



Art in Public Places Panel

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES MONDAY, July 2, 2012

The Art in Public Places Panel convened in a regular meeting on *Monday, July 2, 2012* at City Hall, Room 2016, 301 W. Second Street in Austin, Texas.

Chair Thompson called the Panel Meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Panel Members in Attendance: Jaime Castillo (Vice Chair) arrived late, Scott Daigle (Arts Commission Liaison), Ilse Frank, Hollis Hammonds and Murray Legge.

Panel Members Absent: Jennifer Chenoweth

Staff in Attendance: Meghan Turner, AIPP; Carrie Brown, AIPP; Jean Graham, AIPP; Susan Lambe, AIPP; David Taylor, PWD; Rey Hernandez, PARD; John Gillum, Library, Cynthia Jordan, PW; Matt Coldwell, ABIA; Humberto Rey, Great Streets Program, PDRD

Project Advisors in Attendance: Al Godfrey, Limbacher-Godfrey Architects;

1. CITIZENS COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

None.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. The minutes for the regular meeting of 6/4/12 were approved on the motion of Panel Member Daigle. Panel Member Hammonds seconded the motion. Legge abstained. Motion passed (3-1-0).

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

None.

4. ARTS COMMISSION LIAISON REPORT

Scott Daigle reported that the Arts Commission approved the AIPP items that were on the agenda.

5. OLD BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Conceptual Design discussion for 2nd Street Bridge and Extensions AIPP Project**
-- Sharon Engelstein, Artist

Sue Lambe presented this as an early mid-design report to get distinct comments on material choices and point of view. The Seaholm District is tightly planned and programmed. There will be lots of users in the area – library, trail, children's park, Second Street retail, people who live in the area. The requirement is that this work be family friendly and engaging to children. Sharon Engelstein has been working on meeting the needs of these groups and has a fairly sizeable footprint open to her to engage with.

Engelstein showed examples of work that she has done. Her current approach to interactivity for this project is that the work be accessible for physical engagement by children though the form could be designed to discourage climbing. She has focused on using glass fiber-reinforced concrete because she can get something large for the cost and she likes the stone-like quality and durable nature of the cement. She described her proposed method of fabrication, using a 3D modeling program to cut foam cores and then apply a glass fiber-reinforced concrete shell over that. She has received feedback from the project

team that because there is so much stone and natural material in the area, an approach similar to her studio work which uses rounded shapes and non-stone colors would be more appropriate. Her challenge has been to find a material that would be feasible.

She is in communication with a company in Greenberg, Texas who do glass-fiber reinforce polymers and concrete in color. They can work with any pantone color; they can point to samples of work outdoors have held up fine for 7-8 years. The color is inherent to the material which would be applied to the foam. They also have a graffiti coating that they use. Engelstein is researching this further.

Project Manager Jordan wondered how hard it is and whether it could be interacted with. She is concerned about vandalism and thought that in this regard the integral-color material would be preferable. When asked about the structure, Engelstein explained that the foam is solid, with a steel frame inside. Panel Member Frank suggested a metal material that is used often in Hollywood which is put over foam; she committed to give Engelstein the company's contact information, though concern was expressed that the metal might get too hot to be touched safely. Panel Member Legge suggested that the artist look at the surface of the cement work by John Christensen at the airport which is quite smooth and weathered beautifully. He went to suggest that a focus on form over color is reasonable and asked if color could be incorporated through accents. Frank asked if more than one material could be incorporated. Other suggestions included using a white sparkly stone or fiberglass which Engelstein would need to research for cost and longevity of colors, and using different textures to inspire children to engage with the piece. Due to the cost of the GFRC or GFRP fabrication, more than one piece would be expected for this budget. Graffiti removal will need to be a prime consideration for the surface material/coating.

b. Mid Design presentation for the Lady Bird Lake Boardwalk Trail AIPP Project
-- The Art Guys (Michael Galbreth and Jack Massing), Lead Artists

Jean Graham introduced the Lead Artists and attending project team members, Al Godfrey, Architect and David Taylor, PW. This is an early mid-design presentation of the artists' concepts with no budgets or siting finalized with the intent of giving feedback to the artists from the AIPP Panel on their proposed directions. The Lead Artists and their team have been working on design directions during the past months; construction for the project begins in August and will last 18 months.

