

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

**Date:** Wednesday, January 18, 2016

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**A message from the Commission Chair, Elford Jackson**

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Commission Chair Elford Jackson opened the first meeting of 2017 with a statement to the Commission:

“Welcome to the first 2017 meeting of the Baltimore Public Art Commission. I wanted to take this moment to welcome you back as we begin our process. Ryan brought up the opportunity to start this meeting off with a statement from some of the youth, so I’m happy to oblige and by allowing the students from the Lillie May Jackson Charter School to speak. I want to add that this is a pivotal point as we kick off the new year and remind us of what our purpose is at the PAC. We are not just here because we felt like being involved, or we liked a particular piece of art, we are here to serve the citizens of Baltimore, and what better way to see that then to bring the youth of Baltimore into the room, to remind us what we do ,who it’s for, and set us forth on our path”

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**Special Presentation: Speech about the Importance of Public Art from the Student Scholars of Lillie May Jackson Charter School.**

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Staff introduced the student scholars and their teacher Ms. Sierra Smith. Ms. Smith reached out to BOPA in the Fall to explain that her students were studying the history of public art and the role it plays in the urban landscape. As a culminating project the students wrote their own statement about the value and role of public artwork in our society, and took turns reading it to the Commission.

A full copy of the statement is included as **Attachment I**.

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**Prior Meeting Minutes**

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The commission approved the minutes from the November 2016 Commission meeting. (The Commission did not meet in December 2016)

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**Project Update- Design Review****Project: Central Avenue Streetscape & Bridge****Agency: DOT****Artists: Fallon Graham Land Art (FGLA)****Action Requested: Approve Design Development 60% phase and allow design to proceed.**

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***Central Avenue Streetscape Public Art:***

FGLA member Graham Coriel Allen presented design revisions for the team's "Periscope" project (ATTACHMENT II) to be located a long Central Avenue. The Commission responded with a multiple comments and questions around the technical building and assembly details of the project.

The Commission asked the artist to respond to their commentary before proceeding further with design. In response FGLA noted that the next phase of funding was contingent on approval at this round, and asked if the Commission could provide a level of approval that would allow the team to be funded as long as they agree to address the comments brought up by the PAC.

Brian Oster made a motion, which is subsequently amended by Elford Jackson and seconded by Mary Demory.

**Motion:** *The Commission approves the release of funding to the artists, and offers conditional approval of the design as presented, pending modifications and response to the items described below:*

- Resolve a plan for how the bolts attaching the metal structure to the concrete base will be finished.
- Addressing how water will get out of the middle of the concrete base- a plan of runnels or sloping the surface, or something else, so there won't be standing water that could damage the concrete.
- Provide a sample of how the concrete will be finished.
- Address solutions for the blue pavers in the grass for (1) theft prevention and (2) that the lawn there is unlikely to be mown consistently. Options mentioned were extending the concrete, of having a section of gravel around the pavers, and anchoring the pavers in some fashion.
- Having a plan for the Plexiglas panels- especially their expansion in the summer. Can you attempt a test version of this with some elements of the tower? Also considering how the panels are attached- rubber washers and wider holes in the Plexiglas could allow for the said expansion, especially for the longest panels. Also potentially exploring other materials?
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**Vote:** Unanimous In Favor.

***Central Avenue Bridge design enhancements:***

While it had previously been decided that no Percent for Art investment should be incorporated into the bridge; in recent developments, local project stakeholders had approached BOPA to ask if there were away the artists, who are already under contact, could assist in improving the Bridge aesthetics.

BOPA used project contingency funding to pay the FGLA team to develop design concepts for this work with the understanding that if the bridge were added to their scope of work, it would be under a separate contract. These “design enhancements” that the artists are developing for the bridge are not art, but decorative applications to replace the brick formliner pattern that had been spec’d to be stamped into the bridge. The Staff wanted to take the opportunity to run the aesthetics of the design past the members of PAC for their opinion before moving forward.

FGLA presented two visual concepts: *Harford Run Waveform* and *Tidal Flats*

Commissioners gave comments on each design and noted that the opportunity to include artwork on one or both sides of the bridge was better than what was previously proposed.

Commissioner Kuo Pao Lian expressed specific feedback and criticism about the designs:

*“My first feeling is that it’s too literal for me. I think you can go in a lot of directions with respect to the material process and concept. If you think about what we’ve done in the (Inner) Harbor.. It’s always wave water roof... all in literal proximity to one another. We always have to in the direction boats and crabs.. I think we are smarter than that. I think what you’ve put in theoretically is very cool, but people will see it as another stamp of the literal... waveforms, vegetation that does not exist there... nine times out of ten no one will not get it, but the ones that do, and bother to stop and notice, will think... it’s one more literal thing. If it does not matter, why go to that graphic in your representation.*

*In your other project, there is a developed abstraction, you’ve triangulated it. I’d rather see the same triangle plexi panels attached to bridge and illuminated... this seems too different, not enough identity to link the two together. You want both places to have the same feeling and fervor. You could still do a stamp but maybe it’s abstracted and broken down... maybe the blue is forced? Maybe if you’re stuck with the brick, it’s just messing with the brick... it needs to be a more thoughtful expression.”*

It was suggested that FGLA continue to explore their designs and budget options and present their proposal as a tired approach, starting with the most customization and diversity in design, and scaling down to the least. This would give DOT options to compare according to customization and cost.

