



100 Parkers Mill • Oswego, IL. 60543 • (630) 554-3618 •
Website: <http://www.oswego.il.gov>

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2020
MEETING OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION
VILLAGE OF OSWEGO
MEETING MINUTES

ROLL CALL

Attended, in person: Jennifer Putzier, Karen Kulzer, Jenette Sturges, Christina Burns

Attended, remotely: Tamzin Ritchie, Kristie Vest

Absent: Anthony Pastore

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM

Opened and closed at 6:06 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Jenette presented written copies of the March 11, 2020, minutes for approval. Motion to approve by Jennifer, seconded by Karen. The minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Public Art Plan

- a. Jenette said that the challenge with the public art plan is its long time horizon and the limited funding opportunities, but that this is still a priority. The most pressing piece of this plan is developing a selection process. Jenette proposed that the commission's next task is developing processes for both publicly funded pieces and public-private funded pieces.
- b. Tamzin said that the sections of the public art process discussed at the previous meeting on spaces and funding are locked in a quarantined office. She said that, more importantly, the funding landscape has changed significantly given the pandemic and economic fallout.
- c. Jenette said she could pull any notes from previous discussions, and the commission could start the funding conversation over.
- d. Karen said that business owners are currently challenged with planning ahead because there's no precedent. This is a great opportunity to be inventive in funding and projects because the art world has been devastated by the pandemic.
- e. Kristie said that these conditions make the purpose of the commission even more important.
- f. Jennifer asked if the manhole cover RFP was the basic framework for process. Jenette said yes, the goal is fleshing out that process and a public-private process.
- g. Tamzin asked about what happened to the input for the Dairy Barn mural and the Shodeen art pieces. Jenette said that the Commission's input has been relayed to the



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developers, but that the public art elements of those projects are currently at a standstill.

- h. Karen asked if there has been any discussion about requiring an allocation for public art for new developments. Jenette said that Oswego has typically approached public art as a carrot rather than a stick, but that a proposal similar to a 1% program could be proposed to the board as a part of the public art plan. Karen said the current strategy of suggesting art isn't working and isn't going to make art happen. A requirement could be a super small amount, but it should be something.
- i. Kristie asked if there's still a Cultural Arts budget. Jenette said the \$2,000 is still allotted each year and the fiscal year began in May, so it's all still there. Kristie suggested using that money to fund a public art project this year to kickstart a program.
- j. Karen added that if it's not spent, it goes away, so it would be good to spend.
- k. Tamzin said that \$2,000 is not enough to pay for the materials to create a scaled piece of public art and also pay the artist a respectable amount. Karen suggested reaching out to other community partners to donate materials.
- l. Kristie suggested putting together a commitment for installing a project this year using the \$2,000 budget.
- m. Tamzin suggested using the money for an artist residency, since there are no exhibitions or galleries open now.
- n. Tamzin suggested that we choose a project on a piece of the Village's public property, using some of the ideas that have already been generated.
- o. Kristie asked what kind of support the commission would get with this plan.
- p. Christina said that sponsorship is something that has to be done in context, since businesses are struggling at the moment. It is possible to get the support to spend \$2,000, but it's unclear what could be done going beyond that.
- q. Jenette suggested that proposing a specific project, such as a mural in a specific space, might be helpful in getting support.
- r. Tamzin suggested something on the public spaces within Block 11. Jenette said the other publicly owned spaces in downtown include Village Hall, the Police Department, and Public Works, and the parking lot across from the Tap House. Jenette said she would get photos and dimensions for available spaces.
- s. Christina said it would be possible to get locations and discuss funding. She added that revenue delays to the Village are three months behind, so we don't have a clear picture of revenues, but we'll start to have a better picture by the August meeting.
- t. Jennifer asked about how the idea of a specific project and a bigger Public Art Plan coordinate. Jenette said that a smaller project could inform the plan. The risk with doing a project before the plan is finished is accidentally putting something in that doesn't fit within the overarching plan. The risk with doing the plan first before adding any art is that the plan drags on a long time and we miss opportunities and momentum to get started. She said it's possible, and maybe ideal, to do both at once.
- u. Tamzin asked Kristie how the park district seizes opportunities in the middle of plans. Kristie said that everything they undertake must fall under that one-sentence objective. Jenette suggested a single-sentence statement in the Public Art Plan. Tamzin suggested



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that a single sentence should be a homework assignment that we could discuss and solidify at the next meeting.

