

City of Alameda

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC ART COMMISSION (PAC) MEETING Monday June 17, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairperson Liz Rush called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Vice Chairperson Liz Rush, Commissioners Peter Platzgummer and Robert Ferguson. Absent: Chairperson Adam Gillett and Commissioner Jennifer Hoffecker.

Lois Butler, Jackie Keliiaa, and Abby Thorne-Lyman present as staff to the Commission.

One remote participant, four in-person participants.

3. MINUTES

3-A 2024-4156 Review and Approve Draft Minutes of May 28, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes was given by Commissioner Platzgummer and seconded by Commissioner Ferguson. The motion was adopted 3-0.

4. NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Wes Warren, representing ArtPush – He made a formal request of PAC to re-evaluate the scoring process and grant awards for the 2024 Cultural Arts and Arts Programming Request for Proposals to address the unbalanced allocation of funding:

- Item 1 – Warren said of the eight grants awarded, two were awarded to Rhythmix Cultural Works (Rhythmix), two to West End Arts District (WEAD), four of the eight grants available. That's half the funding to two organizations, which only left four grants available to the remaining 16 applicants.

Prior to this, the City worked with Radium and WEAD to apply for a \$1 million Bloomberg Public Art Challenge Grant, which eventually also included Rhythmix. The City didn't get the award, but the original application resulted in a \$100,000 grant from Bloomberg shared by Radium, WEAD, and Rhythmix. The Bloomberg arts proposal wasn't run through the PAC. Two arts organizations, WEAD and Radium, were selected to participate in the grant application process. No other organizations were invited to participate. While this may be attributed to time constraints, the exclusion of other organizations reinforced the hierarchy of arts funding in Alameda. The City didn't directly provide the funds; however, the decision to include these arts organizations in the City's initial grant application led them to receiving a \$100,000 grant from Bloomberg. While the PAC did not approve the use of funding from the Public Art Fund for the Bloomberg proposal, it seems like it

should have been taken into consideration when these same three organizations were awarded five of the eight grants.

- Item 2 - Ranking of Scores – Why did a single commissioner give ArtPush’s proposal the lowest score while every other commissioner had ArtPush in their top 10? The same commissioner scored the Alameda Civic Ballet no. 1 while it wasn’t in the top ten of any other commissioners. This knocked ArtPush out of the funding list in favor of the ballet. By ranking ArtPush lowest, and the ballet highest, they were able to manipulate final results even though every other score favored ArtPush and ranked it higher than the ballet. This extreme scoring changed the final outcome. It’s effectively gerrymandering to counteract the popular vote. Because of the drastic difference in scoring, the City’s staff decided to convert the scores to a ranked order of 1 to 20; however, this made no difference in the outcome because the result was influenced by purposely ranking ArtPush to lowest and the ballet to highest. The tables in the printout showed that the score converted to a ranking of 1 to 20, extreme voting in the final column was enough to flip the order even though it was opposite of the scoring of all the other commissioners. Some commissioners recused themselves from voting on specific proposals possibly due to a potential conflict of interest. Have specific criteria been established to determine when there’s conflict of interest?

Jessica Warren, representing ArtPush – The possible resolutions that ArtPush came up with: eliminate manipulation by taking the lowest and highest scores out of the average. The trend means is a standard practice to eliminate the influence of outliers that may unfairly affect outcomes. List the name of the organization on all the documents instead of just listing the programming so it’s obvious who is getting the funding. Take into consideration how much funding has already been directed to each organization. List all financial and familial relationships that commissioners have with each organization, create criteria to establish what defines a conflict of interest and when a commissioner should recuse themselves. Set a limit so that a single organization doesn’t receive a disproportionate amount of funding. Create a process to alert the public when there are opportunities such as the Bloomberg grant, regardless of time constraints. A notice could have been sent out to the PAC mailing list. No single one of these solutions may be enough, but we feel that all the suggestions are critical to making a fairer distribution of funds.

