



**Public Arts Commission  
North Adams, Massachusetts**

Meeting Minutes

October 22, 2018

The North Adams Public Arts Commission held a public meeting on October 22, 2018 at the North Adams Public Library, 74 Church Street, North Adams.

Members Present:     Julia Dixon, Chairperson  
                              Eric Kerns, Vice Chairperson  
                              William Blackmer, Secretary  
                              Cynthia Quiñones  
                              Bryan Sapienza  
                              Sarah Sutro

Absent:                 Derek Parker

Also Present:         Roger Eurbin

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dixon called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Discussion of last draft meeting minutes and revision. Approval postponed until next meeting for commissioners to review and amend as needed.

ORDINANCE REVISION UPDATE/REVIEW OF GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Dickson provided a quick review to date of the Public Arts Commission ordinance and proposed ordinance amendment by Mayor Bernard, that was first made known via email to Dixon on August 8<sup>th</sup>. He then presented those changes to the city council on August 14<sup>th</sup>. Under the current ordinance, the Public Arts Commission (PAC) has authority to approve projects and proposals presented to the commission, as well as contracting authority. Mayor Bernard's revised ordinance gives approval and contracting authority to the mayor's office, making the PAC an advisory commission. The city council sent the mayor's proposal to the General Government Committee. Since our last meeting, that committee has met on Sept 10<sup>th</sup>, Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Oct 15<sup>th</sup>, though timely notice for PAC attendance was

lacking. Councilors Buddington and LaForest also made additional proposals for language changes to the PAC ordinance once it was sent to committee, and those versions are also being looked at during this process.

Sapienza advised the mayor has made the case that he is the contracting authority as mayor, not generally the committees and commissions. And where there is that authority outside the mayor's office, there is a dollar limit.

Dixon advised that the city's charter says the mayor must sign contracts "involving sums of two-thousand dollars or more." What that language intends when it says "involving" brings up questions as to whether the two-thousand dollars relates to the worth of the work of art, or was that paid for the work of art? And the PAC does not have a budget to buy, commission, or maintain art. Which for the most part has left the PAC dealing with commissioning organizations, such as Mass College of Liberal Arts' Berkshire Cultural Resource Center, the city's school system, and the Hoosic River Revival Coalition.

Quiñones advised that it has to be that way, since we do not have a budget.

Some discussion of the language in the two proposals of the city councilors, and the language suggesting that the arts application would go to the city clerk, as opposed to how we currently handle the application process and assist the applicant in the process.

Sutro advised it seems that the mayor wants to take the legal liability that could arise from a mural or some other project.

Dixon advised that a PAC commissioner signing a contract would be signing on behalf of the city and would still be covered by the city's law firm. So, not personally liable.

Sutro advised that another big issue is the whole thing regarding the pillar art, and possibly the mayor wanting to avoid that kind of situation in the future by having one person at the top approving the contract.

Dixon advised that the difference between the current ordinance, and the possible changes to it, are that we currently could enter in a contract with artists regarding the pillars or other matters because we have contracting authority.

Quiñones felt strongly that the contracting authority should remain with the PAC, since we are a public body and representing the public's wishes.

Sapienza advised that after attending the Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the General Government Committee, it seems that they want to pull some of the power outlined in the ordinance revision back to the PAC, and leave the contracting authority signature to the mayor, but bring in the veto power from one of the councilor's revisions, and add in a time limit on how long the PAC has before reviewing a proposal.

Dickson recommended all PAC members attend the city council meeting tomorrow, Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### PUBLIC FORUM SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Sapienza, Chair of the Public Forum Subcommittee regarding the pillar art on Marshall St, provided a handout outlining the format for how the forum should be conducted, and open forum ground rules. Kerns advised that care should be taken regarding a history of the art there, as there are different versions of the history, and we need to present an impartial history. We would present a time line review.

Sutro asked what the goal is in having the forum. How would we resolve this?

