



**UrbanArt Commission  
Public Art Oversight Committee  
Wednesday, May 12, 2021 – 1 pm**

Attending: Jana Travis, Patty Daigle, Coriana Close, Eso Tolson; UAC staff: Wendy Young, Brett Hanover, A.M. O'Malley-Miller and Lauren Kennedy

- I. Welcome  
Meeting is called to order. Kennedy begins the meeting.

**APPROVALS**

- II. Email approval recap -- Kennedy noted that we did not meet in April, so there are no meeting minutes to approve this month. Kennedy reminded folks that the following approvals happened over email.
  - a. March 2021 minutes
  - b. Dunbar Elementary - 50% fabrication
    - i. Close asks about the next plan for Desmond Lewis' sculpture. Kennedy notes that UAC needs to find a new location and is working with the City to find a new site in Orange Mound, hopefully the OM community center but that may not be possible. Kennedy states she hopes to find a place and install the sculptures by the fall.
- III. L.E. Brown Park - Schematic Design
  - a. Young presents the schematic design by Arnold Thompson and notes that nothing has changed in the original concept of the design that was originally selected. Young also shows the location at the corner of Georgia and Orland St. Young notes that a copse of trees will protect the sculpture from traffic. Kennedy expresses hoping the trees do not obstruct the view of the sculpture. Young responds to say that placement will optimize on visibility. Young discusses the materials of the sculpture which include a steel base, with concrete footings, weather proof ceramic tiles, metal materials laser jet cut steel, powder coated aluminum bars and a prefabricated stainless steel sphere for the center as well as solar LED lighting bolted into the concrete with access for replacing bulbs and fixtures at the base of the sculpture.

Young asks the committee if there are any questions about the materials. Close asks where the solar panels for the LED lighting will be installed and needed battery power. Young stated that she would clarify with the artist for final design and that each light has its own battery which are all replaceable. Young also stated that an original poem by Njeri Fombi will be on the base of the sculpture and a copy will be submitted to the committee for approval, and will be made of mosaic tiles. Kennedy notes that the artist was focused on the fabrication details for this approval and had originally planned to present the poem at this approval but that has been moved to final design approval. Young presented the preliminary maintenance-the powder coating can be removed and power washed, the floor tile needs light power washing, the LED lights typically last 10 years and are designed to be accessible for maintenance. Young asked the PAOC committee for questions. Daigle asked if there will be rain exposure to the sculpture and asked if there is any issue with the tile being slippery. Young states that this can be explored further with the artist and presented at final design. Close asks that we discuss a path to the sculpture, possibly gravel. Young responds that the Parks Department requires an ADA compliant path and that information will be presented at final.

- b. Pending no further questions, Kennedy calls for a motion to approve. **Tolson moves, Close seconds. The motion unanimously passes.**

IV. Contingency Requests \$1500 & Ida B. Wells Memorial -\$30,000

V.

- a. Vance Park - \$3,500

Kennedy introduces three contingency requests with the first supporting the relocation of John Medwedeff's *Whirl* sculpture in coordination with Memphis River Parks Partnership's renovations for Vance Park. UAC hopes to support the artist's time and work for the planning and consulting the artist has done to plan for the moving, renovation and relocation of the sculpture, which is being executed by MRPP's contractors. Medwedeff's costs are currently \$2500, and Kennedy asks for an approval of up to \$3500 in case there are some additional costs.

- b. Court Ave. Pedestrian Bridge - \$1,500

The second contingency request is for the Court Avenue Pedestrian Bridge by the University of Memphis Law School from the artist team Electroland. Kennedy notes that the lighting on the bridge has been broken for five years and the original artists are not able to execute the repairs and the UAC team has been working to fix it with the maintenance budget. Kennedy notes that UAC will be over budget on the maintenance budget this year which the City is working with UAC on but that there is a need for a \$1,500 component which is above what the City had already approved. Kennedy notes that UAC is hoping this is the last thing that needs to be done for the lighting on the bridge to be fixed. Kennedy notes that we have \$105,906.50 left in the contingency budget and that these two contingency requests are fairly small. Kennedy also notes that another \$7,000 will be coming in the FY22 CIP budget as well.