Michael Galbreth and Jack Massing presented the concepts of their team members: Ken Little from San Antonio, Gary Sweeney from San Antonio and Anthony Shumate from Houston. These artists were chosen by the Lead Artists because each thinks it is critically important to engage the general public in their work; and each employs humor and surprise. The Boardwalk site is 1.3 miles long and has a temporal quality to it – because people move through it – and the works are meant to be small in scale and conceptual surprises.

The concept by Ken Little: "Belting It Out" has to do with the music heritage of Texas and the iconography of belts. Instead of having names on the belts, there would be lyrics from songs. Approximately 30 casted bronze belts will be attaching to the railing of the Boardwalk over the water and distributed over the site. Some of the songs may be like haikus and be broken up so that there could be more than one song phrase. Some would be contained on one belt. Additionally, he wants to also incorporate the phrases in braille. Each belt design would be different and will not have large buckles with protruding pieces which could hurt people as they pass by. Little wants to be sure to highlight Austin musicians and include Tejano musicians and a variety of artists. He wants to consistently use the top of the railing as the reading space so that people know where to look for them as they move down the trail. Panel member Legge liked the variation in the groupings and the fact that they are scaled to the body. Chair Thompson suggested engaging the belts in variety of ways or orientations. The advisors raised the concern that we didn't want to locate them in such a way that people would congregate on the trail and interrupt the flow; and reminded the artists that there will be bicyclists moving by relatively fast. There was discussion about having an audio component through QR codes, but that was not supported.

Two ideas by Anthony Shumate were presented. One was the "Socratic Stroll" which would be text-based interventions where questions are sited along the trail in various scale and various materials.

Questions such as “Could you say it another way?” or “Did you see the other side?” could be presented in different ways. The second idea “Inside Out” presents cursors made possibly of steel or cement and in various scales which would be located along the Trail. These would be positioned to point at some thing or some view so that you would be focused on the icon as an object, but also to where your attention is drawn. In the out-of-door view, a cursor which is 6’ tall could look about like the scale of your computer screen. Some cursors would be very small and some in very surprising locations. The Art Guys like this as a very abbreviated language – functioning as a sign or symbol. Vice Chair Castillo liked the Socratic proposal, but thought that in conjunction with the others would be too text heavy; he likes the playful aspect of the icon idea which also lends itself to the tech aspect of Austin. Panel Member Frank stated that the siting and scale of the cursors will be very important. Chair Thompson mentioned that the cursor was somewhat dated and that the cursor presented was pointing the wrong way; he does not think that it needs to be pixelated, though he likes the staircase aspect of that; he prefers pointing to views rather than things.

Three concepts were presented on behalf of Gary Sweeney. One would be to create humorous fictitious historical information plaques that you might see at a historical site. Some would be close to reality and other more preposterous and could incorporate color imagery or old photographs. A sample shown was portrayed hypothetical critters caught in the lake. These would be located at the nodes, rather than along the trail. They would be built appropriating the existing signage techniques of durable baked enamel signs which are extremely durable and don’t fade. The artist would research the site and Austin’s history to come up with themes for the signs; and he is also researching types of signs at different historical sites. A second idea is using a traditional papel picado aesthetic for signage – water jet-cut out of steel. These could be a series of Burma shave signs along the trail. The sample presented contained the slogan: “Lady Bird Lake: It’s really a river; it just thinks it’s a lake.” The third idea would be one large metal sign created of shoes thrown over wire – caste in metal. Chair Thompson and other Panelists preferred the signs. Vice Chair Castillo does not favor the papel picado signs and does not identify shoes as an Austin theme. Panel member Frank prefers the signs, but also likes the slogan about the lake. It was recommended that the artist do research at the Austin History Center to find some of the many things that we don’t know about our city.

c. Approval of Final Design for the West Enfield Pool AIPP Project
-- Alan Knox, Artist

Sue Lambe explained that the design for this bike rack related sculpture has been reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Department, a conservator and the design team and all are satisfied with progress made. Knox has tested how bikes will function with it and since presenting previously, he has done alterations to the form and perforation pattern. The functional qualities remain the same. It will be sited – centered in front of one of the gates to the pool. It will be 8’ x 8’ x 15’ tall, constructed of welded powder-coated steel laser-cut panels. The structural frame will be galvanized and the concrete foundation will be poured first with a topping slab poured later. There was a short discussion on issues of durability and safety.

