

ERIN MENDENHALL  
MAYOR  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RDA



BEN KOLENDAR  
ACTING DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT *of* ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Salt Lake City Art Design Board Meeting  
May 14, 2020  
4:00- 6:50 pm  
Webex Online

**PRESENT:** Larissa Trout Nancy Rivera  
Aurelio Velazquez Justin Johnson  
Joe Jacoby Kelsey Harrison

**Staff Members**

Felicia Baca, Arts Council Executive Director  
Kat Nix, Public Art Program Manager  
Abby Draper, Public Art Program Assistant

**EXCUSED:** Jann Haworth

**GUESTS:** Tom Millar, Salt Lake City Department of Transportation  
Chris Norlem, Salt Lake City Department of Engineering  
Heath Satow, 9<sup>th</sup> South Roundabout Project Finalist and Angel Castillo  
Stephen Kessler, 9<sup>th</sup> South Roundabout Project Finalist  
Hannah Vaughn, Mark Wise, and Charlie Kimball, 9<sup>th</sup> South Roundabout  
Project Finalist artist team

**I. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes**

- a. After a quorum was established at approximately 4:05 pm, Ms. Nancy Rivera motioned to approve the minutes from the Board's March 5, 2020 convening. Ms. Larissa Trout seconded the motion. All Board members voted in favor.

**II. 9<sup>th</sup> South Roundabout Finalist Presentations**

- a. Project Overview
- i. Ms. Kat Nix provided an overview of the 9<sup>th</sup> South Roundabout call for artists. She stated that in February, the Board had selected three finalists to create proposals. The budget for the project is \$114,000. The finalists had participated in a stakeholder meeting with Mr. Chris Norlem from the Department of Engineering, Mr. Tom Millar from the Department of Transportation, and community members ranging from the chair of the East Liberty Park Community Council to business owners and longtime



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area residents. Ms. Nix read the artwork goals for the 9<sup>th</sup> South Roundabout Project. She stated that after each finalist had presented, all stakeholders were welcome to participate in the discussion and that only the Board members could vote on a recommendation to the Mayor for final approval. The Board could choose whether or not to also select an alternate to recommend. Ms. Nix read the selection criteria for the project. Ms. Trout added that as the Board discussed proposals, guiding principles included creating space for Board members to speak, accepting constructive critiques, and giving full attention to the speaker.

b. Heath Satow Presentation

- i. 9<sup>th</sup> South Roundabout Project Finalist Mr. Heath Satow presented his conceptual proposal.
- ii. Ms. Trout asked for detail on the orientation of the sculpture and Mr. Satow confirmed that the sculpture was facing north. Ms. Kelsey Harrison noted that the table welding in Mr. Satow's model was skillful. She noted that the proposal was similar to other artwork the artist had completed and asked about the site-specificity of this artwork and if this artwork represented an artistic stretch. Mr. Satow replied that he had previously sculpted modified animal forms and had been looking for the right setting for a new whimsical animal form. He stated that he learned and expanded his skill in previous forays to this type of form, and had striven to increase the dynamism of the form in this proposal. He noted that he was investigating a way to create additional sculpted dandelion seeds to place in local settings, and that "Easter Egg" aspect was something he's never done before. Ms. Angel Castillo noted that similarities between this proposal and previous projects could be considered as part of a body of work. Mr. Joe Jacoby noted that the knee joints in the proposal sculpture were higher compared to those in previous work by the artist, and asked if the effect of making the animal appear wobbly was deliberate. Mr. Satow noted that he wanted to increase dynamism and imply that the piece was about to move, which related to the dynamism of the neighborhood.

c. Stephen Kesler Presentation

- i. 9<sup>th</sup> South Roundabout Project Finalist Mr. Stephen Kesler presented his conceptual proposal.
- ii. Mr. Jacoby asked about the increased stylization of this proposed artwork compared to previous artwork by the artist. Mr. Kesler stated that he had tried a variety of levels of detail, ranging from fully realistic in color and texture to highly stylized. He found that the detail detracted from the overall form, and wanted to keep the image simple, purposefully. Mr. Aurelio Velazquez asked which direction the owl forms in the sculpture would face, and Mr. Kesler confirmed that they would face west. Ms. Nix asked about Mr. Kesler's plan for lighting the artwork. He stated that he intended to light it with two spotlights on the front of the sculpture, and his engineer had confirmed they could access the electrical hookup even given the placement of the sculpture on the concrete pad. Ms. Trout asked about the ability of the materials to resist to vandalism. Mr. Kesler noted that the work would be coated in an automotive clear coat, and the simple colors could easily be

