Evanston Arts Council Meeting
Tuesday, July 9, 2019, 6:30 p.m.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Room 2402

Members Absent: S. Davis Friedman, L. Corrin, H. Washinushi, W. Jones
Staff Present: P. Martínez, S. Levine

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Declaration of a Quorum
   Meeting called to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. Public Comment
   No public comment.

3. Approve Meeting Minutes from June 11, 2019
   Minutes unanimously approved as amended.

4. Consideration
   A. Community Support Fund Requests
      1. Art Encounter

Lea Pinsky introduced the project led by Art Encounter. She requested $1,000 from the community support fund. Most of the project’s funding is coming from the Evanston Community Foundation, from who she requested $20,000 and received $15,000. The project is at the Family Focus building. Organizations housed in the building approached Art Encounter to create a project that brings all youth together. Juan Carlos Perez will be the teaching artist for the project. Blick Art Materials has also donated materials for the project.

Ms. Adler asked to elaborate a little more on the project. Ms. Pinsky said the artist will be present every day after school from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. to work with the students, 3rd to 8th grade students. There will be two groups throughout the week that the artists will be working with. The estimate is that artist will work with approximately 90 students. The artist will provide assignments and exercises to brainstorm ideas and create a design.
Ms. Adler asked if the final product will be attached to the fence. Ms. Pisnky said yes, in 4’x8’ plywood panels. The intention is to be public, but it will be removable.

Ms. Adler asked about the sale situation of the building, Ms. Pinksy said that because the future of the building is uncertain, the art piece is meant to be semi-permanent.

Ms. Adler asked what is the life expectancy for the panels. Ms Pinsky replied that it is better than having it straight on the wall.

Mr. Sachs commented he wanted to support this project, because it involves the community.

Ms. Riseborough moved to approve. Ms. Adler seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

2. FEDEJAL

Hector García, briefly introduced the project, and explained this is a tour of professional Mexican folk dancers who are traveling throughout the USA and Canada. This is the 8th year in Evanston, one of the original cities. The purpose of the event is to promote Mexican culture. He is requesting $1,000 to cover the audio technician’s salaries. Mr García shared a video with the Arts Council.

Mr. García mentioned the performance is free, all covered by sponsorships.

Ms. Riseborough asked about the location of the event; Mr. García said the Levy Center.

Ms. Johnson asked Mr. García: how can you appeal to a diverse audience besides the mexican community? Mr. García said the audience is diverse; they have a large distribution list. They have multilingual flyers, and partner with local businesses to promote. The City helps promote the event as well.

Ms. Cohen asked if the ensemble was formed by professional dancers. Mr. García said “yes.”

Ms. Adler asked Mr. García if he was from Evanston. Mr. García explained he has lived in Evanston for over 20, and the sponsoring group is a NFP.

Ms. Williams moved to approve. Mr. Deeb seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Funding Request for Repair of Conversations: Here and Now

Ms. Martínez introduced the item, and explained that because the funds allocated for the Paul Barker mural were no longer going to be used for the mural, that there is enough money in the budget to pay for the repair ($9,130).
Ms. Riseborough asked what is the plan to make sure this is a long-lasting repair. Ms. Johnson, original author of the work explained that the vendor will be removing the chair to make sure it is well attached, but further conversations need to take place with the vendor.

Ms. Adler mentioned that the Paul Barker mural was supposed to be paid through the parking fund. Ms. Martínez clarified that that originally, the Arts Council had budgeted for to pay for the Paul Barker mural; even though the funds were later designated to come from the parking fund, the money originally allocated was still in control of the Arts Council.

**Ms. Adler moved to approve funding for the repair of Conversations: Here and Now. Mr. Sachs seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0-1. Ms. Johnson abstained.**

5. Discussion
   
   **A. Chicago Sculpture International Proposal**

   Ms. Janet Austin, President of the Chicago Sculpture International (CSI) briefly presented her proposal and stated that the Evanston Arts Council would be able to choose the sculptures. CSI would provide installers, but cranes would have to be provided by the City.

