



The Philadelphia Art  
Commission

Established 1911

## Minutes

### The Philadelphia Art Commission

January 13, 2021 - 9:30 a.m.

Remote – Zoom Meeting – Hosted by DPZ

Members Present: Alan Greenberger, José Almiñana, Carmen Febo San Miguel, Raed Nasser, Robert Roesch, Mario Zacharjasz, Steve Hartner

Alan Greenberger

Chair

José Almiñana

Carmen Febo San Miguel

Bridget Collins-Greenwald

Raed Nasser

Natalie Nixon

Robert Roesch

Mario Zacharjasz

Steve Hartner

C. Beige Berryman

Staff

### **Meeting of the Philadelphia Art Commission**

*Beige Berryman – staff member of the Art Commission – introduced the Zoom platform and remote Art Commission process, noting that the meeting is being recorded and those participating in the meeting are giving their consent to be recorded. A link to the recording, will be posted on the Art Commission website and the meeting agenda and materials can also be found on the website at: (<https://www.phila.gov/departments/philadelphia-art-commission/>).*

*Ms. Berryman conducted roll call for the commissioners, then stated a few instructions for the public. Members of the public may comment on agenda items during the meeting. When the agenda items that you are interested in is being discussed, you can use the “raise hand” feature and staff will unmute you during the public comment period. If you’re joining by phone, you can also use the hand raise feature by dialing \*9 during the public comment period and if you have any submitted comments through email, staff will read those emails out loud at the appropriate time.*

*Following the introduction, Chairperson Greenberger welcomed everyone, then informed everyone that Commissioner Joe Laragione resigned from the Commission. Mr. Laragione sent a kind note at the beginning of the year asking to step down and thanked everyone for their collegiality and support during his tenure. Mr. Laragione filled the painter designation, so Ms. Berryman and staff are starting to compile a list of potential candidates. Also, Commissioner Nixon had a conflict and was unable to join the Commission for the present meeting.*

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## Minutes

- December 2, 2020 meeting minutes

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve the December minutes and did a consensus vote of the Commission at the minute mark (00:04:25).

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Febo San Miguel and seconded by Commissioner Nasser, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the December minutes (7-0).*

## Report of the Sign Committee – December 16, 2020

First Reviews:

1. **198-20**  
**M & T Bank**  
117 18<sup>th</sup> St
2. **204-20**  
**General Tsao's House**  
1720 Sansom St
3. **199-20**  
**River West Condominium**  
2105 Chestnut St
4. **207-20**  
**Prosperity Real Estate**  
36 N 3rd Street

Chairperson Greenberger made an announcement regarding the Sign Committee, that one of the sign applications was withdrawn, 2051 Walnut Street. Seeing no questions or comments from the commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve the recommendations of the Sign Committee at (00:05:15).

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Nasser and seconded by Commissioner Zacharjasz, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the recommendations (7-0).*

## Administrative Agenda

1. **4-21**  
**Mixed-use development proposal**  
**1201-1209 Vine Street**  
Review Type: Zoning Code public art bonus  
Project Details: Agreement with Meritis Group LLC  
Submitted By: Claudia Becker, Art Commission counsel

2. **205-20**  
**Metal Canopies**  
**218 S 16th Street**  
Review Type: Projection over the public right-of-way  
Project Details: Two metal canopies over entrances on 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Chancellor Street  
Submitted By: Stokes Architecture
3. **6-21**  
**O'Connor Pool Wall**  
**2601 South Street**  
Review Type: Minor repair located on City property  
Project Details: Reconstruction of brick wall and fence around existing pool deck  
Submitted By: Philadelphia Parks and Recreation

Ms. Berryman presented the three administrative items.

1201-1209 Vine Street is another agreement negotiated by City Council to the Art Commission for a development proposal to use the public art bonus in the Zoning Code. The project includes an existing five-story masonry building, with a proposed two-story overbuild, as well as an adjacent eight-story addition. The agreement includes financial commitments, as well as timing commitments for the public art; the public art proposal itself is required to return to the Art Commission for further review. Chairperson Greenberger informed the Commission that as chair, he has to sign the agreement and has done so for this particular item.

218 S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street is a proposal for small metal canopies proposed to encroach over the public right-of-way over the existing building entrances. One canopy is located on 16<sup>th</sup> Street and one is located on Chancellor Street. As the canopies do not include any text or graphics, the staff removed them from the Sign Committee agenda and reviewed the canopies themselves and recommend approval.

Lastly, 2601 South Street proposes to rebuild a section of a perimeter brick wall at the O'Connor pool, which is a Parks & Recreation Department facility. The work includes replacement in kind of the brick wall along Taney Street, with an ornamental black metal fence above the brick work.

