



A Regular Meeting of the Albany Arts Committee Minutes
Monday, November 9, 2009
Albany Community Center
Edith Stone Room, 1249 Marin Ave.
5:30 p.m.

- 1. Call to Order:** 5:34p.m. Committee Members present: Chair Goodman, Abel, Adame (remotely), Bingham-Goess, Black, Maris, McQuaid, Norman and St. George.

Staff present: Supervisor Isabelle Leduc, Planning Manager Jeff Bond and Robin Mariona.

- 2. Approval of Minutes: 2009**

Motion:

Motion to approve minutes from October of 2009 made by Member Maris and seconded by Member Black. Motion carried all in favor

- 3. Public Comment:** None

- 4. Comments/Announcements from Committee Members:** Member McQuaid stated that the mural subcommittee met and created a brochure that she passed around for the Committee to take a look at. Supervisor Leduc stated that she would put murals and the brochure on the December agenda for discussion.

Member Black stated that she and Supervisor Leduc met and revised the gallery submission forms, which will also be on the Dec. agenda for approval.

Member Norman encouraged the Committee to attend the Albany High School play. Member Bingham-Goess stated that she met a local muralist and would pass on a flyer.

- 5. Comments/Announcements from Staff:** Supervisor Leduc stated that she had been contacted by a muralist that was willing to work pro bono, and she was collecting information and names of other artists as well. She informed the Committee that she had free tickets to San Francisco's Green Event and encouraged any Committee members that were able, to attend and gather information for the Albany Arts and Green Festival.

- 6. Discussion and possible action on matters related to the following items, which could include reports and/or proposed resolutions if any:**

6-1. Spring Art and Music Festival and Green Albany Day: The subcommittee will present an update. Supervisor Leduc stated that the event subcommittee met in Oct. The name for the event would be Albany Arts and Green Festival held on Sunday May 2, 2010 from 11am-3pm. The intention was to focus on family fun, increase awareness of art and music in the community with booths for local artists possibly focusing on recycled green materials in their work. The next subcommittee meeting was scheduled for Dec. 2nd and there were still many details to be decided.

Member Norman stated that she would contact the Connect Academy and Sarah Samonsky to see if they wanted to participate.

6-2. Heron Sculpture: Staff will present an update: Supervisor Leduc reported that the City Maintenance Dept. was trying to figure out the best way to remove the graffiti.

6-3. Banners: Staff will present an update: Supervisor Leduc stated that there were no plans for the creation of fall banners, and the Solano Ave. Association had decided to decorate the street poles with holiday lights. She stated that spring banners had not been discussed as yet either.

7. Future Agenda Items: Murals and brochure, draft gallery forms, heron update, banners, Arts and Green festival, Master Plan public meeting

8. Adjournment of regular meeting: 5:58pm

6:00 p.m.

1. Public Art Master Plan Workshop: Public Art Consultants Steve Huss and Brian Laczko will facilitate a workshop with the Committee. Mr. Huss stated that there had been a great response to the questionnaire that had been distributed and wanted to share some preliminary results.

2. Public Comments: No

Mr. Laczko stated that he and Mr. Huss would spend time on the questionnaire, go over the planning context including Jeff Bond from the Community Development Dept., review the Art Ordinance, types of art, spatial opportunities and constraints, cultural directions, and the associated plans including the Park and Recreation Master Plan and the new plans for economic development.

Mr. Huss stated that Albany key values and trends indicated by the questionnaire included; the excellence of schools, the small town safe feeling of the City and close relationships between neighbors. It was further discerned that residents felt the population was mostly Caucasian and Asian, well educated, fairly liberal, ecologically minded and a small town that offered big city amenities including public transportation, shopping, restaurants and walk-ability. There were older long term residents that were mainly working class and younger more affluent families with children.

The City's Planning and Building Manager Jeff Bond stated that as new building projects were proposed, interaction with the Committee regarding the public art component should begin early in the planning process. Later in the process, which could be up to 6 months or more, there would be further interactions including choice of artist. Finally after the project had been approved, there would be detailed plans including the art element for final input by the Committee. Some future projects were; Safeway, a possible grocery store on San Pablo, senior housing and St. Mary's High School.

Manager Bond gave an example of timing on a project; 9 months to a year after an application had been submitted the Planning and Zoning Commission would vote on the project. During this time the Art Committee would review the plans and most likely receive an art proposal from the planner. Once the Commission approved the project, the building permit phase would begin and take from 3 to 6 months to complete which created another opportunity for input from the Art Committee and interaction with the artist. Manager Bond hoped that the Art Committee would begin to set precedents and create criteria for smooth approval processes.

Mr. Laczko moved on to the City Art Ordinance. He stated that small property projects beginning at \$300,000 were covered under the Albany code, which was unusual. This provision left a lot of control with the applicant, giving them the option of choosing to have public art on their property. The result of

this might be difficulty amassing money in the art fund if owners opted for art on the property instead of contributing to the fund; however it made the program interesting.

Manager Bond stated that the Committee should create a plan to help guide smaller project participants in the direction the Art Committee was looking for. This would make the approval process easier. He further advised that on large and small projects, it was possible to ask for both an art project and a contribution to help build the fund.

