



**UrbanArt Commission  
Public Art Oversight Committee  
Wednesday, July 10, 2024 – 1 pm**

In attendance: Jen Prudhome Booker, Kate Roberts, C. Rose Smith, Mario Walker; UAC staff: Richard Echols, Lakeisha Edwards, Kayla J. Smith-Hardy, Travis Washington

Smith-Hardy opens the July PAOC meeting thanking everyone for attending.

**APPROVALS**

I. June 2024 Approvals

Smith-Hardy shares the last meeting minutes that were approved via email. No quorum results in no meeting minutes from the prior month. To recap, Smith-Hardy shares that Hickory Hill Bus Shelter Enhancement-100% + Final Acceptance, Gooch Park-Final Acceptance, and finalists for the Heights Line, Wind Memphis CDC/Alonzo Weaver Park, and Alcy Ball were approved.

II. Project Approvals

a. Alcy Ball- Finalists

Echols states there are three finalists for the Alcy Ball Neighborhood Markers project. The finalists are Zhixin Walker, Khara Woods, and Kirsten Williams.

Roberts asks if there was a third person added.

Smith-Hardy states she is referring to the WIND Memphis/Alonzo Weaver Park project where Zhixin Walker is one of the two finalists.

Richards shares the finalists will be presenting in August. Echols asks for approval. Roberts motions, Prudhome Booker seconds, and the motion passes.

b. Mustard Seeds- Selection Committee

Smith-Hardy shares that this approval is for the Mustard Seeds Inc. mural selection committee. She says the committee met recently and is very excited about the project, and this is the last project to start from this current round Neighborhood Art Initiative. Smith-Hardy reminds the committee that neighborhood art initiative is neighborhood-led projects where residents and

stakeholders determine the scope of work. Smith-Hardy adds UAC assists with ensuring the right city officials or employees are involved, so everyone is following protocols and getting the right approvals. Smith-Hardy shares that nearly everyone on the committee is involved with Mustard Seeds inc, who does a lot of community work around literacy, and career and financial readiness for all ages.

Smith-Hardy adds that close by is First Lauderdale Baptist Church. Many of these committee members also attend First Lauderdale, a church and neighborhood that holds a lot of history. Smith-Hardy states that the committee is interested in an easement to have the mural on the Mustard Seeds building. Therefore, having a non-voting city official involved is important for this project to see if an easement could be possible. Smith-Hardy asks if there are any questions or comments about the selection committee before voting. Smith-Hardy adds that the committee is also interested in directly commissioning Darlene Newman for the project.

Walker motions, Smith seconds, and the motion passes.

## **UPDATES**

### **III. Other Project Updates**

#### **a. Douglass mural dedication**

Echols shares that UAC has been very busy this month, and PAOC is encouraged to attend dedication events. Echols shows images from the Juneteenth Mural Dedication in Douglass. The mural was created by Jamond Bullock. The celebration was the 31st Juneteenth event for the neighborhood. Echols expresses it was a very hot day, but it was still great to celebrate the community and properly dedicate the artwork.

#### **b. Hickory Hill bus shelters dedication**

Echols shares Hickory Hill Bus Shelters Dedication was a grand event as well. He expresses it was one of his favorite dedications, because so many different people came together. There was a partnership between Gestalt Schools, which is PCA High and PCA Middle school. There was a second portion of the dedication celebrating dance. Echols shares they had snacks and water inside. Then, Echols describes images of the commissioned artist Brandon Marshall talking about this project. There were slides featuring a dance group and a video element shown last month, which was a collaboration between the community and local artists and dancers. The video is now available on YouTube. Another slide shows the PCA cheerleaders and dancers jookin.

Edwards expresses gratitude to PAOC for approving contingency funds for the student workshop. The students were very engaged and interested.

Rose asks if UAC sends out event invitations, or do people have to stay tuned through the website to know about UAC events.

Edwards responds that UAC shares events through newsletters, press releases, and events are shared on social media. UAC has a Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Eventbrite page.

Smith expresses gratitude and asks to be added to the newsletter subscription.