Quiñones advised that the pillar art situation has been a really damaging event for our community and really unfortunate. A wound that will not heal. And a wound that has not gotten better with the passing

of time. The forum would give people a chance to say what they want to say to the people that need to hear it.

Kerns does not disagree with that, but notes that people have had many opportunities to come and voice their opinions, and it hasn't been for a lack of opportunity that they have not done so. So, was it a big damaging thing? It has also allowed some people to grind axes against Mass MoCA in an unproductive way. A review of some of the social media comments about the pillar art issue had comments that quickly devolved into off-topic arguments and claims.

Dixon stated that the pillar paintings were the only public art pieces that the city had that reflected the history and identity of this city, and that is why people are upset. It means a lot of different things to a lot of different people, and the PAC should be in front of a forum if convened.

Sutro questioned who would mediate such a forum. Dixon advised that she met with the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Executive Director, as they convene monthly forums, and discussed ideas for the format and conducting of such a forum. Examples given.

The Public Forum Subcommittee is comprised of Sapienza, Dixon, and Quiñones. Dixon suggested tabling a meeting of the subcommittee until the next PAC meeting and see what is happening with the PAC ordinance revision at the city council tomorrow.

#### MONTHLY MEETING DATE DISCUSSION

Mondays in general have been working for commissioner's schedules and achieving a quorum. Dixon made a motion to schedule meetings of the PAC for the third Monday of each month. Sapienza seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

The next meeting is Monday, November 19, 2018.

#### PUBLIC ATTENDEE CONCERNS

Roger Eurbin, who has been conducting restoration at Hillside Cemetery, provided a request to the PAC to help with design of a memorial for veterans from wars that were not included in the current memorial in North Adams. Mr. Eurbin advised he will pay one-hundred dollars to the design accepted by the cemetery commission. Dixon to scan the proposal and send to each commissioner. Some preliminary thoughts provided on groups to assist with raising additional funds and to facilitate the work. Further discussion will arrive at suggestions to Mr. Eurbin.

#### MEMBER CONCERNS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

#### ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to discuss, Sapienza moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. Kerns seconded. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

William Blackmer, Secretary

## Proposed Public Forum - Pillar Art (Marshall Street)

Introductions - by the Commissioner in Charge of the Forum.

Introduction of Public Art Commissioners Present

Introduction of Guests (if any present)

History of the Pillar Art - Presented by a member of the Public Arts Commission

Graphic Presentation - Time line of the history of the Pillar Artwork

Guest Speakers - If any present.

Open Forum - Members of the public present at the forum.

All members of the public present are welcome to speak about the pillar art.

Open Forum Ground Rules:

1. A member of the Public Arts Commission will chair the open forum discussion.
2. Members of the public will be allowed two minutes to state their views.
3. The open forum should be concluded at approximately 45-60 minutes.
4. Members of the public are asked to respect the right of others to speak their views.

Final Statements by the members of the Public Arts Commission and their guests.

Final statements by any invited guests present at the forum.

Adjournment of the Forum by the Public Arts Commissioner in charge of the forum.

ROGER EUBIN  
398-8067

## Veterans Memorial

Request: Designs for a memorial which will list approximately 300-400 names of our veterans of:

1. Pre-Revolution
2. Revolutionary War
3. War of 1812
4. The Civil War
5. The Spanish American War

### Requirements

- A. LOCATION: A space facing the current wall located on the area of Church St. and Eagle St. (see map).
- B. A height not to exceed 5 feet.
- C. Cost is A factor which precludes using bronze name plaques.
- D. Designs not to overwhelm the current memorial.
- E. Designs and description to be submitted by Feb. 15, 2019.
- F. Final design to be selected by the Arts commission, the mayor and myself.
- G. I will award the final design and artist \$100.00
- H. Any and all changes to the design will be at the discretion of the selection group.



The designs will be submitted to the Arts Commission and all submissions will be provided to the afore mentioned group listed in item (F) with any recommendations from the commission.

Thank You,

Ryan J. Curbie

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2 possible locations