4-A 2024-4179 Correspondence
No additional correspondence.

5. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

5-A 2024-4154 Recommendation to Review and Provide Feedback on Identified
Primary Future Art Locations and on the Process of Primary Site Identification

Civic Sparks Fellow Jack Denham-Conroy presented the update on future art locations.

Background

Following the Public Art Master Plan, it’s a three-step process: preliminary site selection,

community engagement, and final site selection from March to June 2024. Master plan Development Criteria: equitable geographic distribution, visibility, accessibility, suitability of the environment, safety, and community input. In reviewing with City staff, three additional criteria were suggested but not formally adopted as part of the process since they wouldn't affect a site's score but were considered in the process: evaluate maintenance requirements and evaluate funding and budget constraints. The consideration of historical significance would be done during the RFP process.

An initial 39 potential sites for locating new public art were identified around the City, including 16 parks, Main Street Ferry Terminal, City Hall, Portola Triangle, five street intersections, three bridges, and the Mastick Senior Center.

Created a site analysis spreadsheet that analyzed all 39 locations using six criteria:

Geographic Equity – Consider the existing locations of public artworks and ensure artworks are geographically distributed throughout the City of Alameda:

- Used ArcGIS to measure distance between suggested and existing public art locations
- Created two scores: one considering only the distance to non-mural art locations; and the other considered all existing public art
- This created an emphasis on geographic equity within the weighting system, prioritizing locations that are farther from existing public art.

Visibility – Choose locations where the artwork will be highly visible to the public, such as in busy pedestrian areas, public parks, or near public transportation.

- Near business districts or other high traffic areas
- Adjacent to high-volume roadways
- On bike/pedestrian routes
- In public parks

Accessibility – Ensure that the location is accessible to all members of the community, regardless of physical abilities, and consider factors such as curb cuts, sidewalks, and other accessibility features.

Environmental Suitability – Evaluate the physical environment of each potential location, including factors such as climate, exposure to water, animals, birds, light exposure, wind patterns, and existing landscape features, to determine if they are appropriate for the artwork.

Safety – Evaluate Safety: Ensure that the location is safe for both the artwork and the public, considering factors such as traffic patterns and natural hazards.

Community Input – Consider community input: Involve the community in the process of selecting locations for Public Art, through public meetings, surveys, or other outreach efforts. Listen to people's opinions, suggestions and take their feedback into account. Information was gathered at four different spring events: Radium Runway SF Opera, ARPD Community Feedback Event, Performing Arts in the Park, and Alameda Point Open House.

Initial Analysis Spreadsheet found the top twelve locations based on those criteria. Presented at four community events to receive community feedback on those twelve locations. – At the four events, Denham-Conroy had residents and people who work in Alameda take a location survey he designed with five criteria for the placement of future public art: accessibility, visibility, geographic equity, safety, and environmental suitability. Participants were asked to rank 12 suggested locations. Participants were also asked to suggest other locations not listed on the survey. In total, participants suggested 45 future public art locations, including Neptune Park near Posey Tube and Park St/Oak/Central area.

Survey Results - The survey closed on June 9 and had 307 responses. The survey ranked potential public art locations as follows:

1. Main Street Ferry Terminal
2. Washington Park
3. Central & Encinal St. Roundabout
4. Central and Fourth Roundabout
5. Lincoln Park
6. Shoreline Park
7. Franklin Park
8. Krusi Park
9. Portola Triangle
10. Towata Park
11. Tillman Park
12. Godfrey Park

The survey results were added to the Initial Analysis Spreadsheet that considered the accessibility, visibility, geographic equity, safety, and environmental suitability. The results revealed a similar ranking to those listed above, with five sites identified as

Priority Future Physical Public Art Locations:

1. Main Street Ferry Terminal
2. Lincoln Park
3. Washington Park
4. Franklin Park
5. Central and Encinal Roundabout

Moving Forward – Working through the Potential Site List

- Vetting sites before or parallel to the RFP process
- Treating the list as a guide rather than a predetermined plan

Refining a Methodology

- Working closer with PAC commissioners to continue improving this process
- Making the process more efficient and replicable

Adding Potential Sites

- Using these criteria to analyze the whole island—seeing the bigger picture
- Repeating this process strictly for murals or temporary art
- Setting creative goal sites, i.e., business districts that aren't city-owned property or

- regional shoreline parks
- Analyze additional PAC suggestions before RFP process.

