

BALTIMORE OFFICE OF PROMOTION & THE ARTS  
PUBLIC ART COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES

**Date: September 16, 2015**

**Approval of Minutes & Announcements**

July 2015 minutes *approved*

Announcement of new commission member- Brian Oster.

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**General Updates**

- The Percent for Art Project at Uplands Housing Project has been completed
- The first round of reviews for the City Gateway Signage competition was completed and 5 finalists have been selected- will be announced via Mayor's Office.
- List of active Percent for Art projects was provided (**appendix a**)
  - it was noted that the project at Charles and 33rd was waiting for maintenance adjustments by DOT before it was considered 100% complete and a new RFP for the Waverly Library will be posted by October.

Commissioner Comments:

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**Gift of Public Art Review**

Pink Flamingos Monument

Location: Read Street & Tyson Street

Presented by: Michal Makarovich, Alex Fox, David Hess, Mike Pugh, Parisa Saranj

Phase: Initial Concept Proposal

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Overview:

This group comes before the Public Art Commission to propose the idea of a public monument at the Corner of Read and Tyson Street that will memorialize the location where the final scene of John Waters Pink Flamingos took place. In that scene, the iconic John Waters character and actress Divine, eats dog feces. While it is unclear what form the monument would take, the group hopes to officially commemorate this site and hopes that it can become a tourist attraction and location for people to celebrate the positive, impact the art of John Waters films have had on Baltimore.

At this point the group is comprised of 7 individuals working together to plan and promote this monument. The group represents, small business owners, researchers, arts promoters, writers and includes recognized, Baltimore based sculptor David Hess who is very familiar with Public Art processes and expectations.

## Public Art Commission Meeting Minutes

September 2015

Public Art Administrator Ryan Patterson had previously met with the group and given very preliminary advice on the options to proceed with the Public Art Commission and the City. It was suggested that if the group wanted to pursue the project as a sculpture “gift to the City” that they should present the concept in early phase to the Public Art Commission and get feedback on how to proceed.

The group came before the Commission to propose the concept and reasons for the project, and get feedback. No approval or vote was required at this meeting. *Full proposal may be heard in the audio recording and the Public Art Commission’s comments are below.*

### Commissioner Comments\*:

#### Jeremy Rountree:

Enjoy the concept, and I’m excited to see it develop further

#### Elisa Blount-Moorehead:

I’m Appalled it hasn’t happened before!... as a transplant, raised on John Waters, my outsider view is that it is 100% what the world thinks of Baltimore. This could be critical from a place making standpoint.

In terms of stakeholders: I would say that it would be a good time to get that in a formal way, anecdotes or videos, letters of support. Also consider form, and the multiplicity of medias available. Address the question about private vs public, public buy-in brings ideas of public ownership, and ways to maintain it. If you ever sell your house and it’s private it makes it more vulnerable so dealing with these agencies is worth it because then the agencies are behind you.

Additionally in terms of film and what’s happening in city, it might be worth it to coincide with different openings, because it could be a fantastic time for wider conversation about John Waters contributions.

#### Brian Oster:

Strong idea, great, Elisa has outlined design issues, what it looks like sound like smells like, we still have to identify what it is and you guys are still working on that, excited to see where it goes, public compliance is key, the only thing I would add to Elisa list, is where else can this go? I think it’s great knowing the geography of these films, I could see the start of a map of Baltimore and other critical scenes in films.

#### Elford Jackson:

That wraps up opinions from the PAC, you can see a copy of most of this in our minutes, on behalf of the board looking forward to seeing final product

**Gift of Public Art Review**

Baltimore Rotterdam Sister City Committee

Location: Middle Branch Park or other sites in this area near the water

Presented by: Gislin Dagnelie

Phase: 2nd Review of gift

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Overview:

Gislin Dagnelie from the Baltimore-Rotterdam Sister City Committee presented the initial concept for this gift at the July 22, 2015 meeting of the Public Art Commission.

He returned to the September meeting to address the questions the commission posed to him in July. (see the minutes from July 22 for reference). He provided an updated presentation to answer these questions (**Appendix B**). After the presentation the Commission provided feedback and comments.

