



**City Art Board Meeting  
January 12, 2021**

The following are minutes for the meeting of the **City Art Board** held at 10:00 a.m. on January 12, 2021 remotely via Zoom.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Christina Ballew, Chair  
Susan Frary, Vice-Chair  
Chantelle Yazzie-Martin  
Alysa Iyana Grayson-Aulbach  
Saul Ramirez

**ABSENT:**

Susan McNeill

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Ceci Vasconcellos, Art Program Coordinator, Quality of Life  
Garland Courts, Museum Manager (Exhibits)  
Leticia Soto, Museums  
Yvonne Flores, City Councilor Liaison  
Ikani Taumoepeau, Assistant City Manager

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Christina Ballew called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

Those present introduced themselves.

**III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chantelle Yazzie-Martin corrected her name on the agenda. The agenda was accepted as presented.

#### **IV. APPROVAL of DECEMBER 8, 2020 MINUTES**

The minutes were accepted as presented.

#### **V. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was none.

#### **VI. STAFF UPDATE AND ACTION**

- Garland Courts, Museum Manager (Exhibits)/Quality of Life/Las Cruces Museum System
  - Introduction of new Program Coordinator Ceci Vasconcellos
  - Animal Services Center GO Bond Project CaFE Call
  - Fire Station 3 GO Bond Project CaFE Call
  - Ordinance Update

Garland Courts began with informing the Board that this will be one of his last meetings with them as they will turn over the Program Coordinator duties to Ceci Vasconcellos. Ms. Vasconcellos introduced herself and mentioned that she is excited to join the team; she has experience in journalism and working with artists. Mr. Courts continued with an update on the Animal Services Center. They are working on the public call and will write it soon; particulars still need to be finished. It will be a sculpture piece and they will receive specifics from the City architect to put into the public call. He asked Susan Frary to help proofread once it is finished as she has experience with sculptures. Susan Frary added that she has done an extensive scrub through of the public call and has sent it to Mr. Courts to look through. Ms. Vasconcellos will receive a copy.

Mr. Courts moved on to the Fire Station 3 GO Bond project. There were 107 applicants for the \$40,000.00 project. There was difficulty in bringing the committee together, however they have a final 10 candidates now. The next step is to bring that number down to a top three before having those artists do a mockup and presentation. Ms. Vasconcellos added that when finding the top 10 there were so many tied scores that there will be 13 applicants to look at. Three are from New Mexico with the rest out of state. Mr. Courts does not have an update on the bond ordinance. Rebecca Slaughter is currently on an unexpected leave of absence. The previous questions that were sent to the Bond Board have not been answered yet.

Chair Ballew brought up the need to discuss and work on an annual plan. There are no due dates but should be done by spring time. The Animal Services Center artwork is \$70,000.00; they will send out a call for artists soon. There was discussion on why the Animal Services artwork 'call' came before the Fire Station 3. The reason Fire Station was first is that the artwork will be attached onto the building so decisions about attachment must be made early in the construction process; Animal Services art will be freestanding, separate from the

building. Each committee has representatives from city facilities and the user agency; Fire Station 3 has Deputy Chief Jason Smith and Animal Services has Clint Thacker or a representative of his choice. Greg Smith is also a part of the FS3 committee. There was a discussion regarding the funding for these artwork purchases. The money was designated from city funds by former Assistant City Manager David Dollahon; the public art funding ordinance was not in effect yet. They were not voted on within the GO Bond but come from the Public Works Department. For subsequent bonds once the ordinance passes public art funding will be put in the language to vote on.

## **VII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

- Nominations and board openings
- Klein Park
- Future projects for discussion
  - Website & Social Media
  - Outreach
  - Outdoor Exercise Facilities
  - Love of Art Month/City Are Opportunities

Chair Ballew explained the process of nominations; these are done every July. Currently there is an opening as Rebecca Courtney has left and a new secretary is needed. Susan Frary gave a brief history of how the executive committee part of the Board works; the vice-chair and secretary help the Chair. Susan Frary nominated Alysa Grayson for secretary; Saul Ramirez seconded. Nomination passed. There is a Board position currently open as well as one coming open in March; Chair Ballew asked the Board to encourage others to apply for the positions.

The discussion moved to the Klein Park art purchase project. Councilor Flores received an email from Greg Smith, chair of the Arts and Cultural District Coordinating Council (ACDCC), that stated he looks forward to attending the Art Board meetings. The Board has not voted on a budget; the initial proposed amount was \$40,000.00 but was not finalized. Last month CAB discussed what to put in the public art call but would like to invite the Arts and Cultural Committee to be a part of the discussion before moving forward on the project. It was moved to table the discussion until the other representatives are present. There needs to be discussion to evaluate whether they will be putting art on the bandstand or other areas in Klein Park. There was an agreement to table this discussion until the next meeting; February 9, 2021. Ms. Vasconcellos will invite Greg Smith and David Chavez to attend the next meeting.

