



**Public Arts Commission
North Adams, Massachusetts**

Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2018

The North Adams Public Arts Commission held a public meeting on February 26, 2018 at the Eclipse Mill Gallery at the Eclipse Mill Artist Lofts, 243 Union Street #102, North Adams.

Members Present: Eric Kerns, Vice Chairperson
 Erica Manville, Secretary
 William C. Blackmer, Jr.
 Cynthia Quinones

Absent: Julia Dixon, Chairperson
 Gail Kolis Sellers

Also Present: Benjamin Lamb
 Tammy Daniels

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairperson Kerns called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Kerns moved to change the January 10, 2018 minutes to reflect a change: Kerns just wanted to use a different email than the city provider, not that he didn't want to have email.

PROPOSAL: EAGLE STREET INITIATIVE

Benjamin Lamb gave a presentation about the Namazing Eagle Street Initiative (NESI) which was founded five years ago out of an attempt to organize a city-wide lip dub. Because of Eagle Street and its energy they raise the street up to be better, they meet twice a month. Patronicity is a third party provider that enabled NESI to raise money via crowdfunding.

Lamb showed the slide show overview. Social spaces, recycling, trash, parklet, pedestrian facing business signs, gateway signs, want to make a brick street between where Desperados is into a place that is inviting as a corridor, and the current pocket park from 2010, plantings were permanent and the rest was a bit temporary so they want to make it a programmable location. The brickly and the pocket

park are city owned property. Lamb also outlined the parking and where the dumpsters are. Timeline is that they must use money for funding by November 4, 2018.

Kerns and Blackmer mentioned Vincent Melito's concerns about the older murals on the building. Lamb understands those concerns and the plan is to conserve the murals.

Lamb mentioned plantable pavers to help the firetruck access but green the space later behind the building. Every business would get a bracket and a sign, or a Historic Eagle Street logo, same font and colors for the new pedestrian facing storefront North Adams signs, brackets will also have an eagle, use local purveyors for the signage, as well as gateway signs, 13 feet tall, eye hooks for banners to engage in events, stainless steel and metal cutouts, solar power uplighting, there are two lampposts coming down this year and will be re-used for this project. Kerns asked about wind tunnel effect hurting the sign, and if the banner was engineered to make sure it would work? Lamb said no, but he wasn't concerned, it would just be a floppy banner. Lamb had planned to do more on the other side of the street, near the end of the flatiron building. There is an old concrete post, and Anna Farrington will try to mimic the MASS MoCA parking lot square post to read "Historic Eagle Street." Lamb explained that NESI and an art club at Drury High School can take the fireboxes the city doesn't use any more to take them down from Meranti and the students will be designing the works to be installed. NESI will sponsor the paint to help with those art installation. NESI will also install better trash and recycling cans to make the street cleaner as well as a bench in the brick way and one near the church. The benches will not impede traffic.

The parklet will be installed in front of the pocket park, create a large enough space to make it programmable, pop up art exhibits, open mic nights, already working with Roots Teen Center and Common Folk to put some programs in this summer, one Sunday brunch even per month over the summer as well , B&B Micro Manufacturing might help design it. It is 38 feet long, 8 feet deep, it becomes part of the sidewalk and comes out in the winter, solar powered cafe lights, made out of siding. Kerns made a suggestion to put up concrete barriers. Lamb said the city recommended not to do that. It would be just like a car parked there in that spot.

MCLA students have a new app that shows the historic buildings which will align with our unveiling of the initiative.

Lamb explained that there is a \$60,000 budget. Will take the trees out to remove shade and nuisance of berries, change the plantings, and add bee hotels and bird houses. The base is currently wood chips and we can use cobblestones from the heritage state park renovations.

Lamb then described a zoetrope sculpture project already approved by NESI to be added to the pocket park, shows motion called North Adams in motion which is able to be engaged with by people, there are images themed for North Adams in the Zoetrope.

