

ERIN MENDENHALL
MAYOR



BEN KOLENDAR
DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT of ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Salt Lake City Art Design Board Meeting
February 4, 2021
4:00 – 6:00 pm
Webex Online

PRESENT:

Larissa Trout	Joe Jacoby
Justin Johnson	Aurelio Velazquez
Nancy Rivera	

Staff Members

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

EXCUSED:

GUESTS:

Jason Stevenson, East Liberty Park Community Organization
Tom Millar, Department of Transportation
Chris Norlem, Department of Engineering
Stephen Kesler, Finalist
Soonju Kwon, Finalist
Jason Manley, Finalist

I. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes

- a. After a quorum was established at approximately 4:00pm, Mr. Justin Johnson called the meeting to order and read a statement concerning the need for remote meetings in light of the pandemic. Mr. Johnson motioned to approve the minutes from the Board's December 3, 2020 convening, January 7, 2021 convening, and January 21, 2021 convening. Ms. Nancy Rivera seconded and all Board members voted in favor.

II. 9th South Roundabout Re-Envisioned Finalist Presentations

- a. Ms. Kat Nix introduced the 9th South Roundabout Re-Envisioned project, noting that the finalists had been selected in the Board's November convening from the 9th South Roundabout Re-Envisioned call for artists. Ms. Nix stated that Board would hear proposals, ask the finalists questions, and discuss the proposals. The options facing the Board were to select a proposal to recommend to the Mayor and also recommend an alternate, request revisions from one or more finalists, or reject all proposals and pursue all new proposals. Ms. Nix noted that the call for artists was experimental in that it had been written to allow finalists to create designs that could host a rotating mural program. Ms. Nix noted the Board would consider some or all of the artwork goals and led the Board in a review of selection criteria. Ms. Nix welcomed East Liberty Park Community Organization Chair Jason Stevenson, and gave an overview of his role in facilitating community engagement for this project. She stated that the public art program developed a community survey with Mr. Stevenson which was released among 9th and 9th residents and visitors, soliciting stories about the area and input on the community's preferences. The responses were formatted and provided to the finalists to inform their design development.

- b. Mr. Stephen Kesler Presented his Proposal for the 9th South Roundabout Re-Envisioned Public Art Opportunity.
 - i. Mr. Joe Jacoby stated that he appreciated the evolutions in Mr. Kesler's designs throughout the process. Mr. Jacoby asked if the form could be installed white for a period while the first mural was being generated or if it would ideally be painted immediately. Mr. Kesler stated that he felt that there was beauty in the form of the whale without murals and mentioned a famously photographed white humpback called Migaloo. He noted that it would also be possible to have the mural painted while the sculpture was still in the studio, as long as seam work could be painted onsite. Ms. Nancy Rivera asked about the plans for LED lighting on the artwork. Mr. Kesler noted that he had not been considering colored lighting and felt that it would be beautiful standing out illuminated in white light at night. Mr. Kesler shared that he had previously considered opening up his artwork to painted elements by other artists. In a previous project at the zoo, he had pursued opening artwork to an annual rotation of designs. Ms. Trout asked if the sculpture would be shiny or matte if left white. Mr. Kesler stated that he could deliver the sculpture as raw prime if a muralist would be taking action soon, or if it would stand as white for over six months, he could deliver with either a matte or gloss automotive clear coat. He noted that this would be as resistant to graffiti as a car, and if it were tagged it could be sanded down and re-covered. Mr. Kesler noted that he had dealt with maintaining these same materials in his previous artwork. Mr. Justin Johnson asked about the process required to transition from a coated white to a mural or from one mural to the next. Mr. Kesler stated that between each iteration of paint, the sculpture would be cleaned with Scotchbrite to clean and score the surface and then could be primed (if desired); latex paints are suitable in addition to automotive paints for this surface, and an automotive clear coat or a different anti-graffiti coating could be applied on top. Mr. Kesler compared the clean-prime-paint process to prepping a wall in a house for new paint. Mr. Tom Millar noted that the design of the roundabout would accommodate a large truck by allowing driving on the skirt. The tips of the pectorals in the sculpture need to be 18 inches back from the face of the curb. Mr. Kesler noted he could easily accommodate that. Ms. Nix confirmed that the sculpture was to scale with a real humpback whale. Mr. Kesler stated that there was an effect on people when standing next to such large forms. He noted that he had focused on the way the form filled the space of the roundabout and intended to plant some ornamental grass around the artwork base to evoke the form emerging from water. Mr. Chris Norlem stated that from an engineering perspective, the height of the pectorals was safe, because it was high enough to be consistently out of reach of the public. Mr. Kesler noted that because the roundabout is mounded, the pectorals are increasingly high above the ground as they reach out from the body. Ms. Nix asked how Mr. Kesler had interpreted the community survey results. Mr. Kesler stated that throughout the process he has been developing his understanding of the community. He analyzed the feedback provided by the survey and focused on the terms 'diversity,' 'inclusion,' and 'eclectic.' He stated that he had looked up each public artwork submitted by community members, to consider those in his design. The Board discussed the intended timeline and process for soliciting murals. Ms. Nix noted that a mural call would be quick, because the scope and budget are resolved, so it would be relatively simple to run the call for artists and install the mural in tandem with the sculpture. Ms. Nix also noted that Stephen worked on a rapid timeline so the sculpture could be in place in time to have work on the mural happen in coordination with the 9th South Street Fair.
- c. Ms. Soonju Kwon presented her proposal for the 9th South Roundabout Re-Envisioned Public Art Opportunity.
 - i. Mr. Jacoby asked if elevating the sculpture higher was a possible method to resolve potential safety concerns about attracting people across traffic to use the