   CSI coordinates the installation dates, and they usually recommend summer dates.

   The proposal states that each piece would have a two-year lease – $2,000 the first year and $500 the second year. However, the stipend would be deducted if the City decides to buy the Sculpture.

   Ms. Austin explained that the artists are responsible for the damage to the sculpture, but the City must carry insurance for liability on City property, i.e. if the sculpture fell on someone, the City would be liable.

   Call for artists is managed through CaFÉ, an online platform. Proposals are received from all over the country. If the proposal is accepted, the artists have to become members of CSI. Membership is $85 per year.

   Ms. Riseborough said she thought this was a fabulous proposal.

   Ms. Adler asked if plaques were included. Ms. Austin indicated that plaques were not included, but her team can look into it. Another CSI member suggested looking into the Otocast app.

   Ms. Adler said the Arts Council will consider CSI’s proposal in the next year’s budget.
B. Robert Crown Community Center Artist Blessing Hancock

Ms. Adler introduced Ms. Blessing Hancock, and stated that Ms. Riseborough, Ms. Johnson, and she had a chance to meet with Ms. Hancock prior to the Arts Council meeting.

Ms. Hancock introduced herself and mentioned she has a background in sculpture and landscape architecture. She has worked in public art in the last 12 years, mainly in the US and some international work. Ms. Hancock specializes in inner activity: electronic touch sensitive, interactive, social engagement. She likes pieces to be popular. She also specializes in community engagement: workshops, teachings, hands-on, etc. Her work is physical, so even if the piece is not intended to be physical, the design is conducive to be physical friendly.

Ms. Hancock showed her portfolio. She mentioned she uses a lot of text in her work as a way to engage the community. Ms. Hancock works with a lot of young poets, and she can also work with pictorial patterns instead of words.

Ms. Adler said Ms.Riseborough, Ms. Johnson and she met with Ms. Hancock, and they will work with her throughout the project. The group did not come up with anything conclusive, just words to guide her. They advised that “interactive” was a key component of this project. The original ovals proposed did not spark the imagination like her other work. Ms. Hancock agreed to come up with other concepts, but stated she needed direction.

Ms. Cohen asked if she was just looking for just words. Ms. Cohen also expressed that she would like to see something that flows.

Ms. Riseborough asked if the fish bellies were connected pieces. Ms. Hancock replied “no.” The fish bellies are separate pieces about 30 feet apart.

Ms. Cohen asked what color do the fish bellies look during the day. Ms. Hancock said white.

Ms. Adler asked if the piece will last 20 years and look as good as the first year. Ms. Hancock said “yes, it will last 20 years, but it will need maintenance; surfaces can generally be sanded for maintenance.

Mr. Deeb asked what is the scale of the proposal. Ms. Hancock advised 15’x12’.

Mr. Sachs stated he is looking to Blessing for her guidance in terms of scale, and “what gets us the most for the buck.”

Ms. Williams asked if there a is design concept that would engage the building? Mr. Deeb suggested that the piece doesn’t have to be attached to the building,
but just give the impression that it could be attached. Part of the impossible task
is to add the detail that the architectural design is missing from the building.

Ms. Adler said the piece will need a maintenance budget, but that low
maintenance is key as part of the design.

Ms. Adler asked the group if there are any other words they wanted to shares
with Ms. Hancock. Ms. Riseborough said “big.” Ms. Hancock asked if she meant
big as a single piece. Ms. Adler said “no,” but big impact; something that won’t be
dwarfed by the building.

Ms. Johnson suggested exploring the possibility to do something that is
reflective; that is interactive.

Ms. Cohen said she was less interested in text

Dr. Ahmad suggested that if there are three (3) pieces the concept of words,
sports, and another category could be incorporated into each piece.

Ms. Williams asked about the site placement. She wondered if maybe the trees
and other vegetation could be incorporated as part of the design.

