City of Oak Harbor
Arts Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2020 at 4:00 PM

1. Roll Call

Present:
Rodric Gagnon
J.R. Russell
Nora O’Connell-Balda
K.C. Pohtilla
Cynthia Mason
Therese Kingsbury

Staff Present:
Blaine Oborn, City Administrator
Hank Nydam, Parks Manager

Stakeholders Present:
Dr. Lance Gibbon, OHPS Superintendent
Kit Christopherson, OHHS Art Teacher

Stakeholders Absent:
Miranda Hoppock, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director

Absent:
Karla Freund
Lowell Sipes Alternate

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

2. Excuse Absent Commissioners.

3. Public Comments
No public comment was given.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 12, 2019
This item was tabled until the next meeting.

5. Sculpture Park Stakeholder Meeting
Stakeholders were invited to this Arts Commission Special Meeting to discuss the proposed Sculpture Park. Stakeholders in attendance were Dr. Lance Gibbon, Oak Harbor Public Schools (OHPS) Superintendent, and Kit Christopherson, Oak Harbor High School Art Teacher. Miranda Hoppock, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, was not able to attend the meeting. Chairman Gagnon presented a handout on the proposed Memorandum of Understanding relationships between OHPS, the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Oak Harbor, the proposed “Oak Harbor Creative Arts Foundation”, the Sculpture Park, and the Community. Chairman Gagnon explained that the new concept is to have the lease agreement between the Chamber of Commerce and OHPS, with the Oak Harbor Creative Arts Foundation a 501(c)3 sub of the Chamber. The City’s role would be to provide funding and support from the Arts Commission, but would not be a party to the lease agreement.

Mr. Oborn expanded on the funding possibilities from the City. The funding could be given to the Foundation, with $40,000 from the Creative Arts Fund, and $10,000 from Economic Development. The funding commitment would have to be approved by City Council. The Foundation could also apply for LTAC 2% funds for tourism promotion to lower the Creative Arts Funding in subsequent years.

Dr. Gibbon inquired as to the level of support from City Council, and what the next stages of approval would look like. Mr. Oborn explained that he had presented the initial concept to the Council in the early stages and received initial approval for $20,000 funding. With the new concept of the Chamber of Commerce being the leaseholder, once the Chamber Board approves the Oak Harbor Creative Arts Foundation and agrees to proceed with the creation of the Sculpture Park, the Arts Commission could formally request a funding commitment from City Council. Chairman Gagnon reiterated that the Chamber
Board has not yet approved this concept, but rather the President (Ronnie Wright) and Executive Director have been involved in initial discussions and will present to the Chamber Board. The Chamber’s two primary concerns are funding and manpower, and he is working on a startup costs analysis to present to the President and Executive Director.

Mr. Oborn described some of the hesitancy from the City taking on the lease, namely managing it, a laborious procurement process, and dealing with labor negotiations for the creation of a new park. City staff had a meeting with several Arts Commission Members early on to suggest the creation of a separate non-profit to take on the sculpture park project.

Dr. Gibbon suggested that the partners involved work to garner broader public support. As the proposed location is a prime piece of property, the School District would want to ensure the community is behind the project. He suggested reaching out to key organizations, asking for letters of support, building a coalition for future funding needs, etc. Dr. Gibbon also addressed the need to support the existing tenants that use the property, namely the Farmers Market and the Lion’s Club Christmas Tree Lot, and making sure those groups had input in the early stages of layout development so that the sculpture park would be compatible with their uses. Chairman Gagnon reiterated that the concept has evolved since its inception, and that members of the Arts Commission and stakeholder members each likely have their own idea of what it is.

The parties discussed that the lease agreement between the Chamber and School District should clearly establish and memorialize the maintenance responsibilities and level of care; spaces that should be reserved for school district use; etc. The memorandum of understanding with the City should also clearly establish the funding commitment and the Arts Commission level of support.

Chairman Rodric thanked everyone for attending, and will work on a schedule and full plan to present to the Chamber Board, as well as establishing the separate non-profit Oak Harbor Creative Arts Foundation.

6. Other Projects

Commissioner Mason presented a drawing of a windmill done by a local citizen. Parks Manager Hank Nydam asked the Commission the status of the pieces from the Joseph Kinnebrew Sculpture Collection which were not powder coated and painted. Commissioner Kingsbury will work with Mr. Nydam to arrange a time to hand paint the pieces at the Public Works yard where they are currently stored.

7. Next Meeting – February 13, 2020

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Felix
Senior Administrative Assistant
Administration