

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES COMMISSION

Minutes for March

Aspen Room

2nd Floor, Aurora Municipal Center

15151 E. Alameda Parkway

Wednesday, March 1, 2023, 6:00 pm | 3 Hours | (UTC-06:00) Mountain Time (US & Canada)

I. Call to order.

- 6:03pm
- Present - Vanessa Frazier (via zoom), Margaret Norwood, Brittany Pirtle (Chair), Ana Valles, Amy Cheslin, Mary Mollicone, Jill Stilwell (consultant), and Kendall Peterson (consultant) Not Present – Nick Engen, Shana Thompson

II. What makes Aurora unique? Discussion around what makes Aurora different and unique from other neighboring cities. Themes included:

Diversity/People

- The city is diverse in every way: Population, languages, ages, people, artwork, etc.
- The community is doing some healing around social justice and we are at a fork in the road which leads to opportunity.
- People are passionate and outspoken.
- Friendly, small-town feel.
- Population is diverse and the diversity is dispersed throughout the city
- Family friendly
- How do we unify the diverse and dispersed population?
- Need to create some sense of unity/community cohesion.

Growth

- City is really looking at land use, planning and its growth for the future.
- Big city with small town feel
- Young city: it is only half built out.
- With growth comes opportunities
- There is a sense that it is SE Aurora vs the rest – this is shifting. People worry about disinvestment in the areas leading to “have” vs “have not” situation.
- Aurora is a leader in water conservation; Aurora Water will be a leader that other communities look to.
- Some areas are still very rural.

Location

- Widespread city – sprawled out.

- Close to the airport
- Beautiful views – both to the west and the east/plains
- Geographically diverse: they have everything, plains, forest, views (Plains Conservation Center)
- No typical downtown, the center has shifted and changed over the years. Old Aurora along Colfax is the original downtown area, now there are different centers of activity.
- The city places lots of value on its parks, recreation, open space, and wildlife
- People use the parks a lot; they are clean and safe for the most part.

Arts and Culture

- There is a lot of art and culture and theatre and restaurant activity in Aurora (Vietnamese Restaurant Tous les Jours)
- They have a newly certified Arts District!

Businesses

- There are many business hubs (sectors) here: Healthcare, Military, Education, Medical, Aerospace, Amazon, Brew Pubs. They are active and involved in the community.
- There are some businesses sponsoring the city and programs: Schomp Auto sales.
- Active Chamber of Commerce

Problems

- Reputation for crime, which is not true.
- Infamous for the Aurora Theatre shooting
- Three counties, and five school districts
- City is addressing social issues, policing, homelessness.
- Congestion in the City Center area
- The city can be disconnected where people do their own thing, and don't "come together" as a whole.
- Divisions within city governance can be a challenge.
- Council has a lot of turn over, and agendas change.

III. Discussion of what consultant perceive as the "5 Pillars" of the AIPP program.

Discussion around:

- 1% Commissions
- Developer program
- Temporary exhibitions
- Art 2C

- Outreach (social media, collateral, programs, etc.)
- Others?

1% Program

- How does it work?
 - 1% calculation is made every year and 25% of the funds go to maintenance and administration of the program, while 75% goes to art acquisition.
 - They are required to keep a reserve of \$200k in admin and maintenance and \$300K in Art budget as a contingency/reserve fund based on policies from the Finance Department.
 - The Library and Cultural Services Budget Supervisor used to present to the Art in Public Places Commission twice a year to review the list of projects, budgets for each, and 3 year budget projections. Now it is much less formal. It would be nice to know that their budget is ahead of the meetings so they can be ready to ask questions.
 - Contracts over \$50K must go through the Cultural Commission. Brittany is the current liaison. She gives monthly reports and an annual report. Other than this, that is the only touchpoint with this group. Perhaps more regular presentations (annually) might be warranted to help educate the group on the AIPP program and their goals.
 - Goal is to provide artwork throughout the city; currently the five-year plan tries to address each of the Wards.
- What is the role of the Board?
 - Commissioners review the budgets, maintenance, and reserve. Things come to the commission from other departments, and people ask for their advice.
 - Generally, the Commission is not the group generating program ideas, other come to them.
 - They do create a strategic plan which is different from the more aspirational Master Plan. The strategic plan is more of a formal “work plan” for the group.
- How do you feel it is succeeding?
 - There is a great respect for the program and the Commission.
- What are the constraints?
 - Can't keep up with the workload.
 - Not able to be proactive with maintenance
 - Used to be that commissioners did maintenance assessments in their Wards