- c. Kennedy presents materials for the Ida B. Wells memorial planned downtown at Beale and 4th. Kennedy notes that the organizers of the memorial applied to the Neighborhood Art Initiative but they were not selected because the project was not a good fit for the goals of that program as the sculpture is in fabrication and

did not present opportunities for neighborhood collaboration. Kennedy notes that while the project was not a good fit for the NAI process that UAC would very much like to support it. The project has a budget of \$250,000 and a small gap left in funding, with plans to unveil the sculpture publicly in July 2021. Kennedy notes that she discussed putting percent for art money toward the project with Council Member Smiley, one of the super district council representatives for downtown, and he was supportive. Kennedy proposed \$20,000-\$30,000 to put toward the memorial from contingency, which has \$105,906.50 and from the Blight Out budget which has \$201,785. Kennedy proposes that the contribution could be shared between these two buckets. Hanover adds that the memorial will become part of the City collection and therefore fall under UAC's maintenance purview. Close asked what the maintenance costs would be. Kennedy notes that she will clarify that cost and make sure to make it clear that the maintenance would be for the physical sculpture only. Kennedy adds that the UAC maintenance plan will be more manageable in the coming years with the expertise of Young bringing UAC up to date with all major repairs and new CIP funds proposed for FY22 will be used to address a backlog of current conservation needs.

Kennedy asks if the PAOC committee feels this is an appropriate use of that money. Daigle asks that Kennedy clarify what the City's involvement in the project has been and what the funds will specifically be used for. Kennedy confirms that it is a project run by a group of private citizens with vocal support from the Mayor of Memphis and that it will live in a City park. Kennedy notes that she can clarify that with the project leaders but that her understanding is that the sculpture has been built but not yet installed and that the money will be used would be for fabrication and installation of the sculpture. There will also be plaques installed that will tie the sculpture to Ida B. Well's timeline and connect it to the lynching memorial. The installation will be similar to the I AM A MAN Plaza in scope and structure. Close notes that she feels that the money is appropriate and that she likes that the City would own the memorial, adding that Ida B. Wells should have a memorial in Memphis. Daigle asks if there are any other 3-dimensional memorial in place for Ida B. Wells. Close notes, and Hanover confirms, that it will be the first sculpture of any Black woman in Memphis.

Daigle expresses both concern coming into the project at this late date and that a memorial to Ida B. Wells is long overdue. Kennedy notes that the website covers the selection committee involvement and states that she will send the application materials the group made to the Neighborhood Art Initiative. Kennedy notes that there was not an open call for artists which is unfortunate. Kennedy notes that the memorial is happening no matter what and that she would very much like for UAC and the City to support it rather than not. Kennedy notes that the project is very close to being funded and that UAC's support would mean a great deal to the volunteers who are fundraising for the project. Kennedy notes that she advised the group to also approach city council members to ask for discretionary funding they may have. Tolson notes that he agrees with concerns expressed but that he believes UAC should support this project.

Kennedy asks for PAOC's thoughts on the amount of support based on the UAC recommendation of \$20,000-\$30,000, leaving a healthy contingency fund and Blight Out fund. Daigle asked what the funding gap is and Kennedy responds that it is approximately \$80,000. Close proposes \$20,000 from available contingency and \$10,000 from Blight Out. The committee expresses their support of the proposal and support of the project.

- d. Based on discussions, Kennedy calls for a motion to approve all three contingency requests. **Close moves, Daigle seconds. The motion passes for all three requests.**

### UPDATES

- VI. Frayser Library
  - a. A call to artists just opened for this project which will have a \$150,000 budget.
- VII. FY22 public art plan
  - a. Kennedy reports that similarly to last year, UAC proposed \$400,000 for the CIP budget and the request was reduced to \$350,000. Updated amounts for each project are: Ed Rice Community Center reduced from \$50,000 to \$40,000, maintenance overhaul stayed the same at \$125,000, Neighborhood Art Initiative was reduced to \$115,000, and UAC's associated project management fees were reduced to \$63,000. No major questions but some trimming.
- VIII. Other project updates
  - a. Lorenzo Scrogg's sculpture for the Whitehaven YMCA is at the final design stage, hoping for a July approval.
  - b. JFK park is currently being installed with a hopeful 50% installation approval in July or August.
  - c. A mural through NAI for Gooch Park is being installed by Jamond Bullock early this summer. And neighborhood signage for Cherokee Height and other projects for NAI are getting started this summer. (Kennedy notes that these NAI projects are funded through a grant from the Assisi Foundation rather than the City's percent-for-art program.
  - d. Movable Collection artist talks will launch in June with virtual programming rolling out this summer. The last of the library branch installations will be wrapping up in the next couple months as well.

### Upcoming (Zoom) Meeting Dates:

June 9, 2021 @ 1:00 PM  
July 14, 2021 @ 1:00 PM  
August 11, 2021 @ 1:00 PM

Meeting adjourns