- v. Jenette said she would confer with staff about the possibility of installing something with the funds already allocated to the Commission, will get blueprints and/or pictures of identified spaces, and follow up with the Commission during the month by email. She suggested that having a vision articulated for a specific kind of piece in a specific space might garner more support.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Art at the Amphitheater
 - a. Jenette said that a piece installed at the amphitheater site would likely get some support from staff and elected officials. Staff has discussed possibilities for sponsorships and naming rights of various elements of the space, which could be an art opportunity.
 - b. Karen asked whether we should start with asking the committee if they're interested in exploring a public art piece in the space, and if they say yes, inquiring about available funds. Based on that information, the Commission could pitch a concept.
 - c. Jenette described the phased implementation of the project, including budget constraints and grants. We will have a clearer picture on the funding and construction schedule by the next Cultural Arts meeting.
 - d. Jennifer suggested that we could get more bang for our buck by building something into the plantings, which has been a desire from the aesthetic conversation, and helps expand the budget for a project. Jenette clarified that a landscaping element, since it would be in a later phase, might take a long time to realize.
 - e. Jenette confirmed that the way forward is to approach the amphitheater committee and see if they are interested, and then ask about spaces and suggest broad concepts, like tying the art to the landscaping.
 - f. Kristie added that the maturity of built projects should be considered. While the amphitheater may be a ways off, Block 11 already has traffic. She would like to pursue both projects.
 - g. Jenette suggested that, in terms of funding, both projects might be possible if we put the Commission's funds to a downtown piece, and somehow worked art into the budget of existing elements of the amphitheater.
 - h. Tamzin suggested a light sculpture. Jenette added the idea of a sculpture kids could climb on.
 - i. Jenette will approach the amphitheater committee to gauge interest.
2. Fall special events
 - a. Jenette said there is no support for in-person indoor special events from staff, given the pandemic.
 - b. Karen asked if that means postponing.
 - c. Jenette said that was one option. She suggested the possibility of doing an online event.
 - d. Tamzin suggested a community read.
 - e. Jenette said this is an opportunity to rethink the festival in a way that meets the goal of introducing the community to the literary arts and promoting local authors in a way that



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may be more effective and longer lasting than a single-day event. She suggested hosting readings on the Village's social media channels.

- f. Tamzin suggested a drive-in concept with authors reading from their books, maybe as intro film shorts to a full-length feature film. Jenette suggested that timing might be a challenge, because it would have to get pulled together prior to the end of the summer, which could put pressure on staff time.
- g. Jenette added that the Library is not interested in partnering this year to produce the Lit Fest. A commissioner will need to be in charge of coordinating all the authors. Tamzin said she would be the point of contact with them. Jenette said she would have Julie coordinate between the Library and Tamzin for the contact list.
- h. Jennifer suggested that if we do the drive-in to add a component in which attendees could text in lines to build poetry at the event. For a fully virtual event, she suggested making it a month long and releasing author videos at the rate of a couple a week, and directing people to buy books. It limits the number of authors we would need to corral.
- i. Karen suggested building an online shopping site for the local authors. Jenette suggested we could use OswegoLitFest.com, redesign it a bit to link to Amazon. Kristie suggested making us an Amazon Smile organization. Jenette suggested setting up Amazon affiliate marketing. Jennifer asked whether that would be allowed as a government entity. Christina said it could be investigated from a policy perspective.
- j. Jenette suggested that developing the online presence could benefit the in person event by keeping the festival top of mind throughout the year.
- k. Kristie asked whether it was likely that big name authors might be more cost effective to book in an online model. She said she would reach out to a contact at Sourcebooks to inquire.
- l. Jenette also suggested a Zoom happy hour for the authors' mixer.
- m. Consensus for a virtual event that coincides with the end of September. Whether it goes a week or a month will depend on author response.
- n. Jen asked if this would be funded by the Commission's funds. Karen suggested exploring how much it would cost first.
- o. Tamzin asked for more specifics on what to tell and ask the authors. Jennifer suggested telling them the timeframe will depend on author response. Kristie suggested emphasizing National Literacy Month in September. The Commission suggested asking for videos of 5-10 minutes.

STAFF REPORTS

1. None

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

1. None.

NEXT MEETING: August 12, 2020

ADJOURNMENT 7:40 p.m.



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