Edwards shares she would ensure all PAOC members are added to the newsletter.

c. Metal Museum-Final Design/Start of Fabrication

Smith-Hardy shares that the Orange Mound Accelerate project at the intersection of Park and Airways will need an email approval later in July. Currently, the Metal Museum has plans to clean up the surrounding area of the sculpture, and the selection committee is helping decide on a final option. The goal is to have something aesthetically pleasing and safe for pedestrians. Some options include grass, gravel, bushes or bollards. Committee members are also considering if the color and font of the words should stay the same or change. Smith-Hardy asks if anyone has questions or suggestions for her to take back to the Orange Mound group.

Roberts asks if there will still be planters and if it would be one planter box.

Smith-Hardy responds that there will still be a planter box, and the committee is dedicated to planting maintenance.

d. Jesse Turner Park progress

Smith-Hardy shares images of the fabrication happening for Jesse Turner Park. Artist Maxwell Emcays is working on some of the columns for 5 Pillars. Smith-Hardy shares that Emcays has some considerations for the selection committee in terms of slight word change or image placement. If any changes are made, Smith-Hardy expresses that she would be updating PAOC. Emcays has the TN engineering clearance needed now as well. Smith-Hardy asks if there were any comments or questions about this project, and there were none.

e. L.E. Brown Park

Washington shares the L.E. Brown Park is ready to start the process of asking for contingency. This is a project that predates everyone currently on the UAC team and a part of PAOC. Washington shares images on the contingency request breakdown and notes the total is quite large. However, the budget displayed still includes the remaining \$20,00 still left in the project budget, which makes the contingency request for \$61,000. The budget is itemized to show the cost for fabrication, materials, and labor. Washington states the team wanted to leave this request with PAOC to review first before asking for a vote. This time will allow space for PAOC members to provide feedback and any questions to feel comfortable enough approving any amount. Washington then talks through the next images in the presentation that features what the artist Arnold Thompson has already been working on. Thompson is working to get all the pieces to a mirror finish polish. Many fabricators backed out on assisting which has left Thompson having to do research and find new fabricators to help.

Washington reiterates how the project pre-dates everyone but to his knowledge the original fabricators made grave errors in welding the pieces together. Welds were two to three inches thick, and the wrong process was used. Thompson had to enlist a fabricator to do some cutting, re-welding on pieces that were starting to sugar up, which is an oxidation process that happens further build up.

The most recent fabricators have been grinding those pieces down as well as polishing them to a finished level. Thompson has had to use the majority of the allocated project funds to correct those mistakes. There is still quite a bit to go and a few pieces that still need to be fabricated and are major components to the piece. Additionally, concrete still needs to be poured.

Washington shared they were able to finally secure a good concrete pouring quote. Originally, some quotes were as high as \$30,000. Some architects helped the team find some contractors with better rates around \$15,000. Washington asks if anyone has questions.

Roberts asks for clarification around the actual contingency amount since the total number listed on presentation shows \$81,000.

Washington responds Thompson accidentally included the \$20,000 still remaining in the project budget. Washington states that Thompson has not received any funds during Washington's tenure so far at UAC that started in 2022. The project has been on hold since 2020. Thompson is requesting \$60,000 in contingency funds.

Roberts follows up asking if \$60,000 total is even available in contingency funds. She notes this is the largest contingency request she has witnessed since joining PAOC.

Edwards responds she personally was expecting a request around \$35,000-\$40,000 due to the large damage she saw for herself while visiting the site. Edwards emphasizes the piece is completely destroyed, and the original fabricators surely did not do their tasks correctly. Edwards continues stating that a choice has to be made. Some options to consider are axing the project or pouring more funds into the project. Edwards states the \$81,000 total was not anticipated nor encouraged to approve. Edwards suggested perhaps the artist could go in another direction but is unsure what how much that option would cost as well. PAOC would have to choose between scrapping the project or deciding how much of contingency to approve, considering what the final total project cost would be. Edwards notes she does not have a vote in the matter but wanted to present some options since everyone is so new to this project.

Roberts asks what was the original allocation.

Washington responds the original project budget was approx \$88,000, so a good portion of the project funds have already been used as Edwards noted earlier. Edwards shares how he had been trying to get quotes from local fabricators to either fix or rebuild the current fabricated pieces. A few local fabricators responded they did not even care to touch it due to the poor work completed by the original fabricators. Washington notes the original fabricators got the cuts and bends correct but they made mistakes doing the welding. For the local fabricators who consider salvaging, it would cost a lot more.