A mural called The Heart of Eagle, an image of the multi colored eagle with a North Adams background, 12 foot wide by 6 foot tall bird, this would be cut out and color by number out and sourced by the day of service to be crowd painted. Will be facing public property but actually on private property, Kerns mentions there are a lot of literal eagles in this imagery, is this what we are going for? We could save money by maybe not putting them on the brackets to save money. Lamb responds by saying yes, we may decide not to use the birds on everything, we still need to get the quotes on the fabrication. Lamb mentioned the light art project named Solis : a pair of artists out of NYC, recent grads and they are submitting a project that was approved by his Eagle street initiative.

Vice Chairperson Kerns called for a vote to approve the plans with the condition that the images inside the zoetrope are shared with and approved by the Commission. Manville made a motion to approve the plan with conditions. Quinones seconded. All voted in favor. None opposed.

PROPOSAL: ANNAMARIA SEBASTINO: CREATING MAGIC TREES IN THE BERKSHIRES

Quinones inquired about the duration of the installed work and Kerns inquired about the timeline of the installation. The images provided in the proposal do not illustrate the work installed on the property requested. Commissioners were also concerned about already existing flowers and trees as well as garden clubs that volunteer their time to maintain the Main Street median.

With no one present to answer questions about the proposal, the Commissioners agreed to call a special meeting with the proposal submitter and to postpone further discussion and voting.

NEW BUSINESS: CROSSWALK UPDATE

The following notes provided by Dixon were read by Kerns:

Julia had another follow up meeting with Griffin Labbanca, Mike Canales, and city planner Larisa Bernstein on February 5 at city hall to talk about Griffin's desire to paint the crosswalks on Montana Street instead of the street itself. Mike explained that federal laws and regulations have always determined that crosswalks are not to be decorative, but the Alcombright administration allowed Art About Town to paint the crosswalks nonetheless - ultimately, from what Julia understands, it's up to the administration of any given town to make the final decision about the alteration of what are called "uniform traffic control devices" and the administration is equally liable for any damages that may be caused by confusion or misinterpretation of altered traffic control devices including crosswalks. Mike also said he made a recommendation to Mayor Bernard that the crosswalks not be painted anymore, to which the mayor agreed.

The group continued to discuss the vagueness of the uniform traffic control device manual, in particular something called "intersection murals" that do not fall under these regulations. Mike said he personally would not advise the mayor to allow such paintings on any street, although a work of this kind would be *possible* to produce *given approval* by the mayor and public safety.

Property that is not subject to the uniform traffic control device code include sidewalks, parking meters, utility boxes, trash cans, benches, bike racks, dumpsters, and other objects near a road.

CULTURAL DISTRICT UPDATE

The following notes provided by Dixon were read by Kerns:

The cultural district core group held their last meeting on January 31. The group split into two subcommittees that will be tackling the creation of print materials (including rack cards, a brochure, and a map) and digital materials (including a cultural district web page, map, and event submission form). Julia volunteered to be a part of the print subcommittee, which to her knowledge has not met yet. If you would like to help let Julia know.

MAYOR BERNARD MEETING UPDATE

Manville gave a brief synopsis of meeting with Mayor Bernard to give updates about the make-up of the commission since members Manville will be departing and member Nancy Ziter had already left. Since Manville's commission term was up in a month anyway, it was less of a time crunch, but Bernard is aware and interested in any recommendations to be sent his way from the commission to help fill those seats. He is aware of the language of our ordinance and that we have requested a modest budget.

PUBLIC ATTENDEES CONCERNS

None presented.

MEMBER CONCERNS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

From Chairperson Dixon: During her meeting with Mike Canales, he let Julia know that two mural projects were being discussed at the armory and the ice rink - both buildings are city property. She will try and stay abreast of any concrete plans that administrators of either building are making.

Also, upon her inquiry, Mike let Julia know that the city is looking to repair the retaining wall along the Route 2 west ramp to Main Street in a few years. It might make an excellent location for public art at that time (but not now).

Future agenda items will include Annamaria Sebastino's proposal review.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Public Arts Commission will be determined by email, with a preference for March 12, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to discuss, Manville moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:49p.m. Blackmer seconded. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica Manville, Secretary