



CITY OF ALBANY CITY COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Agenda Date: May 6, 2024
Reviewed by: NA

SUBJECT: Purchase of Public Art Piece Barred Spiral

REPORT BY: Jeremy Allen, Media Administrator
Isabelle Leduc, Assistant City Manager

SUMMARY

The use of Art in Public Places funding is requested for the purchase of Jeff Downing's sculpture Barred Spiral for \$4,800. The sculpture has been on display for 2 years on the Ohlone Greenway as part of the City's Sculpture Loan Program.

ARTS COMMITTEE & STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adopt Resolution No. 2024-24, authorizing the use of Art in Public Places funding for the purchase of Jeff Downing's sculpture, Barred Spiral, for \$4,800.

BACKGROUND

The Sculpture Loan Program is included as a City program in the Albany Public Art Master Plan. The mission of the Sculpture Loan Program is to recognize local artists as important cultural resources and to install large-scale artwork throughout Albany to broaden public awareness and encourage dialogue about public art.

Selected sculptures are on display for two years in a highly visible outdoor location. Artists are responsible for transportation, delivery, installation, and removal of the sculpture. The artist is responsible for maintaining the sculpture and the City maintains the site, base, and plaque for the duration of the loan agreement.

At the end of the two-year loan, the City and artist consider different options such as continuing the loan for an additional two years, removal of the sculpture, donation of the sculpture to the City, or selling the sculpture to the City or a third party.

DISCUSSION

The sculpture, Barred Spiral, by Jeff Downing, is currently on display at the corner of Washington and Masonic Avenues on the Ohlone Greenway. It was installed as part of the City's Sculpture Loan Program with a loan term of May 9, 2022 - May 8, 2024. After discussing the next steps with the artist, the Arts Committee voted unanimously at their

March 2024 meeting to recommend to the City Council the purchase of the sculpture. A memo from the Arts Committee has been submitted and is included with this staff report as attachment 2 for the Council's information. A photo of the sculpture is also included as attachment 3 for the Council's information.

If purchased by the City, the sculpture will remain at its current location as a permanent public art piece. The City will continue to maintain the site, cement base, and plaque, and maintenance of the public art piece will shift to the City upon the purchase. The pad/location will no longer be included as part of the Sculpture Loan program and a Public Art Call will be released in the future to find a sculpture to be placed on the cement pad located at the corner of Masonic and Solano Avenues on the Ohlone Greenway.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

Public Art can help foster creativity, freedom of expression, cultural awareness, civic pride, and a sense of community.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

Goal 4: Encourage Community Connectivity through Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The estimated FY 2024 year-end balance of the Art in Public Places fund is \$180,000 which is sufficient to cover the purchase cost of \$4,800 for the sculpture, Barred Spiral. Maintenance costs of the public art piece are expected to be minimal, but if incurred in the future, will be covered by Art in Public Places funds.

Attachments

1. Resolution No. 2024-24
2. Memo from Arts Committee
3. Barred Spiral Photo

DATE: April 15, 2024

MEMORANDUM

To: Albany City Council

From: Albany Arts Committee

Re: Purchase of Sculpture from Sculpture Loan Program

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council purchase the sculpture Barred Spiral from Jeff Downing for long-term installation at the Washington Ave/Masonic Ave for \$4800 using Set Aside Funds for small community projects.

BACKGROUND

The Sculpture Loan Program features sculptures along the Ohlone Greenway for a two-year period. Two sculpture pads were installed in 2020 at 1) Washington Ave./Masonic Ave. and 2) Solano Ave./Masonic Ave. Pieces after the two-year loan may be purchased by the city, at the artist's discretion. Barred Spiral by Jeff Downing is located on Washington and Masonic Avenue and has a loan period of May 9, 2022 - May 8 2024. The Arts Committee voted unanimously to purchase the sculpture for long-term installment at the current location. The other sculpture pad on Solano Ave/Masonic Ave has remained empty since 2020 because the planned artist had to drop out.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Purchasing this sculpture would result in only a single sculpture pad available (Solano Ave/Masonic Ave) for the Sculpture Loan Program. The Art Committee will release a new call for applications for the single sculpture pad this summer. The single sculpture pad has remained empty since the pad was installed in 2020. Purchasing the Barred Spiral sculpture ensures there will be a piece located on the Washington and Masonic Avenue corner for the foreseeable future, whereas extending the loan or ending the loan may result in the sculpture pad becoming empty for an unknown time until a new artist is selected and the piece is installed.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

None.

SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

Purchasing the sculpture would reduce the number of pads available for other artists to loan their sculpture to the city. However, the Committee discussed the possibility of installing additional sculpture pads at other locations if there is much interest in participating in the Loan Program.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

Purchase of art for public places supports improving the quality of our neighborhoods and streets and promotes community.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The price of the sculpture is \$4800. Extending the loan for another two years would cost \$1000 while ending the loan would cost \$0, although the introduction of a new sculpture would cost about \$3000.