Smith asks what it would take to cut losses and encourage Thompson to move in a different direction.

Edwards responds that scenario would mean no more additional funds would be given to the artist, since the artist will be paid for all work done so far. Edwards adds that she is unsure about how to handle fabricated pieces and if all of those just stay with the artist.

Roberts asks how much is done already with this project.

Washington responds that Thompson has the actual forms, the main pillars in which all five pieces are already created. Washington shares that Thompson also has the main connection portions fabricated at the top that are shaped like a hexagon. The remaining portion that needs to be formed are the colorful pieces. Washington adds that at the top and bottom are actually shrouds that are bent metal that will be cut, formed, attached, and then powder coated. Then

the concrete base still needs to be done, as well as any other polishing to finish getting the rest of the wells down to where they should be.

Roberts asks how much does the concrete cost.

Washington responds he was able to secure a better quote of \$15,000 directly with a company who works hand-in-hand with Archimania. Washington shares prior to him now managing this project, Thompson had received his own quotes prior, one for \$28,000 and another was for \$30,000.

Roberts states it sounds like the forms are basically there and asks if it is just the finishing left.

Washington responds yes it is the finishing of those top components, the last portions that will attach everything together. Washington adds it is also the connecting ring, shrouds where there is color at the top and bottom, and the concrete is still needed. The concrete will be a basic slab and will include some engraving. Washington states there is a contractor willing to work with them, giving a \$15000 quote.

Smith asks how long it will take to produce.

Washington responds that ideally we are looking for a spring 2025 complete installation. The new fabricators gave a timeline to start in the fall, since they are currently finishing up some projects. Thompson has the other forms to continue to get them fully finished and polished. Ideally Thompson would have his forms fabricated by the end of fall and installation could be early spring.

Roberts states she was thinking about the project that former Executive Director Lauren was working on before her departure.

Washington responds that it was for the JFK Park project.

Roberts recalls the former Executive Director did go back to the artist for that project, and she told him he needed to get everything he needed down to a minimum cost wise. So for the current project, Roberts understands that the concrete foundation for \$15,000 is set and essential. However, Roberts wonders what are the other parts of the budget that have to be simplified. If this is not possible, should we walk away, Roberts asks.

Washington agrees. He emphasizes Edwards' earlier comment that the number they received from Thompson was not expected at all.

Roberts shares how this project also predates her, since she has been a part of PAOC for a year and half. She states that she is curious about it losing any key elements. She worries if it is too simplified, would the pieces still feel complete and achieve the initial idea. If things have to be simplified some, does it still feel worthy for the space that's been waiting for it.

Washington responds that it is tough to answer, because he is unsure of how much he could simplify. He states how he has shared with Thompson several times he was present from the start, so these fabrication mistakes would not have happened. Depending on how much contingency is allotted, this would affect the outlook of the project. Scaling down will change the overall outcome or impact it is meant to have.

Edwards expresses that she feels like we could still end up with a quality product, but it would not look like a \$120,000 product. Edwards shares having some reservations about the product costing so much versus the scale.

Washington agrees with Edwards. He states for other projects around that amount, you would expect a little bit more given the larger budget.

Smith asks if we are advocating for a whole new product and what is this current piece's significance to the location.

Washington responds that he will forward some backstory on this project, since he did not have those details at the moment. He says he knows it is related to self reflections for the people in the area. So, they can see themselves in art. It is essentially inviting people to reflect about themselves, their past, present, and future. Washington reiterates he will send out the write up before the end of the day.

Roberts adds one thing she is concerned about is the reflective surfaces. She asks if the surface is going to get too hot.

Washington responds that yes it will have some heat. The inside is hollow, so it will not hold as much heat. With the piece being metal itself and in a space completely exposed, there will be moments where the metal does heat up.

Edwards adds the cost, no matter the route will still be about the same. The committee has a choice to give Thompson contingency funds and pour into the completion of this project or create something new and that would for sure cost more than \$20,000. Edwards states more funds have to be spent either way, and the final product needs to be worth even installing into the park. Edwards shares she wanted to provide options to consider knowing this project is going to go over budget regardless.

