



The Philadelphia Art
Commission

Established 1911

Minutes

The Philadelphia Art Commission

February 10, 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 polled the commission via roll call, 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 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. Thank you.*

Minutes

- January 13, 2021 meeting minutes

One Parkway Building

1515 Arch St.

13th Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19102

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artcommission@phila.gov

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

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

Report of the Sign Committee – January 27, 2021

Second Reviews:

1. **204-20**
General Tsao's House
1720 Sansom St

First Reviews:

1. **12-21**
Wu Law Firm
1202 South St
2. **11-21**
Wilder
2009 Sansom St
3. **13-21**
Strangelove's
216 S 11 St
4. **10-21**
2300 Chestnut St
2300 Chestnut St
5. **9-21**
The Poplar
900-58 N 9 Street

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve recommendation of the Sign Committee.

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

Administrative Agenda

1. **89-20**
Christopher Columbus Statue
Marconi Plaza, 2700 South Broad Street
Review Type: Removal, relocation or alteration of existing artwork owned by the City
Project Details: Six-month report on the status of the Columbus statue removal
Submitted by: City of Philadelphia, Public Art Office
2. **19-21**
Ford Road Pumping Station
3900 Ford Road
Review Type: Minor construction on City property
Project Details: Rehabilitation and improvements to pump station
Submitted By: Trans-Pacific Engineering Corp.

3. **15-21**
Vare Washington Elementary School
1198 S. 5th St
Review Type: Minor construction paid by City funds
Project Details: Interior classroom modernization
Submitted By: The Sheward Partnership

4. **16-21**
Amedee Bregy Elementary School
1700 Bigler St
Review Type: Minor construction paid by City funds
Project Details: Interior classroom modernization
Submitted By: The Sheward Partnership

5. **18-21**
William Longstreth Elementary School
5700 Willows Ave
Review Type: Minor construction paid by City funds
Project Details: Interior classroom modernization
Submitted By: The Sheward Partnership

6. **17-21**
Kensington High School
2501 Coral St
Review Type: Minor construction paid by City funds
Project Details: Building envelope maintenance
Submitted By: The Sheward Partnership

Ms. Berryman presented six administrative items beginning with the first six-month update of the removal the Christopher Columbus Statue, heard by the Art Commission on August 12, 2020. The City was asked to provide an update every six months concerning the progress of the relocation plan. Currently, a court case is pending in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas filed by the friends of Marconi Plaza against the City of Philadelphia to prevent the City from relocating the statue. The City has filed preliminary objections to the complaints and the court has yet to rule on these objections. In addition, the plaintiff's marble expert performed a visual inspection on site. In Summary, the City plans to move forward with the relocation of the statue, but the timing of the removal remains dependent on the resolution of the ongoing litigation.

Ford Road Pumping Station: The Philadelphia Water Department owns and operates the Ford Road Sanitation Pump Station located in West Fairmount Park. The majority of the improvements include replacement of the equipment. The proposed equipment is located behind existing equipment at the rear of the parcel and therefore is not visible from the street.

The next three items are all interior school renovation proposals.

Vare Washington Elementary School will perform interior renovation to modernize 15 classrooms, including new finishes, new cabinetry, new door hardware, and electrical, lighting, and technology upgrades, to be completed during the summer recess.

Amedee Bregy Elementary School will perform interior renovation to modernize 10 classrooms same scope of work as the previous school to be completed during summer recess.

William Longstreth Elementary School will be performing interior renovation to modernize 11 classrooms same scope of work as the previous school to be completed during summer recess.

The last administrative item, Kensington High School, will perform exterior renovations, including a new roof, routine brick and limestone repair, repointing on the façade to match existing materials in quality and appearance, and window replacement in kind.

Seeing no questions or comments about the items for administrative approval, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve at (00:09:16).

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

Presentations for Second Review

1. 153-20

Frank Glavin Memorial Playground Renovation Project 2600 E Westmoreland Street

Review Type: Construction paid by City funds

Project Details: Renovation to playground, site, and Recreation Center

Submitted by: Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

This presentation began with specific items that the Commission had asked about at the conceptual approval including presenting color renderings, plant species, playground features, and safety surface details.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (00:19:41).

Commissioner Almiñana asked if the safety material was pervious and how the water drainage relates to the grading plan. Rae Vassar stated that the surface material is not pervious and the grading plan has accounted for drainage. Commissioner Almiñana then asked about the caliper of the tree replacements and suggested the tree species be re-examined to include those that grow significant shade canopies in a relatively short time, such as elms.