Recommendation to PAC – Review the identified primary future physical public art locations. Provide feedback on the replication of this process.

Clarifying Questions

Commissioner Platzgummer asked to see clarification on site ranking results and survey results. Commissioner Ferguson asked why locations on Park and Webster Streets won't be considered. Denham-Conroy said they can be with the "wobble room" factor built into the process of site selection.

Public Comment

None

Commissioner Discussion

Vice Chairperson Liz Rush said the length of time it takes us to get a piece of art through the PAC is such that pushing off future public art locations could be so far down the road that it becomes a moot point. These fantasy public art locations should be incorporated into the potential sites. Ms. Butler asked for clarification and Vice Chairman Rush said that all 45 potential locations should be incorporated into the potential site evaluation process, not just the top 12, but especially the top ones beyond the 12 locations that people mentioned.

Commissioner Ferguson said that Park and Webster streets should be top priorities for future public art locations, which are not on the top 12 list.

Commissioner Platzgummer thanked Denham-Conroy for all his work on the project, which he thought was well done and professional work. He agreed with his fellow commissioners that not all 45 locations, but the obvious clusters of locations should be looked at too. Of the five selection criteria, Platzgummer said visibility was the most important one since we want pieces of art located where people are, such as Park and Webster streets. He said we have sculptures, such as one on Central, near Park St., Milestone, that no one sees and, therefore, doesn't care about. We need new locations for art.

Vice Chairperson Liz Rush said our goal as art commissioners is to put art where the most people see it. That is our goal and that's how we should be spending our money.

Ms. Butler said that not all 45 locations are worth including in the evaluation of sites but agreed the Park and Webster street cluster locations identified could be included and rated accordingly along with a change in the weighting of site location criteria.

Ms. Keliiaa agreed that the Park and Webster street clusters could be included in the evaluation of sites for future public art, but it would involve a shift in the methodology and lessening the weight of geographic equity and giving more weight to visibility in incorporating the commissioners' suggestions.

Commissioner Platzgummer agreed that it is statistically significant when 15 percent of the public wrote in Park and Webster street locations on the survey, so that should be

considered. He said that a much larger number of people than we think want art in places where they go out, eat, walk, but where exactly it is doesn't matter.

Vice Chairperson Liz Rush said in the last seven years, we have discussed the positioning of artwork around Alameda in great detail. There's a lot of limiting factors when it comes to the placing of public art in the public: safety, land ownership: public or private?

Commissioner Ferguson said the solution to some location considerations is temporary art where it's only placed for one to five years. These kind of art installations allow art to change and the impacts are much less than permanent art site locations.

Ms. Butler said staff would meet and take into consideration all of today's comments for a new report about public art site selection at a future meeting, hopefully in August.

6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Butler announced she is retiring on August 1, 2024, so this is her last PAC meeting. She thanked the commissioners for working with her the past eight years.

7. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Butler said there weren't any written communications other than what was attached to the meeting's agenda.

Commissioner Non-agenda communications

Commissioner Ferguson and Commissioner Platzgummer thanked Ms. Butler for her work over the years. Vice Chairperson Liz Rush told Ms. Butler that for the past seven years she has been PAC's pillar through hard times and good times. "We really appreciate your contribution to this commission. We will miss you."

8. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairperson Liz Rush adjourned the meeting at 7:05 pm.