Commissioner Comments\*:**Jeremy Rountree:**

I have concerns about the environmental implications of placing a sculpture in the harbor or within protected embankments. I am also concerned about the headwinds stemming from the fact that the proposed site in the Middle Branch is going through quite a transition period.

**Frank Dittenhafer:**

I don't really have any issues with the technical, logistical, or cost aspects. The piece I still have a problem with is really about the symbolism of the seal in Baltimore and that connection to Rotterdam. I can see the fact that seals are making a comeback in the port of Rotterdam, and that is a great starting point. But I'm trying to find a connection to Baltimore. Is the expectation that seals will eventually come to the Baltimore section of the Chesapeake Bay? I just feel that there is still a disconnect.

*Gislin Dagnelie:*

*Sending the seal is encouragement to reach the goal of the swimmable harbor by 2020*

**Sandra Abbott:**

My concern is more in terms of aesthetic qualities of the piece and how developed that portion is. If the piece does not end up near the water it could be misconstrued as something else, almost appears to look like a bird in some of the images. Does it have to be a seal? Does it have to be this seal? I don't feel this seal is the seal to tell the story behind the symbolism. This is something that has already been designed with no regard for where it will be. It can be challenging to find a location for an already formed piece.

*The artist's wife came to worked at Mason Cove education center in Baltimore, worked with children on how to get rid of trash, how to live responsibly in our environment, after being in Baltimore told her husband that Baltimore could also use the symbol of the seal, then he created the artwork for the city*

Sandra Abbott:

Do you have artists on your committee? It would have been helpful to have had artists come and present their support to the piece. I'm not sure if artists would have seen this has a fully developed piece.

Gislin Dagnelie:

*Had two artists, one from UMBC and one from MICA, previously on the committee. They approved the work of art.*

Elisa Blount-Moorehead:

I would be curious about the narrative being more explicit as well. The narrative is more of an aspirational narrative.

Brian Oster:

I agree with what others have said about symbolism. For me, public art has to be able to communicate instantly, if the individual has to go an extra step, and scan a barcode, or read a plaque, it is too much effort put on the individual who might see this out in a landscape.

Elford Jackson:

I would be interested to see community support behind the piece.

Gislin Dagnelie:

*The rowing club was very supportive of the piece.*

Elisa Blount-Moorehead:

It is important to reach out to people without a personal connection to the work. It would be useful to organize a community meeting to see what the neighborhood's feeling are about this. Cherry Hill may have different opinions about the art that would be a part of their everyday community.

\*These comments are not direct quotes, simply summaries of the main ideas. For exact commentary please refer to the audio recording.

**Motion:**

**Frank Diffenhafer motioned to deny the gift of art, seconded by Sandra Abbott. Yea from Jeremy Rountree, Elisa Blount-Moorehead, and Brian Oster. Nay from Elford Jackson.**

**Motion carries to deny the gift of art.**

**Vote:** Motion Passes; 1- Nay: Elford Jackson

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In the Interest of time the final two items on the agenda

- Sarah's Hope Artist Selection
- Deaccession Policy

Were not fully discussed at the September meeting

Commissioners present decided to review the Sarah's Hope Finalist materials online and vote first thing at the October meeting.

A draft of the proposed Deaccession Policy was circulated to Commissioners for feedback. Staff will follow up to collect feedback and work with the City's Legal Department to turn the document into an official policy for passage by November.

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Attending

**PAC Commissioners:**

Elford Jackson  
Jeremy Rountree  
Sandra Abbott  
Elissa Blount-Moorehead  
Frank Dittenhafer  
Brian Oster

**BOPA Staff:** Ryan Patterson, Lou Joseph

**Pink Flamingos Monument Committee:**

Michal Makarovich, Hapden Junque  
Alex Fox, Churchandcompany  
David Hess, sculptor  
Mike Pugh, teacher School of Design, Read St homeowner  
Parisa Saranj, Iranian writer living in Baltimore and Kickstarter leader

**Baltimore Rotterdam Sister City Committee:** Gislin Dagnelie