sculpture like a jungle gym, or if that would ruin the concept. Ms. Kwon stated that she was not opposed to altering the height of the artwork but would like to explore the implications of raising it and noted that raising the sculpture substantially would reduce the connection between eye level and the artwork. Ms. Kwon noted that it was always tricky to find the balance between artistic freedom and the extent to which concessions needed to be made to public safety when it came to the built environment. Ms. Trout asked Ms. Kwon to discuss the role of the mural component in her work. Ms. Kwon stated that she had attempted to create a design that would provide balance between her sculptural component and the mural component, noting that she was looking forward to the addition of color to the work via the murals. She stated that the selected muralist should have full freedom over their design, and noted that in keeping with the overall artwork, the mural surface itself was curved and organic. Ms. Aurelio Velazquez asked if the steel components would be painted. Ms. Kwon confirmed that she had selected to powder coat it in white to direct the viewer's attention to the curvature and movement of the form. Mr. Norlem stated that engineering had a concern about people climbing the structure. He asked if the existing concrete pad would be removed. Ms. Kwon stated it would remain, possibly covered by dirt to avoid wasting additional resources on removing it.

- d. Mr. Jason Manley presented his proposal for the 9th South Roundabout Re-Envisioned Public Art Opportunity
 - i. Mr. Jacoby asked if a different color than the natural rust color of Corten steel would be more legible. Mr. Manley stated that he had considered a variety of metals, but had settled on Corten due to the texture and color it would produce and the ability to resolve the patina before installation. He valued the natural, unpainted effect of Corten and how it could be distanced from the effect of signage in the area. He noted that evening lighting would change the effect over the course of the day. Mr. Jacoby noted that the plaques at each of the designated viewing locations helped increase the legibility. Ms. Trout asked if Mr. Manley would pay the poets for the use of their work. Mr. Manley confirmed that they had all consented and were excited to have their work in public, and that there would be a stipend that could also help cover their publishers' copyright fee. Mr. Norlem relayed, on behalf of the Transportation Division, concerns that text would be distracting to drivers and it may be unclear whether pedestrians observing the artwork were waiting to cross the street. Mr. Norlem and Ms. Nix stated that neither of those concerns made the project impossible, as they would likely both have the effect of slowing traffic. Mr. Manley noted that he was committed to making public art with sufficient detail to engage the viewer, especially the pedestrian. Ms. Baca noted that there was an opportunity for braille text on the plaques, and Ms. Nix confirmed that the plaques at the viewing locations would list the poems.
- e. Discussion
 - i. The Board discussed the proposals for the 9th South Roundabout Re-Envisioned Public Art Opportunity. They expressed initial interest in Mr. Kesler's proposal, with Mr. Jacoby stating that it achieved goals that had not been met in the previous iteration of the call for artists. Ms. Nix relayed Ms. Rivera's reflections, noting that it was an unexpected subject matter and grabbed attention, and that she had concerns that leaving it white would attract vandalism. Mr. Johnson stated that installing the sculpture white would generate an "aha moment" that could be recreated a second time when the mural was added. Mr. Jacoby stated there could be opportunity for public outreach where postcards, for example, could be distributed to the community to generate their own designs for the form. Mr. Baca noted that the mural budget as it existed was not sufficient to place murals on the entire form while also paying national best practice of price per square foot. Ms. Nix stated that she had alerted Mr. Kesler to this concern and he was open to any creative or partial engagement of a mural artists with the form, though he was interested in having the entire form painted. Ms. Nix stated

