

## Minutes

City of Kentwood

Arts Commission

January 30, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm.

1. Roll Call:

Members Present: Wendy BooydeGraaff, Jerry DeMaagd, Terry Schweitzer, and Maurice Groce

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Mayor Kepley, Kiosha Jeltema, Kent District Library Regional Manager, Val Romeo, Director of Parks & Recreation, Spencer McKellar, Deputy Director of Parks & Recreation

Schweitzer noted that Kiosha Jeltema offered to host the meeting at the Library and, in response to Schweitzer's offer, she has expressed an interest in working with the Arts Commission.

2. The Minutes for the meeting dated June 28, 2022, will be considered at the next meeting.

3. The Genesis of the Arts Commission

Schweitzer gave an overview of why the commission was formed and generally what's been worked on in the past. The predecessor was a group called the Kentwood Arts Advisory Committee whose charge was to discuss issues, foster collaboration on projects, and brainstorm ideas to encourage greater community involvement in the arts. Subsequently, in 2017, a hotel painted a large mural on the side of their building at the intersection of 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadmoor. The sheer size of the mural and the distraction it represented to motorists at this very high traffic intersection triggered the desire for a process and a set of policies to evaluate such highly visible art venues considering public safety, contemporary community standards, and commercial messaging.

4. Woodland Mall Sculpture Donation-Tri-Elements

The group discussed the sculpture donated by Woodland Mall to the city in 2019 and the process it went through prior to coming into the City's possession. The City Commission gave the Arts Commission the assignment to recommend the placement location and installation method. The knoll

in front of the library had been discussed as a prime location and there have also been suggestions to consider Covenant Park or the library courtyard, but no decisions were made. Regarding the installation method, the original artist had been contacted and he confirmed that it was feasible to retrofit the sculpture with LED lights. Schweitzer confirmed with the DPW Director that we still have the sculpture in storage, and it is in good condition.

DeMaagd noted that there is still an issue with the funding for the retrofit and installation of the artwork. It was noted that the Kentwood Foundation could serve as the qualified non-profit organization to accept donations toward the retrofit/installation project.

5. Draft Arts Commission Purpose Statement

Just prior to COVID, the Arts Commission was discussing their desire to formulate a wider long-range vision for the Arts Commission based on the value of art in the community that transcends the focus on the piece of art donated to the city. BooydeGraaff had introduced a draft purpose statement she had volunteered to put together drawing, in part, upon the tenets associated with the former Kentwood Arts Advisory Committee.

6. Paul Collins Art Display

Mayor Kepley stated that the Arts Commission plays an important role in the community in terms of evaluating Art Venues on private property and evaluating donations as well as a resource to evaluate the purchase of art for display on city properties and within city buildings. For that reason Mayor Kepley recently asked the Arts Commission to review a Paul Collins portrait exhibit entitled “Road Towards Equality” scheduled from January 10-26 for display in Kentwood Richard L. Root branch of the Kent District Library. Mr. Collins is a local artist of great renown. Given the timetable, Schweitzer authorized the display as a prospective pilot for similar displays by other artists within the community.

Jeltema indicated that community reaction to the display while hanging in the library on the wall just behind the information center seemed favorable. Discussion ensued concerning other alternate or additional display venues: on a library wall within the children’s area, the library interior entrance wall, or the existing down-lit wall within the large first floor conference room in City Hall.

It was suggested that a donor be sought out to purchase the portrait and give it to the city for permanent display in the library or other city facility.

7. Community Center Update and Process to Name the New and Existing Buildings

Mayor Kepley updated the group on the progress of designing the new community center on Walma Avenue, north of the Fire Station #1 and west of the Justice Center. He invited the Art Commission to offer input on how and what to name the new building. Parks & Recreation Director Val Romeo noted that people call the current Kentwood Activities Center a few different names and she explained the importance to reinforce a consistent naming of the new building as well as the existing facility at 355 48<sup>th</sup> Street in our upcoming communications.

The Art and process of how Art was purchased for the library was talked about and a similar process was desired for the new building. Discussion ensued concerning the need to place art, whether paintings or sculptures, in and around the new building. The group urged that artistic input be provided early in the design phase of the project. Currently under consideration is a classroom for Art and potentially a small gallery area to showcase art created there and by local artists. The Woodland Mall sculpture was also discussed as an option for display in front of or in the lobby of the new building and, given the remote location of some of the planned parking area, consideration was suggested to place art or interest stops along the trailway to the building. Romeo noted that the City Commission recently authorized working with a professional fundraising consulting service to assist in the financing of the Parks & Recreation capital projects. Local foundations may also be a resource to finance art purchases. Regarding the naming of the new and existing buildings, it was suggested to solicit donor input/naming rights or solicit suggestions from the community at large and allow the community to name the top 5 as vetted by representatives from the community. The final decision could be made by the City Commission.

8. Feeding America Art Venue Request

Feeding America, located at 3070 Shaffer Avenue SE in Kentwood, wishes to paint large wheat stalks on the side of their building in addition to their freestanding and wall signs. The request was submitted a few days in

advance of this meeting. The details of the plan/request will be reviewed at a subsequent Arts Commission meeting.

9. The Meeting adjourned at 6:30pm

Submitted by Arts Commission Secretary Terry Schweitzer