

EDUCATION, ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE

October 27, 2009

4:35 P.M.

Councilman McGary, Chairman, called the meeting of the Education, Arts & Culture Committee to order with Councilmen Murphy, Ladd, Benson, Berz, Robinson, Scott, Gilbert and Rico present. City Attorneys Michael McMahan and Valeria Malueg and Shirley Crownover, Assistant Clerk to the Council, were also present.

Others present included Dan Johnson, Daisy Madison, Larry Zehnder, Richard Beeland, and Peggy Townsend.

PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

Chairman McGary invited Lily Wills and Peggy Townsend to the table. He stated that if anyone had been following the newspaper and e-mails that the tone is becoming heated; that this was not a personal issue to him, and he would like to refrain from attacks.

Councilman Benson stated that he did not think there was any heat out there.

Chairman McGary stated that he would like to bracket the conversation and put it to the side and start at the very beginning, mentioning three options: (1) Funding at less than \$100,000; (2) Continuing to fund at \$100,000; and (3) Funding at more than \$100,000. He stated that to help facilitate this conversation, we would start at funding less than \$100,000.

He called on Peggy Townsend who passed out a sheet, which is made a part of this minute material of their permanent and temporary inventory and what it takes to take care of the art and insure it. There are 107 pieces documented, and a very small amount of these were purchased with city funds and are part of our collection. 42 of these pieces are on loan. The total value is \$1,045,698.00. The value of the total collection is \$3,253,835.86. Ms. Townsend noted that this does not include works in the County and stated that she was using this as a tool to show what we have and what is under our auspices.

Chairman McGary noted that the City had allocated no dollars at all for a lot of pieces, which could disappear and decay.

The second handout, which is also made a part of this minute material, shows where the \$100,000 goes. Chairman McGary thanked Larry Zehnder for creating this. The account is constituted three ways—Lyndhurst, Benwood, and the City. We are not paying for a fulltime person. He stated that if the foundations pulled out, this shows what we would be left with.

Mr. Zehnder added that the foundations contributed \$45,333 toward estimated expenses of \$68,000. Councilman Benson pointed out that we don't work on a calendar year; however Mr. Zehnder noted that the foundations do.

Chairman McGary noted that in summary here, we are not paying salaries; that there could be no art in the neighborhoods with \$100,000 funding.

The third option was to increase the amount and would allow for art in the neighborhoods.

Councilwoman Berz went back to the second document, which totals \$93,430.00. She stated that only one-third of this was being paid by us and wanted to know where the other 2/3rds of the money was?

Mr. Johnson stated that we pay 1/3 of the \$74,880.00 for the personal services contract (salary). Mr. Zehnder added that the \$100,000 does cover the salary of the employee. Chairman McGary added that currently the contract person is not a city employee, and this is coming out of capital dollars. Mr. Zehnder agreed that it was taken out of capital.

Councilman Rico stated that art is good but these are hard times, and we are supporting art as much as we can afford; that longevity pay should come first; that we are in a recession and hard times and until we get the things we really need fixed first, we can't go any further. He reiterated that longevity pay comes first.

Councilman Murphy stated that he had an e-mail from a good friend; that for sake of argument, the 1% is not honored and has not been honored since day one. He noted that now is the time we pick to have a fight; that the Public Art Program had done wonderful things for the City and was a marketing vehicle; that we can cut this out and look at what is necessary such as garbage, patrolling the streets, and putting out fires. He looked at funding mechanisms, noting that funding is revenue and not an expense; that this is an additional expense. He questioned if investment was not needed to find a dedicated funding mechanism such as \$.50 more on a hotel night stay. He stated that we needed to find something to fund this.

Chairman McGary stated that he appreciated Councilmen Rico and Murphy's remarks; that the purpose of this meeting is not to come to some conclusion but to see where the dollars are going, and he was giving the Council information as we get ready to make a Capital Budget; that this was for the Council to decide.

Councilman Gilbert stated that we had allocated money for Water Quality, and he was getting calls that that money was wasted; that art brings more revenue to the City and this is profitable. He mentioned that the billboard with the frog did not go anywhere.

Councilwoman Robinson pointed out that longevity pay was not capital money but a general revenue expense; that Mayor Littlefield had already said that funding \$100,000 was never off the table; that it was safe to say that giving less was off the table; that this was an important program, and we needed to keep our heads and move with caution and hold steady and re-visit an increase at a later time. She stated that a viable Art Program could make a huge difference and was a great treasure of this City. She urged to hold the boat steady; that this \$100,000 belonged in the Capital Budget.

Councilman Benson stated that we had heard who is paying for public art. He mentioned the tremendous burden of annexation and getting nothing from the county; that he appreciated Chairman McGary bringing these three things and Councilwoman Robinson saying that we had \$100,000. He stated that there might be a way to get more than \$100,000 and stated capital money was not different from general revenue money. He stated that we needed to be cognizant—that it was taking \$1.5 million dollars to repair the Passage and a lawsuit was going on now to get a judgment; that he would be more than willing to spend more of this money on public art.

Attorney McMahan noted that the Passage lawsuit is in the infant stage.

Councilman Benson stated that we don't have the money now but could have a dedicated judgment; that art attracts people, as does police service and good roads—all together—and well rounded; that he could see more than \$100,000 down the road if we get the money from the Passage.

Councilwoman Scott stated that she was against perpetual fixed annual funding.

Councilwoman Berz went back to the fact that we gave \$100,000 and wanted to know how this was used in the past and what the Plan was. Mr. Zehnder responded that they did a Plan. She asked where the \$100,000 went—that this handout looks like it all went to salary when in fact it went to leverage a lot of other money; that her suggestion would be that this is not true reporting of the money spent.

Ms. Townsend stated that this was what they had been working off of, with Councilwoman Berz agreeing that they had done good, but it still looked like everything was going to salary, when it leveraged other dollars.

Chairman McGary asked what we would be looking for at the next meeting; that we would take a two weeks' recess and then come back and revisit this.

On motion of Councilwoman Berz, seconded by Councilman Gilbert, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as published.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.