Smith asks how invested the team is into this particular artist and do we know of any reputable work completed by this artist. Knowing the project started in 2020 and will take 5 total years to complete, how invested is this group in this current project and artist.

Roberts adds she is following Executive Director Edwards that more funds have to be spent either way. Roberts wonders if the project would be pushed back, since it is not in the current fiscal year budget and assumes resuming this project will not be immediate. Roberts calls out that either the area is receiving a sculpture as soon as next year or a few years later if an entirely new project needs to be included in the next available fiscal year budget.

Smith-Hardy states since there will not be a vote today the team wants to ensure all questions and follow up steps are captured. Smith-Hardy asks what all the committee needs to review in advance to feel comfortable to vote, besides project description.

Smith responds that the artist's CV would be helpful to know what previous projects the artist has completed.

Roberts adds that the team should ask the artist where in the budget could he scale back.

Smith-Hardy responds with an additional question asking the committee how much they would be comfortable approving for contingency. She explains that the remaining \$20,000 is too low, but \$60,000 more is way too much, so is there a medium range to offer.

Roberts asks if there is \$60,000 left in contingency funds.

Edwards responds that she does not have the exact number available to share at the moment, but there is at least \$60,000 left in contingency. Edwards adds that funds will still be needed for future contingencies, noting that even less contingency is budgeted for FY'25 projects to stretch the artist project budgets.

Smith asks if anyone had reached out to the Metal Museum for fabrication.

Washington responds that they were some of the first people he contacted. However, the Metal Museum was uninterested at the time trying to revive the piece.

Edwards adds that she does not think their choice had to do with the particular artist but more so about the damage done.

Washington states the Metal Museum also could not do repair work within a budget that works for the project.

Roberts shares as she is looking at the budget that the foundation is essential, as well as the welding, grinding, and polishing. She notices that the custom-made tiles and installation has not started. She adds that the sandblasting and installation also still needs to be done and asks for clarification.

Washington responds that this is the process of them transferring the sculpture to the site and putting it into the ground and installing it into the concrete base for Thompson.

Roberts adds that the foundation, welding, and installation of the top ring is all needed, which is still going to be costly.

Smith-Hardy reads a Zoom chat question from Prudhome Booker, which reads will it cost additional funds to fix the unsatisfactory work from the original subcontractors and if they were paid.

Washington responds that all prior payments were distributed before his arrival to UAC, and Thompson has been using funds he still had access to from those previous payments.

Smith-Hardy checks to see if Walker is still logged on. She asks Walker for any input he has for budget recommendations or things to take back to the artist.

Walker responds that he would need to send some time to review the budget proposal more.

Smith-Hardy summarizes that the team will send over a project description and the artist CV. She reads out Prudhome Booker's chat comments that says we need to likely get the request down 50% of the original request. Smith-Hardy notes she understands this means trying to get additional funds down to \$30,000 instead of \$60,000.

Walker asks if Thompson has a contractor for installation.

Washington responds that Thompson did have a contractor he started with initially, and those two have kept in contact in case the project does move forward.

Walker asks to receive information on the contractor as well.

f. Chelsea Flood Wall

Edwards shares she wants to mention the Chelsea floodwall. At the recent city council meeting, Michalyn Easter-Thomas secured \$200,000 for this project. There is artwork there that the community is not pleased with. Edwards states she wants PAOC to know that UAC will be sharing more about the transparent process for completing these public art projects. She adds of course a part of this process is the PAOC approvals. Edwards adds that the next steps are bringing the Chelsea selection committee lists to PAOC to approve. This will be a very community based project to honor the significant disappointment in how the first murals were created. Edwards shares this project has been mentioned continuously as a priority for the City. Edwards adds that youth involvement from Juvenile Court, Stax Academy, and the neighborhood will also take place with this project.

Smith-Hardy mentions UAC upcoming artist gathering at Crosstown Concourse then adjourns the meeting.

IV. Maintenance Updates

-

**[Upcoming \(Zoom\) Meeting Dates @ 1:00 PM:](#)**

August 14, 2024