repainted. Ms. Harrison asked why the artist had used the owl forms. Mr. Kesler noted that the inspiration for the piece came from an image of two barn owls, which are a distinctive character and easy to identify from afar. He noted that the site was just up the street from the Tracy Aviary in Liberty Park. He had considered the Andean Condor in Liberty Park but felt that having the two birds together worked well. Ms. Rivera asked if this proposal would use the same materials as work the artist had previously worked and he confirmed that any work he's done that is situated outdoors had also been fiberglass. Mr. Justin Johnson asked about the development of the form of mimicking the number "9" which the shape of the sculpture evokes. Mr. Kesler noted that he typically raises his artworks to be eleven feet off the ground minimum so viewers cannot reach the artwork. The form of the nine emerged as he was investigating ways to raise the owl forms to that height. Ms. Nix asked about the eight-year minimum lifetime of the proposed automotive paint. Mr. Kesler noted that the paint would last at least that long and could last longer with potential for a slight fade in the colors. Waxing would lengthen the life of the color. Ms. Nix asked if this was the artist's tallest sculpture yet, and Mr. Kesler confirmed it was his tallest work by 6 inches. Mr. Kesler noted that they recycle the foam used in the fabrication process and could produce the artwork on a quick timeline.

d. Hannah Vaughn, Charlie Kimball, and Marc Wise Presentation

- i. 9<sup>th</sup> South Roundabout Finalist team Ms. Hannah Vaughn, Mr. Marc Wise, and Mr. Charlie Kimball presented their conceptual proposal.
- ii. Ms. Harrison asked what materials the team was proposing. Ms. Vaughn replied that each pillar was made of creosote-soaked wooden railroad ties connected with a weathered steel core. She noted that they were using salvaged ties which were already weathered and would not need a coating beyond their existing treatment. Ms. Trout asked about the significance of the stones included in the proposal. Mr. Wise noted that the three stones were intended to introduce tension into the piece and balance the man-made railroad ties with something from the natural world. Because the site is near a fault, the team felt rock was the best material to nod to the site. Ms. Harrison asked if the stone that was situated near the edge of the roundabout was a formal choice. Ms. Vaughn stated that it threw off the grid form of the work, that the salt and pepper granite is local. The deviation from the grid shape is intended as a reference to the irreverence of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> area. Mr. Millar noted that the apron area at the base of the roundabout must remain free of stones since it was required to be clear to allow large vehicles to turn. Ms. Nix asked about how the height of the artwork would comply with sightline recommendations, and Mr. Millar noted that it would adequately obscure vision through the roundabout. Mr. Jacoby asked how the team intended artwork be lit. Ms. Vaughn stated that because the columns were so dark, they intended to light the stones with seven lights, four shining down at the suspended stone and the others on the other stones. Ms. Rivera asked how the team had interpreted the artwork goal that the piece reflect the "unique and funky history of the area." Mr. Wise stated that the funkiness came

from the concept of tension and the suspension of a very heavy object. The deviations from the perfect grid and the interplay between the natural and man-made world were interpretations of that goal. Ms. Vaughn added that a few of the columns were slightly bent and stated that the raw materials evoked funkiness.

e. Discussion

- i. Ms. Trout stated that she was struck by the whimsical, fun, unique element of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> neighborhood in Mr. Satow's piece. She noted the level of professionalism that shows through in his work and stated that it is very striking. Ms. Harrison felt that Mr. Satow's piece looked like it did not have a specific home in that site and that though the piece was weird, it did not seem site specific. She stated that the potential for additional sculpted dandelions seeds that could find their way through the neighborhood was interesting but unresolved. Ms. Trout asked how that would be funded, and Ms. Nix noted that she was anticipating talking with the city attorney about legal challenges to that part of the project. Board members discussed the funky and playful aspect of Mr. Satow's proposal and that it was interesting from all angles. The Board also discussed that Mr. Satow's experience would lend confidence to a cost-effective, durable, easily maintained, and professional project. Mr. Jacoby stated that he felt that the public would appreciate it and it would be a conversation piece however there was the potential that it may not have a long term effect. Mr. Norlem said that from an engineering perspective, Mr. Satow's work would be the easiest to maintain, with the artist team's piece being the second easiest to maintain, and Mr. Kesler's piece being third easiest. He stated that he did not have concerns about the install methods of any of the proposals.
- ii. Mr. Velazquez stated that he appreciated the inclusion of music and color in Mr. Kesler's proposal, however, his concerns came from maintenance and that the sculpture may not be best viewed in the round. Ms. Nix showed the models provided by Mr. Satow and Mr. Kesler. The Board discussed whether there was clear reason for the owl imagery and if they anticipated the artwork to age well. Ms. Trout stated that she found Mr. Kesler's proposal family and pedestrian friendly. She was disappointed that it was not more responsive to angles other than the front. She noted that the 9<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> neighborhood did have several iconic birds. Mr. Johnson stated that he liked the initial impression of the proposal but was underwhelmed by the absence of detail compared to Mr. Kesler's previous highly realistic works. Mr. Jacoby stated that and texture and this seemed to be a divergence from Mr. Kesler's previous use of color and detail. Ms. Harrison wondered if one of the owls faced the other direction it would be more appealing from multiple angles.
- iii. Ms. Trout stated that she felt that the proposal by the artist team was stunning but did not fit in the neighborhood. Mr. Johnson stated that the feeling that stood out from that team's presentation was tension and he appreciated that there were aspects of the work that were off kilter. Mr. Jacoby noted the team's process and presentation but wondered if passerby would enjoy the sculpture given the industrial,