Chair Ballew began a discussion for future projects; she asked if the Members had any other ideas they would like to contribute. Susan Frary suggested that the city website list of public art to tour should be managed by the Public Art program, rather than Parks and Rec, to allow the program to add and change items on the tour as well as use it for social media interaction. Another idea,

presented by Alysa Grayson, was to use the Next-door Neighborhood app to find where graffiti is to have artists cover them up with murals.

Chair Ballew moved on to social media outreach. She read a statement regarding social media and website development from the Master Plan. Ms. Vasconcellos checked on if the Board can do their own website; there was a question on what benefits there would be to have a separate social media presence outside of the City's. There was a comment on how difficult it is to gain followers on Facebook and how the Board would need to spend money to market the pages. Using the City's existing Facebook page would benefit by having a built-in audience. She recommends starting with adding into the existing page and perhaps separate once they have a stronger audience.

There was discussion on the pages that come up on the City's website for the phrase "arts and culture"; in the recent past one led to the City Art Board and one to the CVB version. Those two routes need to come together. Ms. Vasconcellos stated that she will work on the current website; redesign it to make it dynamic and add the correct information. There was more discussion on the phrase "arts and culture". There is an Arts and Cultural District which uses that phrase for market branding, so all other city entities need to be careful with using the phrase. A suggestion of making groups on LinkedIn was made; there would not need to be marketing to find followers and they could connect with other City Art Boards across the nation. This would gain knowledge on how other cities do things and create connectivity between like-minded professionals. There are a significant number of artists and arts advocates within the City of Las Cruces that would most likely raise the viewership of a social media campaign. However, there needs to be a strong campaign to spread awareness of art outside the arts circle using social media, which will be among the challenges.

There was discussion on readdressing the ways in which the Board is able to communicate with the community. Broader art projects that involve the community as a whole would bring more awareness. The Board should consider more interactions with artwork. Having both LinkedIn and Facebook social media would bring both professional and nonprofessional circles together to truly get information to the community. The Board decided to begin with focusing on strategy. Working with the City on social media would require creating a marketing and social media campaign that identifies the goals, who will create the content, what the content may look like, what projects will be focused on and begin. There was a suggestion to have a designated Board Member be an editor. There was a suggestion to focus not only on the art community but also those who may not know what public art is; an event was done the previous summer where many people didn't know what public art was.

There was a discussion on what the Art Board is as well as the role in the community. Education and outreach is important to help communicate the CAB's role in art purchasing and artist opportunities. Mx. Ramirez had a question as to

the limits of organizing and doing projects; such as contacting other community leaders and inserting the Board into other projects. Originally the Board was very limited. However, there have been changes to how the volunteer Boards can act and now volunteer appointees are individually allowed to speak to separate City Council members for opinions and to impart information. Ms. Frary clarified by saying that members are also allowed to speak to the community without making any promises or commitments; they can ask for or give information. For example, if a community member has a concern, they can bring it to a Board Member who then brings it to the Board. There was more discussion on what conversations to have with the community and other organizations; promote the Master Plan, the City Art Board, and their goals as well as invite people to attend the meetings or suggest items for the agenda. It was suggested that when having conversations with others about the city art program Board members remember to use the language “review and recommend”; e.g. “We will review with the Board and make recommendations”. It was suggested to have a script ready for when talking with the community to aid in not saying the wrong things (over-committing for the public art program).

Mrs. Yazzie-Martin suggested to do a definition series and bios of the Board Members as a social media outreach campaign. There was also a suggestion to do some behind the scenes posts to humanize the Board. There was discussion on who would create the content for the social media; it is a group effort of whoever wishes to help. It was suggested that the project plan created for the Program Coordinator includes what percentage of time should be spent on each item. By sharing a social media page with the museums, they don't need to worry about posting multiple times a day which makes it manageable. Chair Ballew suggested discussing the items they would like to accomplish during the executive meeting with Ms. Vasconcellos. They would like to do a press release of the new Board Members, the new Program Coordinator, and the new direction of the Board.