Discussion continued about the spray park area, and if the nozzles remain in place during the off season. They will remain but are not fragile. The discussion turned to the details of the climbing feature, and if enough shade was being provided in the critical locations.

Chairperson Greenberger suggested that the applicant send final selections of tree species to staff. Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked for a motion for final approval at (00:35:24).

Upon the motion made by Commissioner Nasser and seconded by Commissioner Almiñana, Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Nasser, Commissioner Roesch, Commissioner Zacharjasz, and Chairperson Greenberger. The Commission voted unanimously for final approval with one abstention from Commissioner Febo San Miguel (6-0).

2. 195-20

Heitzman Recreation Center

2136 Castor Avenue

Review Type: Alteration of City property

Project Details: Building renovation and site improvements

Submitted by: Rodriguez Consulting, LLC

Mr. Torres began the presentation at (00:38:03) and the presentation included a review of the existing conditions, proposed site and planting plan, materials, community engagement process, lighting, and rooftop equipment.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute (00:54:16).

Commissioner Zacharjasz asked if window infill areas would be re-opened. A limited number will be and some will not be due to budget limitations. Commissioner Roesch inquired about the security gate over of the main entrance, as its appearance is unwelcoming. Suggestions were made to paint the gate so that when it is closed it does not create a negative atmosphere.

Further discussion continued between presenters, Commissioner Almiñana and Chairperson Greenberger about the windows being operable, the exterior color scheme, and mechanical enclosures on the roof. There was agreement that mesh was preferable to solid enclosure panels on the roof, and a caution that their color deserves careful consideration. Many commissioners sympathized with the budget limitations and the extent of maintenance needed, and advised to maximize spending in places that give back to the community the most.

Question and comments from the public.

Shannon Farrell expressed concerns about the project not being properly funded, and questions on how community feedback was incorporated, especially concerning the soccer pitch.

Chairperson Greenberger stated that the Commission can only respond to the scope of work as presented, and it was clarified that the soccer pitch is included. He then suggested that conversations continue among community groups and City Council members.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked for a motion for final approval (01:15:31).

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

Presentations for Concept Review

1. 20-21

Arrott Transportation Center 4679- 4681 Frankford Ave

Review Type: Construction project located on City property

Project Details: Renovation to station egress structure

Submitted by: SEPTA

Emily Silver began the presentation at (01:18:34) and outlined that the purpose of this project is to secure the exit stairs so that they are only accessible to customers leaving the station.

Questions and comments from the Commission at (01:24:57).

Chairperson Greenberger asked about the sidewalk clearance for pedestrian movement and Ms. Silver responded that the sidewalk meets the Streets Department standard for the walking zone.

Further discussion continued between Ms. Silver, Chairperson Greenberger, Commissioner Roesch and Commissioner Almiñana regarding details of the slope of the sidewalk, the rotary gates, and the downspout from existing roof. There was some confusion on the knee wall including its material, and how it physically meets the surrounding structures. A more accurate rendering was requested of the knee wall at the next review.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion for concept approval at (01:32:11).

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

2. 21-21

University of Pennsylvania Boat House Renovation 11 Boat House Row (intersection of Kelly Dr. and Lemon Hill Dr.)

Review Type: Alteration of City property

Project Details: Boat house renovation and addition

Submitted by: Ewing Cole

At the minute mark (01:33:26), Mark Kocent gave an overview of the project. The proposal is for boat house renovations including demolishing and modifying an unsympathetic 1920s addition to the original 1875 structure due to structural issues. Mr. Kocent stated that they've had productive discussions with their own internal design review committee, as well as the Philadelphia Historical Commission, and have made several revisions thus far. Andrew

Donaldson-Evans continued with the goals of the project, recognizing the need to work within the context of the existing building's architectural style as well as the larger historic context of Boat House Row. He outlined details of the renovation which include keeping the existing building footprint, adding a second floor on the east bay, and new balconies on the river elevation.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (01:47:50).

Chairperson Greenberger inquired about the roof material. Asphalt shingles will be used, but this material is consistent with the existing conditions. Commissioner Almiñana asked about the height of the boat house in relationship to the adjacent buildings. The University of Pennsylvania's boat house does have a higher ground floor and has escaped flooding unlike many of the other structures.

