNS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Public Arts Commission will be determined at a later date by a Doodle poll.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to discuss, Ziter moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 p.m. Manville seconded. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica Manville, Vice Chairwoman