raw materials. Ms. Rivera wondered about the team's ability to coalesce given that this was their first project together but Ms. Nix stated noted her confidence in the team from having previously worked with Hannah Vaughn on a project. Ms. Harrison stated that she found this to be was the most mature sculpturally and that the proposed materials had a deeper history than those in the other two proposals. The Board discussed the sophistication they associated with this proposal and whether it responded to the artwork goals of "funkiness". Board members weighed their impression that the proposal was strong against their feeling that it may not fit the area. Ms. Nix noted that in meetings with residents, some had articulated interest in cartwork reflecting that the area used to be funkier and was transitioning to upscale boutique. Mr. Johnson suggested that this sculpture may reflect the direction the area was heading, rather than capturing the neighborhood identity right now. Mr. Millar noted that because the artwork would be installed across the area of the roundabout, it should be considered in the context of the vegetation that will ultimately cover the roundabout. Ms. Nix added that this proposal would require a more in-depth installation process. If this proposal was selected, Ms. Nix expressed, she would like to recommend an alternate and have further conversations with the City departments of Parks and Engineering. Ms. Harrison noted that the artist team's proposal included references to history through the materials of railroad ties and granite, which both has relevance to Salt Lake City. Ms. Trout noted that she has seen the neighborhood changing tremendously and that she felt that the 9<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> neighborhood might be scratching their head about why the piece was there.

- iv. Ms. Harrison suggested a preliminary vote. Two members favored Mr. Satow's proposal, and three favored Ms. Vaughn, Mr. Wise, and Mr. Kimball's proposal. Ms. Nix redirected the discussion to those two proposals. The Board discussed the risk of carved or spray painted vandalism to the team's wood material, and noted the creosote was tough but sanding it down would leave a mark, the railroad ties were pre-worn and affordable to replace, and it will not be viewed up close in the Roundabout. Ms. Nix noted that in addition to the businesses at 9<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, there were two schools near the site. Mr. Millar also noted he worked with the residents for 2.5 years while the roundabout project was underway, and his impression of that area was that residents prided themselves on the funky history but were happy to embrace the changes to the area.

f. Artist Recommendation to Mayor

- i. Ms. Harrison motioned to recommend the proposal by Ms. Vaughn, Mr. Wise, and Mr. Kimball to the Mayor, with the proposal by Mr. Satow as an alternate. Mr. Jacoby seconded the motion and Ms. Rivera and Mr. Velazquez voted in favor. Ms. Trout stated that she respected the Board's decision, but was worried the neighborhood would not accept it. She noted that the goal of the Board was to consider all stakeholders in making the recommendation, including the Mayor and residents. She felt that Mr. Satow's proposal was a better fit for the area, and was better associated with a warm effect of the area. Mr.

Johnson stated that he hoped the mature look of the recommended artwork may go over well. He noted that no artwork would please everyone in the community. Ms. Trout reiterated a four to two vote in favor of recommending the team's proposal to the Mayor.

**III. Arts Council ED Update**

- a. Ms. Nix reported on behalf of Ms. Felicia Baca that an ordinance revision had been transmitted to City Council for review. The revision includes clarification that deaccession is in the Board's jurisdiction, a 1.5 percent for art program which is an increase in the current one percent, and allows more flexibility on the makeup of the Board.
- b. Ms. Nix also reported that there the program had a bid for an inventory and condition assessment of the entire public art collection.

**IV. Public Comment**

- a. None.

**V. Other Business/Adjourn**

- a. Ms. Nix noted that the next Art Design Board meeting would be on June 4, to select an artist or artists from the Pre-Qualified Artist Pool for artwork at a new Trax station. She stated she will check in with the Board to determine if the meeting would be virtual or in person.
- b. Ms. Harrison introduced herself to the Board.
- c. Ms. Trout motioned to close the meeting and Mr. Johnson seconded, all Board members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:50 pm.