Commissioner Zacharjasz began the discussion about the roof ridgeline alignment. The renovation is proposing to raise the ridgeline approximately 16" higher than the original line, which increases the visual mass of the elevation fronting the river. Given the central location of the building along the row, and the fact that its architecture has a more robust scale than many of the other buildings that display more delicate details, the roofline and its associated mass becomes visually important. In order to address the commission's concern that the overall appearance may be too massive relative to the adjacent structures, Chairperson Greenberger requested that the applicant provide contextual images of the entire boat house row, from both the river and Kelly Drive, to better assess the proposed visual bulk in context. Commissioner Febo San Miguel added that "before" and "after" images be provided for comparison.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion for concept approval at (01:59:39).

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

3. 22-21

Statue of Peace

800 S Front Street

Review Type: Public art proposal

Project Details: Statue to commemorate the history of Comfort Women

Submitted by: Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy

This presentation began at the minute mark (02:01:14) when Chairperson Greenberger asked if the project is endorsed by the Office of Arts & Culture and Creative Economy. Presenter Shinjoo Cho confirmed this, and began the presentation stating that they are seeking approval of the public art donation of the Statue of Peace, which commemorates the history of Comfort Women and is part of a worldwide reconciliation movement. The statue will be located within a small plaza which will undergo landscape renovations as part of this project.

It was noted that the project received approvals from Queen Village Neighborhood Association, PPR, and ILMC; and received approval from the Public Art Advisory Committee in December of 2020. Dave Kyu continued the presentation providing details about the sculpture, symbolism, and the relationship between the proposal and nearby memorials in terms of messaging and physical proximity. Julie Snell presented the landscape proposal, including site analysis, planting, and sidewalk details. She described the space as needing to provide a contemplative setting for a single visitor, yet also be able to accommodate a group of people upon occasion.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (02:22:21).

Commissioner Almiñana asked about the centrally located plaque, confirming if he was correctly understanding the drawing. He also received confirmation that the proposed landscape was not irrigated and is designed with low maintenance needs.

Commissioner Roesch raised concerns about the scale of the sculpture and the plaza space that surrounds it as being mismatched. Further discussion continued about the location of the sculpture within the plaza, how one might approach the art, and how the landscape could better frame the piece visually while still accommodating programming for a crowd.

Chairperson Greenberger summarized the discussion by suggesting the next review address the concern that the scale of the art and the scale of the space it occupies have an uncomfortable relationship. Landscape, paving patterns, and other visual framing elements could be modified to provide an improved sense of enclosure for the space. Commissioner Almiñana suggested that the vantage point of the perspective sketches may be depicting the scale unfairly.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion for concept approval at (02:40:13).

Upon the motion made by Commissioner Febo San Miguel and seconded by Commissioner Roesch, Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana, Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Nasser, Commissioner Roesch, and Chairperson Greenberger. The Commission voted unanimously for concept approval (6-0). Commissioner Zacharjasz was excused from this item.

4. 23-20

Past | Present | Future Play

3799 Germantown Avenue (Butler Triangle/Fish Park)

Review Type: Alteration of City property

Project Details: Temporary placemaking installation with streetscape elements

Submitted by: Philadelphia City Planning Commission staff

Alex Smith began the presentation at the minute mark (02:41:20), describing the project as a collaboration between City agencies, including Planning Commission, Office of Transportation Infrastructure and Sustainability, as well as the Commerce Department. Mr. Smith noted that the project will be a temporary installation from about May through November 2021 and includes streetscape elements such as planters, seating areas and furniture, play equipment, and customized, movable blocks for children to play with. The project is on a parcel that is owned by the City of Philadelphia and is currently being maintained by the Office of Public Property.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (03:08:12).

Commissioner Roesch asked if the installation was a “test” for future permanent site improvements and Mr. Smith confirmed and also clarified that the permanent improvements would need to be approved by the Commission as well.

Commissioner Febo San Miguel expressed concerns about visitor safety given the context of the busy intersection. Mr. Smith stated that the perimeter fence will be maintained and that planters and some of the play equipment will also act as safety barriers. Flex posts in the street and regular maintenance of the space are also serve as protective safety measures. Further discussion continued regarding the resiliency of the proposed turf given the type of intended play activities. Commissioner Almiñana cautioned against having too many types of activities, as a simpler space might lead to more success.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion for concept approval at (03:20:27).

Upon the motion made by Commissioner Febo San Miguel and seconded by Commissioner Hartner, Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana, Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Nasser, Commissioner Roesch, and Chairperson Greenberger. The Commission voted unanimously for concept approval (6-0).

The February 10, 2021 Art Commission was adjourned at 12:51 p.m.

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