

Summary of Deaccession Jury/Special Called Meeting, January 13, 2015: Actions and Recommendations

Panel Members

Jade Walker, Jaime Castillo, Emily Little, Ilse Frank, AIPP Panel members

Frances Gale, Arts Commission appointee

Lynn Osgood, AIPP Panel appointee

On the Green

After a staff briefing by Maggie Stenz, AIPP Collection Manager, Kevin Gomillion, Golf and Tennis Division Manager, PARD, presented background information and answered questions on behalf of the golf course staff.

The discussion focused on the following issues:

- Maintenance and repair history of the piece—repair issues surfaced not long after installation and continued for years
- Golf Division's reasons for filling in the fountain with dirt—could not afford constant repairs, if they turned off the pump the pool smelled bad from standing water, if they drained the pool it presented a safety hazard
- Attempts to contact the artist—he assisted with repairs the first year, but even then was difficult to reach. Around 2000 he left Austin and did not leave any contact info with the golf course or with AIPP
- Disposal options for the piece—Golf Division would prefer to keep the ball and flagpole, but when funds are located they would like to remove the remaining waterfall and fill the entire area in with grass. The rocks can be used elsewhere at the facility. The artwork would not be sold or relocated, and City Purchasing department has stated that there is no resale or surplus value to the artwork.

Jade Walker made the motion to deaccession; it was seconded by Jaime Castillo. Lynn Osgood made a friendly amendment to have AIPP acknowledge the artwork as a commissioned work (albeit deaccessioned) on the website and in AIPP publicity. Emily Little made a friendly amendment to allow golf ball and flag pole to stay on site, if PARD so desired.

The motion passed unanimously.

Letterscape

After a staff briefing by Maggie Stenz, AIPP Collection Manager, presentations and comments were made by Jimmy Luu, artist; Jean Graham, AIPP Project Manager; Kymberly Maddox, Health and Human Services Department; and Chris Noble, Animal Services Office.

The discussion focused on the following issues:

- HHS reasons for recommending deaccessioning—how does the artwork present a safety hazard, what is the current master plan for the campus and why is the artwork not included in the master plan, changed in business use of the campus since the arrival of the Animal Service Center and how the artwork interferes with use of the quadrangle
- Past maintenance efforts— artist’s efforts to design a piece with low maintenance requirements and work with facility staff, artist’s maintenance recommendations, facility’s ability and resources to perform regular maintenance
- Removal or resiting options—whether there existed viable alternate sites on the campus; whether that would be acceptable to the artist; cost to move would be, in artist’s estimation, comparable to the cost to restore/replant the piece; options for disposal if deaccessioned
- HHS department responsibilities—staff who collaborated with AIPP on the design and installation of the piece are no longer there; new/current staff have only seen the artwork in disrepair and came in with a negative view of the artwork; contractual responsibilities of the department, not individuals, for long-term maintenance of the piece; precedent that would be set for future public art projects; artwork should be celebrated, not removed
- Repairs—what are real safety issues with letters, and can these be fixed; artist agreed to remove the ornamental grasses from the design, if that would make maintenance easier; AIPP funds available for repair if HHS would commit to maintenance thereafter
- New campus master plan— artwork should be considered in master planning process; might bring in irrigation system, which could be used for artwork; could envision the artwork as part of HHS programming (a community garden, for example)

The jury recommended that the artwork not be deaccessioned, and that the artist work with AIPP and HHS staff to discuss reimagining and restoring the work in the next 60 days. An update would come back to the jury for final action after 60 days. This motion passed unanimously.