As a final comment on the Ordinance, Mr. Laczko advised the Committee to consider tracking public and private funds. Public funds could be moved around more readily and used with fewer constraints. He highlighted the important link that the Ordinance created between the Art Committee and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Mr. Huss moved on to temporary and permanent art installations. A key element that was discerned from the questionnaire was the importance of community gatherings and gathering places to the people of Albany. This indicated the possibility of using temporary event based artwork. Mr. Huss pointed out that temporary projects served to bring awareness to an art program that might not exist, and were often used to kick-off a program at keynote or landmark locations such as Solano Avenue.

Mr. Laczko questioned the Committee as to their feelings, and their perceptions of public feeling, regarding the use of public funds for temporary art. Supervisor Leduc suggested there may be a place for a temporary art piece at the Arts and Green Festival.

Mr. Huss stated that advantages to temporary art pieces were; they could be more experimental, not subject to stricter criteria placed on permanent pieces, fill in gaps in permanent art, create opportunities for dialog and education and would make siting more flexible.

Chair Goodman stated concern about event oriented pieces, but felt there could be interesting possibilities for works that lasted from 3 months to a year in one site. Mr. Laczko stated that a well educated population might be favorable to this approach, but the downside could be seen as the use of funds for a temporary piece. Member McQuaid pointed out that art at the Bulb was temporary, which was already a start. Member Maris suggested art rotation and emphasized the need for permanent art on Solano Ave.

Member Adame asked if the cost would be less. Mr. Huss stated that was not necessarily the case, but leasing could be less expensive. He cited temporary media art in Oakland and temporary displays of sculpture in Palo Alto as examples.

Member Norman supported the idea of temporary art and gave examples of the community building benefits. Member Bingham-Goess stated the positive outcomes for Hearts on Solano, a temporary art project by the Middle School.

Chair Goodman stated that his sense from the Committee was that temporary art was an acceptable component of the plan, but did not necessarily want it to be tied to an event.

The next item for discussion was spatial opportunities and constraints. Mr. Laczko stated that the areas mentioned in the questionnaire were: Memorial Park, the Masonic Avenue corridor, Solano Avenue, Terrace Park, the Bulb and the Community Center. Participants made references to the use of natural materials, gardening and green art. Mr. Laczko mentioned the corridors targeted for economic development including Solano, Buchanan and San Pablo and opportunities were mentioned at the San

Pablo and Marin gateways. San Pablo Avenue was barely mentioned by participants in the questionnaire. Mr. Laczko asked the Committee for their ideas on landmark locations in Albany for public art and their thoughts on San Pablo.

Chair Goodman stated that San Pablo seemed to play a small role and any work would most often be seen from a car. Mr. Laczko stated that San Pablo had green medians in El Cerrito and Berkeley, which made it more attractive, but they did not hear focus on San Pablo from the Committee so it may not be the best use of funds. Member McQuaid stated that it would be disingenuous to leave San Pablo out. Manager Bond stated that it was important to capture opportunities on San Pablo that were coming up in the future for example at the possible sight of Whole Foods.

Mr. Huss stated that many people travelled the San Pablo corridor and it could be an opportunity to use art to define what was different about Albany and change the character of the Albany portion of the street. Mr. Laczko stated that at present there was in fact not much cohesion on San Pablo, but if there was development as indicated in the economic development plan, there may be a fair amount of money for projects generated in the future. He stated that a transparent policy for use and levels of funds should be developed by the Committee regarding San Pablo development.

Mr. Huss raised the question of Albany's artist base and what support there was for them, if any. It seemed to the consultants that there were artists in Albany, but would it be difficult to get them involved and what were the possibilities of funding them and involving them in the collection. Member Adame stated that there were local artists, but Albany commissions may be too small. Chair Goodman stated that the Committee should look at the artist base and create projects that would be appropriate to Albany's scale.

It was suggested that there may be projects that could be defined as Albany only artists and to create a pool of artists for smaller projects to help expedite the selection process.

As the last portion of the evening's discussion, the consultants stated that they had reviewed the Park and Recreation Master Plan and the economic development document. Mr. Laczko stated that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was a very workable document with art included in the overall strategy. He stated that the consultants were looking for City stakeholders to interview and receive input from including the Park and Recreation Commission, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the economic development group. He questioned if there were any others that were important to interview.

Member Bingham-Goess suggested the Albany Historical Society. Member McQuaid stated that the Waterfront Committee and the Traffic and Safety Commission were important to interview. Member St. George suggested local business, Flowerland and Chair Goodman suggested local galleries, restaurants, cafes and the mural subcommittee. Supervisor Leduc mentioned the Sustainability Committee. Others that were mentioned included; Karen Nelson, Sarah Samonsky, the Solano Avenue Association and the Chamber of Commerce.

As a recap the consultants and Manager Bond stated that Planning and Zoning needed three or four projects from the Committee for creating direction and vision, and they would do their best to get those done. Manager Bond stated that recession periods were good opportunities to plan and have plans in place to move forward with implementation when the economic situation improved.

Chair Goodman asked the consultants what the next steps would be and what form the report from this evenings discussion would take. Mr. Laczko stated that the report would include site and criteria recommendations ascertained from the meeting and put in a clear and unambiguous format. He stated

that the Committee needed to keep discussing policy implementation plans as a standing agenda item. He stated that Supervisor Bond may be able to present the Committee with questions that could help to focus the process. The report from the stakeholders would be presented at the January meeting and the public update event for opinions and feedback could begin with the next Art Gallery opening on January 10th. Mr. Laczko stated that there was a good opportunity to demonstrate leadership in the arts.

Chair Goodman stated that keynote phrasing for public input should be on the December agenda.

3.Adjournment of Workshop: 8:57p.m.