

Public Art Committee – Regular Meeting
February 17, 2009 5:00 p.m.
Jack Reidy Conference Room – Council Chambers

Members Present: Joan Jonkel, Dave Nelson, Linda Richards, Liz Dye, Kathi Olson

Absent Members: Dana Boussard, Dave Strohmaier, Peter Lambros, Paul Filicetti

Non Members Present: James Halvorson (Gallery Director, Zootown Arts Community Center), Mike Parker (Faculty, University of Montana – Painting), Vicki Watson (Two Rivers Chapter of the Industrial Workers of the World).

Public / PAC Committee Member Comment:

Mike Parker introduced himself. He is teaching painting at the University of Montana. Mike has completed large scale murals. Mike noted that he is working on a couple of projects with the Northside neighborhood. One project is in collaboration with Zootown Arts Community Center. The second is a smaller Northside project involving the Orange Street Underpass. More to come.

Joan welcomed the new PAC committee members – Linda Richards and Liz Dye. Dave Nelson and Kathi thanked James Halvorsen and Mike Parker for attending the meeting.

Minutes:

No quorum.

Reports

1. Vicki Watson – IWW Historic Marker at Front & Higgins: October, 2009 will make the 100th Anniversary of a Missoula event commemorating free speech. Vicki distributed a handout outlining a **"Proposal to place an Interactive Historical Marker to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of First Free Speech Fight in Missoula, Montana."** Vicki summarized the proposal, noting that numerous towns in the West repealed their "free speech" ordinance because of the Missoula event.

*"100 years ago this October, at the corner of Higgins and Front in downtown Missoula, Montana, a watershed event in American history brought this nation's attention the exercise of free speech. At that time in many US Towns, street speaking was illegal. Often these ordinances had been passed specifically to prevent labor organizers from speaking (the ordinances were not enforced against groups like the Salvation Army). Workers decided to make a stand and be arrested to defend free speech rights. And it was in the little town of Missoula, Montana that the first "free speech fight" was fought. Workers stepped up on a soapbox one after another and were arrested and filled the jail to overflowing. Missoula repealed its ordinance. From there the defenders of free speech moved on to Spokane and much larger towns. (See Phillip Foner's **History of the Labor Movement**, pages 175-177; and UM professor Clem Work's, **Darkest Before Dawn**.)*

The Two Rivers Chapter of the Industrial Workers of the World proposes to work with the City of Missoula to place and "interactive" historical marker at the NE corner of Higgins & Front to commemorate this event. The marker will be a bronze soapbox bolted to the sidewalk, which any citizen can step up on and recreate that historic event (as well as exercise free speech rights on today's issues). A plaque describing the event would be placed on the soapbox or on a protective rail around 2-3 sides of the soapbox to prevent accidents while allowing access. Ideally, the box would be placed beside the clock tower if that iconic structure can be saved. The local IWW is seeking support from local civic organizations to make Missoula's role in this important chapter in American history more visible."

- Proposal to place an Interactive Historical Marker to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of First Free Speech Fight in Missoula, Montana.

Vicki requested a letter of support from the Public Art Committee. She also proposed that the marker be donated to the City of Missoula. This would become a "public-private" partnership art project. Joan asked if the soapbox could become a piece of art. Dave N. noted that the art is the process and the product. The Committee liked the idea of the interactive historical marker. Joan questioned Vicki on the possibility of working with artists

to design the soapbox. Vicki said “yes,” that would be great. Joan said she would talk to Jim Nugent (City Attorney) about potential conflicts. She noted that without a quorum, we couldn’t vote. The committee discussed safety issues with the proposed location. Dave N. wondered if the box could be in a different location with a plaque at the original site. Kathi suggested that the area behind First Interstate Bank may be a possibility. Joan asked Vicki to talk to her committee about the piece as an artwork and to relay the PAC’s support if they decided it could truly be a “public artwork.”

- 2. Fire Department Project:** Kathi updated the committee. The Design Review Team (DRT) will meet this next Tuesday, February 24. Kathi asked the committee to review the previously distributed draft prospectus. The committee discussed the award amount. Joan reviewed the verbiage pertaining to the PAC Trust Fund. The PAC has never kept the allowable 20% of the 1% monies. Dave N. noted that it is important to have monies for maintenance/infrastructure. The PAC discussed allocated \$40,000 to the selected artist(s). Kathi reviewed the history of the Project. Joan wondered about a fountain. Dave N. wondered if the fire department could use the pump from a truck to provide an “intermittent fountain” at appropriate times. Kathi invited the PAC members to the DRT meeting. The committee discussed the “invitation” procedures – open vs. limited invitation. Liz noted that we would hate to miss inviting an artist. Linda noted that Colorado has a marvelous foundry with numerous, very talented artists.
- 3. Swain Wolfe:** Dave N. recapped Swain’s idea. Dave complimented Swain on the work he has done thus far. Dave N. met with Swain and discussed additional concepts. Dave N. suggested to Swain that he meet with Brad Allen (UM sculpture professor). Swain would like a letter of support from the PAC. Dave N. noted that he could support Swain’s project. Joan asked Dave N. to draft the letter of support.
- 4. MOBASH:** There is a draft agreement that has been reviewed by Jim Nugent. Peter is not here to update us, so we will table this discussion.
- 5. The Lake Project:** Peter is not here to update us, so we will table this discussion.
- 6. Traffic Signal Boxes:** Kathi provided an overview of the project to date. She and Paula Goldberg met with the Montana Department of Transportation (Doug Moeller). He was supportive of the idea. Doug will talk to Steve King (City Engineer) to coordinate “implementation” issues. The sub-committee will refine the proposal and meet with the City and State. Kathi distributed the presentation PowerPoint and proposed timeline. Liz Dye and Linda Richards agreed to be on the subcommittee.
- 7. Other:**
 - a. Missoula Public Art Guide:** Kathi noted that Jacque Walawander from the Missoulian had called her regarding the guide. At this point the Missoulian would like to do the guide and will get back to us regarding the particulars.
 - b. Audio Tour:** Dave N. and Kathi told the committee about the cell phone audio tours the Missoula Art Museum is using in the gallery’s so patrons can learn/understand the artworks. Trail 93 is sponsoring the audio Tours.
 - c. Mike Hollern:** Joan told the committee that Mike Hollern has not responded to her written requests to repair “Cattin Around” or send instructions for repair.

Meeting adjourned: 6:50 pm