There was a discussion on the outdoor exercise facilities; a budget and how to move the project along with local artists. They would like annual displays to change every year. They would put a call out for local or regional artists to submit ideas, have committees, accept the artwork proposed, make a selection, and then install it onto the exercise facility. The hope is to begin the project this year. Ms. Greyson suggested to make it a local artist volunteer but have the tools and materials be included; not have a big budget item as it will be changed yearly. Chair Ballew recommended to give the artist a panel with a stipend such as \$1,500.00 to \$2,000.00. Parameters would be given to the artist as well. Susan Frary would like to pay the artist in order to have professionalism; require the artist to submit a proposal and act professionally. She also suggested using removable panels so the artist can take it afterwards; she once worked with billboard canvas which has several years of life.

There was discussion on the budget; what cost would be for the frame, panel, possible vinyl, installation, payment to the artist, etcetera. It was suggested to also look at how many artworks it would take to fill the exercise areas as they are large. A previous artwork project of large panels painted by community artists was brought up: the panels were all six feet tall, widths varied from four up to ten feet. Artists submitted their design in advance for review and requested a size, the committee provided the paints and the panels prepared with primer and grommets. After the artist returned the panel they put a UV resistant varnish on each art piece before it was hung. There could be two to three mini murals in one location but the exact dimensions need to be acquired. Chair Ballew suggested having a meet and greet with the artists where the community could have the option of purchasing the artwork or doing an auction where the funds are split between the artist and a donation to a nonprofit or the Board art program.

There was a discussion of having work groups or committees. Having a Committee meet this month would allow them to have more ideas ready for when the Board has a discussion with Parks and Rec. There was agreement to have a small meeting with two people in order to not meet quorum; by definition the Chair is on all Committees but does not have to attend. Volunteers for the Outside Exercise Facilities Committee are Saul Ramirez and Chantelle Yazzie-Martin. Chair Ballew will send them an email to coordinate the meeting before the next Board meeting. There was a comment to have Parks and Rec join the meeting as well. They will need to let the Board know the size of the panels and materials needed, as well as if Parks and Rec will be required to maintain it. There was a suggestion to ask what facilities the Parks and Rec would like art on before deciding the size of the panels; there are two to three facilities they are looking at. There was discussion of the handball courts at Picacho and the railroad tracks on 1st Street which have serious need of mural work. They are exercise facilities which have larger walls at 20 feet by 30 feet, which may qualify as a highway major artwork place. Chair Ballew will reach out to the volunteers to go to the locations in order to work out ideas.

Discussion moved to the Love of Art month and City Art Opportunities which will be updated to Year of the Artist. The Doña Ana Arts Council and the ACD are proclaiming this year as the year of the artist; this will connect with that. A history of work with ArtForms Love of Art month was given; CAB has helped with banners in the past. It was suggested to recognize the Love of Art month in a press release and possibly reach out to ArtForms as well as other art groups to find ways to help. Rebecca Courtney has the e-mails for these groups that will need to be obtained. There was discussion as to whether they need ongoing committees for the events; it would be beneficial to have standing committees such as for calendar, budget, and annual art events. It was suggested to have an organizational chart created in order to grow committees and state expectations.

Many art groups have made proclamations that 2021 will be the Year of the Artist; the Arts Council is celebrating what art means to the community and the 50 years the council has been in existence and has already had a press release. A comment was made that the Board should be notified of what other groups are doing and once the partnerships are formed it should happen. It was suggested to use the social media calendars to help as well. Ms. Grayson would like to have a meeting with a list of people or art groups to meet with in order to introduce themselves and give knowledge of the City Art Board; they could assign certain people to certain groups to ease the workload.

**VIII. BOARD COMMENTS**

Susan Frary commented that she sent emails but hasn't received responses. The emails included information regarding art in the City alleys and a link to the New Mexico Public Art for purchase list to get an idea on the art and prices of art in New Mexico. Chantelle Yazzie-Martin is excited for the new Board Members and thanked Mr. Courts for his work. Alysa Grayson is excited to be on the Executive Committee. Saul Ramirez is excited for the new Committees. Garland Courts commented that the City Art Board is fairly new but is continuing to move forward. The Master Plan is a good base for them to make decisions for the direction of the Board. Ceci Vasconcellos commented that she's been reading the resolutions and bylaws for the Board. She is also excited to work with the Board moving forward. Councilor Flores thanked everyone for their work. She will be sad to see Susan Frary go and suggested that she could be a consultant. Chair Ballew thanked everyone for their hard work as well; specifically, the help from Garland Courts and Susan Frary.

**IX. NEXT MEETING, February 9, 2021.**

**X. ADJOURNMENT: Susan Frary motioned to adjourn, seconded by Alysa Grayson-Aulbach.**

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Chairperson