

Staff: Holli Bushnell, Office Assistant
Lakeview Cemetery
hbushnell@burlingtonvt.gov

Minutes

Parks, Arts & Culture Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 28, 2023, 5:00pm

MEETING CONDUCTED IN PERSON AT 645 PINE ST, FRONT CONFERENCE ROOM, AND VIA ZOOM

Attendance:

Committee Members: Chair Joe Magee, Councilor Mark Barlow

Absent – Councilor Ali Dieng

City Staff: Colin Storrs - BCA, Holli Bushnell – BPRW

Public Present: Carmen George

Meeting called to order at 5:01 pm by Chair Joe Magee

Approval of Agenda

Mark Barlow moved to approve the agenda, Magee seconded, all were in favor

Approval of Draft Minutes from 1/24/2024

Barlow moved to approve the minutes, Magee seconded, all were in favor

Public Forum

Public forum was opened at 5:02pm. As no one present wished to speak public forum was closed at 5:02pm.

Welcome to Nepal Mural –

Carmen George began by explaining that she is a long time resident of Burlington with some experience in the world of public art and grants and that this project is intended for the building located at 1563 North Ave. Bedur Rai, the owner of the business occupying the space, had intended to come to the PACC meeting, however he had a death in the family and wasn't able to be present. Rai is from Nepal, he is a new business owner, and is hoping to transform this space. Upon entering the space and speaking to Rai, George suggested that the building needs a mural. Rai agreed and mentioned a neighborhood artist who is an Ethiopian immigrant that he would like to work with. George reached out to the councilor for the ward, Ali Dieng, and he suggested that George bring a proposal before PACC. George then shared a picture of the building which is currently painted cerulean and could use some curb appeal. She sees this project as an opportunity to celebrate diversity in the New North End, acknowledging it's growth and changes with a new mural. George added that Bedur has had an amazing journey to recover from a serious disability and is now working to transform this store and add a restaurant to the existing space. His business intends to provide the community with an opportunity to have access to different, non-standard American foods.

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Magee asked for a breakdown of the funding request. At this time George was able to provide a rough breakdown of how the requested funds would be allocated, this did not include final numbers. Magee added that it looks as though there is similar art displayed inside space and that bringing that art outside seems appropriate.

Barlow requested that the rough breakdown be posted with the agenda on Civic Clerk. Holli Bushnell confirmed that she will do so. Barlow also questioned the proposed \$8000 budget, asking for confirmation of the 30' x 15' size and how the mural would be structured. George confirmed that the proposed location facing the Tracy Drive side of the property. Barlow asked about the timeframe for the project and George stated that she believe it will take around six months. The hope is that they will have funding secured to use the summer months to do the installation.

Magee asked of George had discussed the proposed artist fees with the artist and George shared that the number provided was her rough calculation. Storrs stepped in to share that, by BCA's standards, the estimate is a little low, averaging out to \$11 per square foot for 45sqft of work. This wage is a little too low to be livable for this area and Storrs suggested increasing the fee. George was grateful for the information and shared that she felt her funding request was for the bare minimum.

Magee suggested following the process that the Oddfellows took with their mural project. The Oddfellows grant was for \$10,000 and Oddfellows added another \$5000 of their own to funds to pay the artists. That said, those artists decided to paint the whole building although they were asked to do a space around the size of this proposed mural, 30'x15'. The Oddfellows also had the capacity to pay for equipment, a grand opening celebration, and the lawyer fees. The finances for the Welcome to Nepali mural would be different.

George agreed, adding that Bedur's business is a new start up. Bedur has applied for state grants to add kitchen and continue work on the space, but has very little surplus money. Additionally, the Oddfellows issued a call to artists and Bedur would specifically like to work with the artist previously mentioned. George asked if that would be a hindrance to accessing potential funds. Magee asked Colin Storrs of BCA to field that question.

Storrs explained that, although the previous project (and ostensible template for this project) did have a call to artist, it's up to PACC/City Council to set the parameters of a grant. Essentially, an organization or group comes to PACC and the council with an idea of how they want to grant out the money and those bodies determine whether or not to provide the funds. Storrs also shared that BCA runs a community fund grant (the application process begins in April and funds are distributed in July). Artists or groups can apply for up to \$5000. It is a competitive grant, but it does have an existing structure for how to provide grants for projects with community oriented goal. Storrs suggested that the artist apply to the community fund as he is the creator. George felt this might be too challenging for recent immigrants with a language barrier to attempt, especially when funds are not guaranteed. She added that she could potentially work to materials donated and shift the requested \$8000 to just pay the artist. She reiterated that her proposal really was just the minimum she felt was needed for the project.

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Magee suggested that George return for the next meeting in March with a better outlined proposal and finalized numbers that would provide the artist with a livable wage. Barlow added that, after PACC approves of the proposal it will need to go before the Board of Finance and they will want to have as many of the details of the project nailed down if possible, particularly if those funds are coming from the councilor initiative funds. Magee stated that he would check with CAO Catherine Schadd concerning the remaining balance of the fund.

George expressed hope that the proposal could be approved that night, however Magee felt that he needs to go through the procedural aspects of the proposal so the committee won't need to backtrack. Over next few weeks he will work with Storrs and Schadd so the committee can come back in March and confidently make recommendation.

George asked if the committee could give her a sense of the likelihood that the project would be funded. Barlow shared that this is the third project PACC has been approached with, the concern is that initiative funds have been used for a number of other things this year and that there might not be enough of the original \$50,000 left. That said, those same funds are included in the FY24 budget which begins in July, so if the council isn't able to fund the project now, they may be able to in the new fiscal year.

George appreciated the explanation and consideration for the proposal. Magee apologized that PACC was not able to make a determination at this meeting. George asked Storrs to send her BCA's payment guidelines so she can adjust her proposal accordingly. Storrs mentioned that they will also need to determine who is signing the contract and who will be paid the grant funds, the building owner, the business owner, or the artist. These are taxable funds, and that's something to keep in mind. George shared that the plan is to have the building owner take ownership of the mural. Magee requested something in writing confirming this from the owner.

Adjournment –

The meeting was adjourned at 5:41pm. The next meeting will be held on 3/27/2024 at 645 Pine St and via Zoom.