- Need to look at staffing and maybe contract workers for maintenance and project management
- Budget can be a constraint. We would love 2% for art.
- Constant education to the public about the AIPP program and how it functions.
- Impact for each
 - The group chooses to balance larger and smaller projects. This is an active decision. Want to create opportunities in all the Wards over a 5-year timespan.
- Developer/Private funded program
 - How does it work?
 - At conceptual review, during planning process, developers must submit a “public art plan” for approval. Developers must put aside funding according to a calculation for artwork at the site. (Roughly 1% in TOD, Metro Districts use a calculation based on acreage and land use.)
 - Applies to Metro Districts, TOD, and Urban Renewal projects (AURA projects have a .5% requirement.)
 - Roberta provides guidelines for developers and helps them develop their public art plans which must be approved by the Director of Library and Cultural Services.
 - The developers can use 10% of their budget to hire consultants to help with the art selection and management.
 - 5% of the total public art funding is a Public Art Application fee that goes into the AIPP Administration and Maintenance budget.
- What is the role of the Board?
 - Group will advise and help with art selection as needed/asked.
- How do you feel it is succeeding?
 - The developer contribution is a unique program and is a model for other cities. The program could do more to promote it, and it is helping Aurora and the way it is perceived outside the City.
 - There is not a lot of promotion around artwork created by developers, and residents don’t necessarily know how different pieces are funding. City could promote it more.
- What are the constraints?
 - Public art review process is not fully integrated into the current planning tool (AMANDA). Need to address this. After the initial review, we rely on the city planners to remember to loop public art into later reviews.
- Impact of each
 - Adding value to all these new developments and placemaking.

Outreach

- How does it work?
 - Commission members are encouraged to do 10 hours of volunteer work a month.
 - They regularly get out for several events, including Chalk Lines and Vines, Colfax Canvas, 7/20 memorial event, Global Fest/ACAD and Trick or Treat.
 - They will attend Ward meetings to talk about the program.
 - Each of the Commission members takes notes/minutes at the meeting and reports back at AIPP Commission meetings.
 - They have a social media account, entirely run by Amy. That will have to change to a city-run social media group when Amy's term is completed. Cultural Services has a new social media person and the work tends to be more focused on Fox at this time.

Temp Exhibitions/Mobile Art Program

- How does it work?
 - There are three exhibition areas, MLK, Tallyn's Reach libraries, and AMC Mezzanine, which has been dark since covid.
 - It was originally curated by staff.
 - They solicit exhibition ideas from the public through an application process, and now it is selected more in line with the 1% program. They create a community panel, and it also has commissioners, librarians, neighborhood representation, and staff.
 - They used to have a whole year of exhibitions planned (rotating every 2 months) but that changed with covid.
 - The applications are solicited by work of mouth and there is a deadline for submissions. (2x a year?)

Art 2C Program

- How does it work?
 - Partnership with the Havana BID, they supply the artist honorariums (\$2500/each) and award funding. The City pays for the selection process (CAFÉ), installation and deinstallation (Andy Miller/AMPA) and Pedestal maintenance and plaques.
 - The AIP budget is around \$15,000 every 2 years. (Used to be every year)
 - 11 years of history, first 9 it was annually, last several have been every 2 years. Due to cost and staffing.
 - They did a review earlier and the Council members expressed support for the program.

- BID loves the program and states that is has helped indirectly with their growth.
- Regional artists only (cost)
- Some of the artwork has been purchased, but it is not expected.
- Some problems with scale and placement – some are in awkward places.
- Artists love the program – good for training artists on getting into public art.

IV. Adjournment

- 8:37pm

X *Ana Valles*

Ana Valles
Vice-Chair

X *Roberta Bloom*

Roberta Bloom
Cultural Services Manager and Public Art Su...

The mission of the Art in Public Places Program is to capture the pulse of the community by contributing to neighborhood development and economic vitality, and by engaging the many voices of Aurora through art and culture.