Seeing no questions or comments about the items for administrative approval, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve at (00:07:51).

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Nasser and seconded by Commissioner Roesch, the Commission voted unanimously to approve (7-0).*

### **Presentations for Concept Review**

1. **5-21**  
**York Dauphin Station**  
**2345 N Front St**  
Review Type: Construction project located on City property  
Project Details: Renovation to station egress structure  
Submitted by: SEPTA

At the minute mark (00:09:06), Emily Silva began the presentation explaining images of the existing conditions, of the exit stairwell at North Front and York Streets, and the fare line at the platform. The purpose of the project is to move the fare line from platform level to street level to better secure the stairs.

*Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (00:13:49).*

Chairperson Greenberger asked about the circulation of the project and if the new structure is covered. It's currently an exit only structure and will remain so, and the roof provides weather protection for the walkway but is not connected to the existing roof.

Further discussion continued regarding the color and details of the canopy with Chairperson Greenberger, Commissioner Zacharjasz, Commissioner Roesch and Ms. Silva. In terms of the legal requirements, Chairperson Greenberger asked how much space was needed at the bottom of the stairway, as related to the small encroachment into the sidewalk. Ms. Silva stated that there's a 10-foot requirement between the bottom of the stairs and rotary gate. Commissioner Zacharjasz wanted to know what triggers the emergency exit doors. The exit doors are fire alarm activated.

Further discussion continued about the door panel appearance. Chairperson Greenberger, Commissioner Roesch and Commissioner Almiñana (00:20:35) suggested that the solid stainless steel panels be replaced with perforated panels to match the existing treatment along the stairs and improve transparency.

Chairperson Greenberger suggested Ms. Silva resubmit drawings to staff that show the change in the panel appearance and then the Commission can approve the project administratively.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked for a motion for final approve with the condition that revised drawings are submitted to staff (00:25:32).

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Roesch and seconded by Commissioner Zacharjasz, Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana, Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Raed, Commissioner Roesch, Commissioner Zacharjasz, and Chairperson Greenberger. The Commission voted unanimously for final approval with conditions (7-0).*

## **2. 7-21**

### **Amy Northwest Schoolyard**

#### **5950 Ridge Ave**

Review Type: Alteration of City property

Project Details: Schoolyard improvements

Submitted by: The Trust for Public Land

Owen Franklin, Pennsylvania State Director for The Trust for Public Land, began the presentation at the minute mark (00:26:28). Mr. Franklin gave a brief overview of previous green schoolyard projects since 2014 and existing conditions of the current project schoolyard. Ms. Elizabeth Class-Maldonado continued the presentation about

the participatory design engagement and community workshops for the project. Ms. Class-Maldonado explained the demolition and site plans, surface materials, and playground equipment.

*Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (00:38:59).*

Chairperson Greenberger asked what is happening to the remainder of the play area of the schoolyard that is not getting the new surfacing. Mr. Franklin stated that the existing concrete surface is in poor condition and they will improve it as budget allows but also, they need to stay under the 15,000 square feet of earth disturbance for the stormwater regulations. Additionally, they are making substantial improvements in other spaces as shown in the presentation.

Further discussion continued, with Commissioner Almiñana, Chairperson Greenberger, Mr. Franklin, and Commissioner Zacharjasz about the trees, safety surface, concerns about the chokecherry tree being poisonous, shade, soil volume, budget for planting, as well as fences (00:40:40). The commissioners recommended that different tree species be considered that offer a broader canopy for shade and have less of an “upright” form. Additional consideration is also needed during the installation phase to find ways to increase the soil volume for root health and growth success of the trees.

Commissioner Febo San Miguel asked if the spaces would be publicly accessible. Mr. Franklin confirmed that community accessibility is a condition of the work and that during school hours the yard would be closed to the public, but it would be open to the public outside of those hours.

Chairperson Greenberger suggested a motion for concept approval with the condition that the Commission staff, the Trust for Public Land, and the Department of L&I discuss how to move the proposal ahead considering its timeline (01:02:51).

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion for concept approval.

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Almiñana and seconded by Commissioner Nasser, Ms. Berryman announced that there were no public comments, then polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Raed, Commissioner Roesch, Commissioner Zacharjasz, and Chairperson Greenberger. The Commission voted unanimously for concept approval, (7-0).*

### **3. 8-21**

#### **Lowell Elementary Schoolyard**

#### **450 W Nedro Ave**

Review Type: Alteration of City property

Project Details: Schoolyard improvements

Submitted by: The Trust for Public Land

Mr. Franklin began his presentation for a second project (01:04:39). Mr. Franklin described similar existing conditions with the schoolyard asphalt surface. Ms. Class-Maldonado then presented the site plan and other drawings for the project.

*Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (01:11:22).*

Commissioner Almiñana noted similar issues from previous presentation and proposed pairs for the trees, as opposed to individual trees. Commissioner Febo San Miguel asked about lighting, which was confirmed to be outside the scope of the project. Chairperson Greenberger mentioned that this project demonstrates the value of consolidating work to small, discrete areas as a solution for getting the “biggest bang for the buck” from projects with restrictive budgets.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion for concept approval at (01:13:42) with the condition that the commission staff, the Trust for Public Land, and the Department of L&I discuss how to move the proposal ahead considering its timeline.

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Febo San Miguel and seconded by Commissioner Nasser, Ms. Berryman announced that there were no public comments, then polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Raed, Commissioner Roesch, Commissioner Zacharjasz, and Chairperson Greenberger. The Commission voted unanimously for concept approval (7-0).*

#### **4. 196-20**

##### **Vare Recreation Center 2600 Morris Street**

Review Type: Alteration of City property

Project Details: Site improvements, building renovations, new construction

Submitted by: Make the World Better Foundation

This presentation began at the minute mark (01:15:29) by Mr. Ian Smith, who gave an overview of the existing conditions, site analysis, and community engagement. Ms. Lauren Elachi continued the presentation by reviewing the landscape, site plan, site furnishings, materials, and planting. Mr. Eric Gehring presented the building design, plans and elevations.

*Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (01:39:26).*

Chairperson Greenberger inquired about the demolition of the existing building and the stated budget for the project. Mr. Smith responded that the deterioration of the building was caused by soil conditions, and therefore the issue could not be solved without demolishing the building. The budget for the project is \$14 million dollars and it is a Rebuild project. Commissioner Nasser expressed that he supports the project and is pleased to hear that the community has given a great deal of input. Commissioner Roesch mentioned that the project was well presented, well researched, and that he was excited about the idea of using stoops as the concept behind the public gathering space.

Chairperson Greenberger read Commissioner Almiñana's comment from the chat box, "This is a remarkable project. I would like to see more detail regarding the planting strategies, soil removal/replacement, and stormwater management details, see the opportunity to integrate all of these interventions and achieve a significant economy of scale. I regret not being able to further participate on the discussion. I would support giving this a concept approval."

Chairperson Greenberger asked about the pool. Mr. Ken Tomczuk, from the Make the World Better Foundation, stated that the Parks & Recreation Department will be restoring the pool as a separate project. The pool is not in the scope of this proposal.

Further discussion continued about the public space, field, accessibility, building size [20,000 Sq. Ft.], lighting, chain-link fencing, security and material, with Chairperson Greenberger, Ms. Elachi, Commissioner Zacharjasz and Mr. Smith (01:44:22). They observed that the building has two "fronts" and that Morris Street is a critical access point for community members. Related to this comment, it was suggested that a more convenient entrance to the basketball courts be investigated. Likewise, the entrance gate at 26<sup>th</sup> Street should be designed to be more welcoming and significant.

The balance between needing shade and needing clear sightlines for safety was mentioned in relationship to the perimeter plantings.

Chairperson Greenberger raised concerns about the budget not measuring up to the ambition of the project and Commissioner Febo San Miguel asked for a better sense of the budget. Chairperson Greenberger stressed that the public space is the most important component of the project and the budget should be concentrated there. He went on to state that the next time the Commission reviews the project, they need to see a developed scheme better measured against their budget.

Commissioner Zacharjasz added that the plans, elevations, and renderings need to be consistent for the next presentation. Others also observed that the building design was not at the same level as the site design, and the building's character needs to be developed to become more "civic". There may also be an opportunity to make the gymnasium area more transparent. The obligation for public art was briefly mentioned.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked for a motion for concept approval, with the conditions of budget and drawing consistency to be met for the future presentation.

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Roesch and seconded by Commissioner Nasser, Ms. Berryman announced that there were no public comments, then polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Raed, Commissioner Roesch, Commissioner Zacharjasz, and Chairperson Greenberger. The Commission voted unanimously for concept approval (7-0).*

Chairperson Greenberger thanked the commissioners, presenters and everyone and expressed great job to the staff for pulling everything together.

The January 13, 2021 Art Commission was adjourned at the minute mark (02:15:30).

*Ended at 11:15 a.m.*

**The next Art Commission will be held Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom.**