Panel Member Daigle made a motion to approve the selection process as presented. Vice Chair Castillo seconded. Approved 5-0-0.

d. Mid Design presentation for the 3rd Streetscape Enhancement AIPP Project
-- Erin Curtis, Artist

Carrie Brown introduced the artist Erin Curtis and her partner Nicole Blair who have met with Jessica Salinas, Public Works project manager and Humberto Rey, Great Streets program manager to discuss the feasibility of their design concept. They are also coordinating with the Colorado Street AIPP project to make sure there are no conflicts. The artists presented a 3-d model of their design concept called “Pedestrian Geometries.” They have developed a palette of triangular and square geometries and colors that could be used along the 8 blocks of their installation area. They want to use Elgin-Butler glazed structural brick which is used in exterior and come in a wide range of colors. The colors and patterns of the forms will vary; the tallest one is 12 feet tall, but most are human scale. The scale will grow and shrink along the street and there are opportunities for possible interactions with people. They see these

works as being minimal sculpture in some ways, but also somewhat “over the top”. Ms. Turner brought up the concern of skateboarding. The works will be secured under the surface and there will possibly be some “shadows” of the forms imbedded into the sidewalk. In this case they would need to use textured glazes which would not be a slip hazard. They discussed options for cutting the bricks to make patterns and are seeking a skilled mason. Panel Member Legge was concerned that it is difficult to cut the bricks and suggested that they make a test model to scale using the actual materials. The finished pieces will weigh between 500 and 2000 pounds and they are looking for a large warehouse to rent where they can fabricate. The installation may occur sequentially. They are still determining the siting along the 8 blocks. The structure will begin with a steel base that the bricks will be tied to and will be backfilled with cement.

e. Approval of recommended artist and alternate for the CONRAC at the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport AIPP Project

-- Carrie Brown, AIPP Coordinator

Carrie Brown reported on the selection process for the CONRAC AIPP project and introduced Matt Caldwell an ABIA Project Advisor. The five finalists (Vito Acconci Studio, Ball-Nogues Studio, James Carpenter, Mikyoung Kim, and Michael Singer) were in town for a project orientation and interviews. They visited the site and got a good understanding of the challenges and opportunities. The selection panel selected Vito Acconci as the artist and thought he was very forward thinking, imaginative, collaborative in nature and seemed genuinely inspired. The vote was 4-1 and the 5th panelist thought that this was not a good match for him. Michael Singer was recommended as the alternate. The selection panel was also inspired by his collaborative nature and poetic approach to projects.

Panel Member Daigle made a motion to approve the artist and alternate as presented. Panel Member Legge seconded. Approved 5-0-0.

f. Approval of temporary public art program and selection process for curator/project manager

-- Meghan Turner, AIPP Administrator

Meghan Turner presented a suggested outline for a temporary art program policy. The funds currently available are from 2006 Bond Parkland Acquisition – approximately \$180,000 with the constraints that the works be sited on parkland. Because there is minimal staff for project management, she suggested hiring a curator/project manager who would be a hybrid between being a staff and curator. This would be a way to move the program forward now and also bring a fresh perspective to the program. There is a desire to coordinate one piece with the 2013 Austin’s New Year event on December 31st. The curator would devise a short list of artists that would commission works for a year and there would be built-in safeguards – like an advisory group – to make sure a wide range of artists were considered for the program. Turner asked for input on the criteria for the curator position as well as a short list of suggested persons to consider. There was discussion about the amount of funding for the Curator/Project Manager in relation to the amount available for the artwork; and other city programs. Perhaps have two people – a curator and a project manager.

Vice Chair Castillo made a motion to table this discussion until next month. Panel Member Daigle seconded. Approved 5-0-0.

7. STAFF BRIEFINGS

- a. AIPP received two Americans for the Arts Public Art Network Year in Review awards for the South Congress Avenue project by James Talbot and the Skateboard Park project by Chris Levack.
- b. The Bond package is being finalized and it would be helpful for someone from the CIP planning office to talk with the AIPP Panel.
- c. The Bollard call got 35 submittals and the selection is upcoming.
- d. The Uprooted Dreams AIPP project workshops at the Mexican American Cultural Center are currently underway and there will be a public artist presentation on July 19th from 6-8pm.

8. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. AIPP Panel retreat is planned for July 28th.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m. without objection.