



Date: March 20, 2018

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager
From: Andre Pettigrew, Director, Office of Economic and Workforce Development
Subject: Acceptance of the Donation of Public Art Sculptures from Trinity Park Foundation

Executive Summary

The Trinity Park Foundation, Inc. approached the City of Durham Office of Economic and Workforce Development, as the liaison to the Cultural Advisory Board and Public Art Committee, with a proposal to donate two art sculptures to be permanently installed on public medians in the Trinity Park neighborhood. Each of the sculptures would be created by a different local artist, Michael Waller and Al Frega and be site specific--located at the City-owned Markham Avenue median at the corner of Buchanan Boulevard and Markham Avenue, and the City-owned median at Main Street and Buchanan Boulevard. The Trinity Park Foundation presented to the Cultural Advisory Board and Public Art Committee who voted unanimously to accept the donation.

Recommendation

The Office of Economic and Workforce Department recommends that City Council:

1. Authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with Trinity Park Foundation, Inc. accepting the donation and ownership of a sculpture entitled "The Rising Flame" by artist Michael Waller; and,
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with Trinity Park Foundation, Inc. accepting the donation and ownership of a sculpture entitled "Industrial Romantic" by artist Al Frega.

Background

On November 21, 2011 the City Council approved a Resolution Establishing a Public Art Policy, to establish a public art process for the City of Durham, including the process for the donation of works of art to the City of Durham. As stated in that resolution, "...a public art program is important to a city, because it brings social, cultural, educational and economic benefits to the public and visitors to the city..." The encouragement of public art is a stated goal of the Downtown Master Plan, Citywide Strategic Plan and Durham Comprehensive Plan.

On December 20, 2017 the Trinity Park Foundation, Inc. gave a presentation to the City's Cultural Advisory Board Public Art Committee with an offer to donate two pieces of public art to the City for display in City-owned medians in the Trinity Park neighborhood. The two pieces are described as below:

Public Art Donation One: The Rising Flame by Michael Waller

In late 2002 the Trinity Park neighborhood raised money to create a memorial in honor of Marie Austin, a key resident responsible for sustaining and revitalizing the Trinity Park neighborhood. In February 2003 a request was made to six Durham sculptors to submit their ideas for the memorial art. The work chosen to honor Marie Ausitn was The Rising Flame by Michael Waller. The top section of the piece consists of a forged bowl shape with various sized steel base tapered on the ends, representing a communal movement upwards toward preservation and growth. The ball entwined in the steel bar represents the unity guiding Trinity Park. The lower section of the piece represents the foundation and stability in which a community is built. The piece is approximately 7' tall.

The sculpture was originally installed in 2003 at the Kings Daughters Home on Buchanan Boulevard. Marie Austin was a lifelong supporter of this institution. When the home was sold in July 2008 and became The Kings Daughter's Inn, the sculpture was moved into storage. In April 2016 the artist moved the sculpture out of storage to his studio and provided an estimate for repair, current maintenance and reinstallation in a new location. The Foundation plans to cast a solid 3' x 3' x 5" reinforced concrete base on site with an imbedded stainless steel anchoring system at ground level. A commemorative plaque will be installed at the foot of the sculpture by the Trinity Park Foundation.

The Trinity Park Foundation plans to install this sculpture at the east end of the Markham Avenue median. An existing arc light will serve as a spotlight. Nandinas have been removed and adjacent holly trees have been trimmed and the neighborhood has weeded the median and will thin the daylilies at the east end. The median will be mulched following installation. The Transportation department has reviewed the proposed plans.

Public Art Donation Two: Industrial Romantic by Al Frega

In 2015 the Trinity Park Foundation, Inc. commissioned local Durham artist Al Frega to prepare a new sculpture/sign for the entrance to the neighborhood at Main Street and Buchanan Boulevard. It would be placed in the City median and the current sign would be moved to Markham Avenue. The vision for the new work was something more dramatic, larger, and art that could better utilize the large public space. Frega's work proposed a tall sculpture using parts of the HVAC system from the Liggett & Meyers factory located just a few blocks east of the proposed installation site on the edge of Trinity Park's border. The sculpture is 10' tall and made of steel. It weighs 1,200 pounds, and will be painted following extensive grinding and finishing. The artist is considering using colors drawn from an old pack of Chesterfield cigarettes. The artist proposes to install the piece on a concrete slab 54" x 42", high enough above the ground that the mowing crews will not run into the piece. Trinity Park volunteers Dan Jewell and Scott Schuett are both working with the artist on the exact placement and installation needs and other safety protections required by the City. A commemorative plaque will be installed at the foot of the sculpture by the Trinity Park Foundation.

As a part of the installation of this piece, the existing Trinity Park Neighborhood Sign designed by local artist Francis Vega in the late 1990s would be moved to the west side of the Markham Avenue median. As a part of the move and reinstallation, the artful sign will be refurbished and



painted by Al Frega or craftsman Mitch Fisher of Fisher Graphic Arts. A commemorative plaque will be installed at the foot of the sculpture by the Trinity Park Foundation.

On November 14, 2017 the Trinity Park Neighborhood Association sent a letter to the City offering its full support of the Trinity Park Foundation, Inc.'s efforts to install the two public art pieces.

On December 20, 2017 the City's Cultural Advisory Board, through its Public Art subcommittee, recommended that the City approve and accept the artworks into the City's public art collection, subject to technical review by relevant City staff.

Issues and Analysis

A major priority of the City of Durham is increasing and strengthening the economic stability of the City. Studies have demonstrated that arts' spending contributes to economic activity and local government revenues, encouraging visitorship and associated spending. Public art adds to the appearance of neighborhoods and promotes a sense of place. The content of the sculpture, connecting the City's past with its future, will serve as an educational tool both for the schools and for the general public. Staff endorses the recommended location, which would serve to promote the neighborhood cohesion and identity of Durham neighborhoods.

Alternatives

The City Council may reject the recommendation to accept donation of the two works or may reject the selected locations for their installation. Not approving the acceptance would eliminate the opportunity for the City to own two significant works by two respected local artists. Rejection of the location would delay an opportunity to complete a project of artistic, historical and educational merit.

Financial Impact

Funding for the project will be provided by the Trinity Park Foundation through its non-profit foundation, Trinity Park Foundation, Inc. Approval of the donation will have no impact on the General Fund.

Equal Business Opportunity Summary

This item involves the acceptance of donations and was not reviewed for compliance with the Ordinance to Promote Equal Business Opportunities in City Contracting.

Attachments

Letter of Support from Trinity Park Neighborhood Association

Exhibit A, Photograph and Location of Proposed Sculpture Donation, *The Rising Flame*

Exhibit B, Photograph and Location of Proposed Sculpture Donation, *Industrial Romantic*