Elford Jackson made the motion of general support for the artists to bring design enhancements to the bridge without favoring a specific design alternative.

**Motion:** The Commission is in favor of the concept of adding color and texture in an abstract pattern onto the concrete panels inside and outside

**Vote:** In Favor, Unanimous

**Attending**

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**PAC Commissioners:**

Sandra Abbott  
Frank Dittenhafer  
Elford Jackson  
KuoPao Lian  
Brian Oster  
Mary Demory

**Staff:**

Ryan Patterson  
Lou Joseph

**Public:**

Graham Coriel Allen (FGLA)  
Fallon Mahlic (FGLA) *by phone*

*Lillie May Jackson Public Charter School student Scholars:*

De'jah Royster  
Tamia Hayes  
Kendall Brown  
Alexis Smith  
Desteny Hunt  
Tae'Ja Carr  
I'meia Anderson  
Damel Royster  
Brooklyn Arrington  
Erica Brown  
Sydni Peterson

*Lillie May Jackson Public Charter School teachers:*

Sierra Smith  
Ka'Rin Lane

Attachments:

- I. Statement from Student Scholars of Lillie May Jackson Public Charter School
- II. 60% Design Development for Central Ave. Streetscape by FGLA. & Harford Road Bridge Design Enhancement Concepts

**Attachment I**

**Speech from Student Scholars of Lillie May Jackson Public Charter School**



**Scholar Speech at Baltimore Public Art Commission**

**Student Scholars from Lillie May Jackson Public Charter School:**

De'jah Royster, Tamia Hayes, Kendall Brown, Alexis Smith, Desteny Hunt, Tae'Ja Carr, I'meia Anderson, Damel Royster, Brooklyn Arrington, Erica Brown, Sydni Peterson

**Instructors:**

Sierra Smith, Ka'Rin Lane

**De'jah :** Hello Baltimore Public Art Commission, We are scholars from Lillie May Carroll Jackson Charter School and we are here to remind you about why public art is important. There are three reasons why public art is important.

**Tamia :** Public Art is important because it shows what people or the artist thinks about the time, place and world. Also, public art is important because it helps beautify the world. Last, public art is important because it inspires people.

**Kendall :** We said this because everyone has The Freedom of Speech. According to The First Amendment, “ Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech or the press.” This is saying that we are able to express ourselves in any way. Expression also is important.

**Alexis :** For example, some people choose to hide their emotions, but public art can help you express yourself in multiple ways. Freedom of speech and expression is a right and you are entitled to it. This shows that even though people don't choose to express themselves verbally, they can express themselves through art.

**Desteny** : Public art is important to Baltimore because it shows off the good energy that it brings, that is why many people do it. According to “ A Mural in Historic Pigtown”, “It brings positive attention to the neighborhoods”. That’s inspirational because art has a meaning and when you feel motivated you can even be more positive or confident.

**Tae’Ja** : For example, in the text “ What is it? Modern-ism and Public Art at Baltimore’s Public Schools” a sculpture was made to decorate the front of a school building that was about to be closed down. But, the art saved it. It was inspirational because it brought playfulness and joy.

**I’meia** : The art, sculptures and murals that are put up around the city and different places is very important. Some people actually fought for public art to be put up in areas, that’s why some adults created and participated in the 1% Program.

**Damel** : Public Art is also important because it brings communities together. When the community has to create a mural they have to come together to agree on an idea. For Example, at LockerMan-Bundy, Mr.Jay Wolf Shlossberg-Cohen, helped students make a mural for their library that showed how they visioned their own planet and what it would be like.

**Brooklyn** : This was important because they got to decorate their home, they got to express themselves, and they got to think about what a better space would be. They thought about their futures. It also saved the school, because before the mural was put up, they were going to close the school down. The mural helped bring life into the school, people were interested in donating books, and test scores went up.

**Erica** : In conclusion, public art is very important to us because it helps us be more inspired to do different things in our lives and push harder. It also makes our city better. It helps neighborhoods look nice and it brings communities together, and it helps people realize what their lives can be like, like the mural on the Healthcare for the Homeless building.

**Sydni** : It showed how everyone deserved a home, but how homelessness can be like a nightmare. One man was able to express how he wasn’t plugged into the world, but he wanted to be plugged in. Thank you for making our city more beautiful and taking the time to listen to us. We appreciate your hard work.

**Attachment II: FGLA 60 % Design Development & Bridge design enhancement proposal**