Mr. Sachs indicated that the word that came to his mind was “inviting”

Dr. Ahmad suggested projecting the piece on the wall at night.

Ms. Adler said the concept of a lighthouse is a symbol in Evanston, not
suggesting to build a lighthouse, but to keep it in mind

Ms. Riseborough asked about the placement of the trees. Ms. Levine said she
could not remember off the top of her head.

Ms. Adler said that what they are looking for is “a welcoming beacon of light and
that is a bang for the buck.”

Ms. Cohen said she would like to see something more organic, because the
building is very geometrical. Ms. Hancock said her work is very organic, so she
feels comfortable with the feedback

Ms. Hancock agreed to present her concept at the September 10 Arts Council
meeting. The group will help assemble a group of students.

Ms. Williams asked the artists to look at warm colors to contrast the building. Ms.
Hancock said she will look into it, but her concern is that warm colors fade fast.
C. Community Support Fund Guidelines

Ms. Martínez briefly presented the draft guidelines for the Community Support Fund. The group suggested adding that whoever receives funding acknowledges the arts council support.

Mr. Deeb asked “what happens when you get it?” referring to the funding. He wanted to know what the responsibilities are prior to receiving the funds. He suggested incorporating that in the application itself.

Mr. Sachs referred to page 3 point 1a., and expressed it was the Arts Council’s members job to define artistic merit. He suggested to get rid of that. Page 49 it states “4 consecutive years,” but it says 3 consecutive years in other parts of the document, so keep it consistent.

Ms. Johnson said defining artistic merit is much more professional. Ms. Adler added that it can mean that work needs to be done in a workmanlike (professional) manner.

Ms. Johnson said that the question: “has the applicant thoughtfully answered the questions about inclusion and equity” doesn’t go far enough. The solution would be a point system.

Mr. Sachs suggested rewording to “explain how this furthers the agenda of the City and the Arts Council to promote diversity and inclusion?”

Ms. Adler said this grant should be easier, and more accessible. Ms. Johnson replied that it is not about being more demanding, but raising awareness.

Mr. Martínez explained that the draft guidelines and the application were based off the comments from the Arts Council members, and the need for a formal process that levels the playing field for all applicants, and gives the application uniformity to give a fair shot to everyone.

Mr. Deeb said the proposals that were presented at the meeting were all very solid proposals, but very different.

Ms. Adler suggested adding what ward they (applicants) are in and what ward they would be serving.

Ms. Cohen suggested hosting workshops to help applicants go through the application.

Mr. Sachs said he wanted the proposals to express how each project is important to the Arts Council.

Ms. Williams said to not “dumb down” the application process. Maybe there is an opportunity to create a tutorial video, or allow a draft submission.
Mr. Deeb suggested adding successful example online.

Ms. Cohen indicated that the group should be very clear about what they are looking for as a group.

The Arts Council members will send Ms. Martínez their top three priorities.

6. Communications
   A. Chairs Report
   B. Public Art Subcommittee Report

Ms. Riseborough reported that the public art inventory is complete. Ms. Riseborough would like to work with Mrs. Cohen to rewrite the text for the interactive map on the City website and is eager to work with the IT staff on it. She added that Chicago Public Art Group is working on the concept for the Noyes Street station project. Lastly, she said she is still working with Robert Smart for a proposal to repair Fire Station #5.

C. Working Groups Report

Mr. Sachs reported that he has been working with the Evanston Community Foundation (ECF). He has had discussions about working together on equity in the arts. Mr. Sachs and Ms. Williams will meet with Ms. Martínez and Deputy City Manager, Kimberly Richardson, and the ECF.

Art lunch

D. Staff Report

Mr. James Deeb is the new member of the Arts Council. He said he was a painter and printmaker. Mr. Deeb has lived in Evanston for 13 years.

Ms. Martínez reported Ms. Susan Davis Friedman had decided to not renew her term to the Arts Council.

7. Announcements

Ms. Johnson announced that she is curating a show called “Truth as a Contested Subject.”

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.