that the scope of the murals could be determined in collaboration with the selected muralist and that it may be possible to iterate the mural three times instead of four to increase the mural budget in each iteration. The Board discussed Ms. Kwon's proposal. Ms. Trout stated that this was a beautiful form and she felt like it was a challenge to balance the safety concerns with the ways that limited the forms. She stated that it somewhat evoked a jungle gym. Ms. Baca noted that she wished for clearer understanding of what was acceptable from a public safety perspective and what artistic endeavors were deal breakers from a safety perspective. Ms. Rivera reflected that she felt this may not be the best proposal to engage connection from the community. Mr. Jacoby noted that there may be a difference between the conceptual underpinnings and the concrete deliverable. The Board discussed Mr. Manley's proposal. Ms. Rivera reflected that the inclusion of five poems was a lot of text and that she appreciated the inclusion of multiple disciplines into the work, creating a collaborative effect similar to the collaborative effect of murals. Mr. Jason Stevenson reflected that poetry was a durable art format and the multiple angles of the sculpture could be viewed as reflecting the multiple dimensions of the community. Mr. Johnson stated that he appreciated the detail in the artwork and Mr. Jacoby noted that the viewing stations marked by plaques added value. Ms. Baca stated that she felt this proposal achieved the same effect of a rotating mural component in terms of serving multiple artists in a single project. Ms. Trout stated that she liked the inclusion of poetry but that she found it busy. Mr. Velazquez stated that the colors of Mr. Manley's proposal would eventually seem to disappear into the environment. Mr. Norlem stated that both Mr. Manley and Mr. Kesler's proposals were low-concern from an engineering perspective. Mr. Jacoby stated that Mr. Kesler's proposal had a scale that would make a coherent impression on the viewer. Ms. Trout stated that Mr. Kesler's proposal most strongly fit the goals and criteria, and engaged in an exciting way with an experimental call that blended sculpture and mural. The Board stated that the artwork is unexpected and conversation-sparking. Mr. Norlem stated that it was a noteworthy design and that he expected folks to specifically visit the 9th and 9th area to see the sculpture.

- ii. Ms. Trout motioned to recommend Mr. Kesler's proposal to the Mayor with Mr. Manley's recommended as the alternate. Mr. Jacoby seconded and all Board members present voted in favor. Ms. Rivera's schedule had required her to leave the meeting and she therefore abstained.

III. Executive Director's Comment

- a. Ms. Baca noted that City Council had taken a unanimous straw poll in favor of an increase to a 1.5 percent for art budget, and further revisions to that ordinance were being worked out. She stated that the business development team looked forward to helping the arts council do community engagement with the businesses around the Life of State project site.

IV. Public Comment

- a. None.

V. Other Business/Adjourn

- a. Ms. Nix thanked the Board for their work and Mr. Stevenson for his engagement throughout the call for artist process. Mr. Johnson motioned to close the meeting, Mr. Jacoby seconded and all Board members present voted in favor.