



The Philadelphia Art
Commission

Established 1911

Minutes

The Philadelphia Art Commission

March 10, 2021 - 9:30 a.m.

Remote – Zoom Meeting – Hosted by DPZ

Members Present: Alan Greenberger, Carmen Febo San Miguel,

Raed Nasser, Robert Roesch, Mario Zacharjasz, Steve Hartner, Natalie Nixon

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 item 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. Thank you.*

Minutes

- February 10, 2021 meeting minutes

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve the February minutes and did a consensus vote of the Commission at the minute mark (00:02:49).

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

One Parkway Building

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13th Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19102

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Report of the Sign Committee – February 24, 2021

Second Reviews:

1. **207-20**
Prosperity Real Estate
36 N 3rd Street

2. **12-21**
Wu Law Firm
1202 South St

First Reviews:

1. **32-21**
Cohen's Fashion Optical
1318 Walnut St

2. **31-21**
Van Leeuwen Ice Cream
109 S 13 St

3. **33-21**
Ocean First Bank
1500-42 Market St

4. **34-21**
Yowie
224-226 South Street

5. **35-21**
Independence Place
241 S 6 St

6. **36-21**
Shopper's World
821 Market St

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission on the Sign Committee, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve the recommendations of the sign committee at (00:03:14).

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

Administrative Agenda

1. **30-21**
East Passyunk Community Recreation Center
1025 Mifflin St
Review Type: Minor construction on City property
Project Details: New splash pad for spray ground area
Submitted By: Philadelphia Parks and Recreation

2. **38-21**
Independence Place
233-41 S. 6th St
Review Type: Minor construction within Independence Hall Area Overlay
Project Details: Minor lobby renovation
Submitted By: Oliver Construction Incorporated
3. **39-21**
Annual Sculpture Conservation
Various locations, 30 sculptures
Review Type: Public art maintenance
Project Details: General cleaning and maintenance treatments
Submitted By: Association for Public Art

Ms. Berryman presented the three administrative items.

The East Passyunk Community Recreation Center project is for the installation of a new splash pad, which includes removing a small area of existing paving and pouring a small concrete splash pad with water jets. The overall proposal has minimum impact on the landscape.

The Independence Place Lobby renovation includes work to the lobby connector space between the two condo towers. Renovations include interior lobby layout reconfiguration, and simplification of the connector corridors off of the lobby. Small segments of exterior walls will be renovated with a curtain wall system and brick to match existing exterior conditions. The work does not include any work on the front plaza. Overall, the scope of this work has a minor impact on the public realm and Washington Square, as the lobby and associated spaces are set back from the street.

The last item was the annual sculpture conservation. The Association for Public Art submitted their annual conservation work, including 30 pieces to undergo general cleaning and conservation treatment during the spring, fall and summer of 2021.

Seeing no questions or comments about the items for administrative approval, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve at (00:05:22).

Upon the motion made by Commissioner Febo San Miguel and seconded by Commissioner Roesch, the Commission voted unanimously to approve administrative items (7-0).

Presentations for Second Review

1. **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

Bill McCullough began the presentation at (00:06:00) and provided an overview emphasizing the project goals: expansion and upgrade of locker rooms, remediate existing structural concerns, improve training and team spaces, and preserve an historic landmark.

Mr. McCullough reviewed images of existing conditions and proposed work as viewed from the Schuylkill River Trail, showing minimal impact to the streetscape and the project's sympathetic response to the context. Likewise, he reviewed images viewed from the river itself, showing the proposed form and mass is consistent with the river's context. More accurate renderings of the color of the materials were presented. After showing a comprehensive collection of images of all the proposed work, including the before and after images of the context of the entirety of Boat House Row, Mr. McCullough stated that they kept the proposed new building forms as low as possible while maintaining reasonable ceiling heights for utilization of the interior space.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (00:20:40).

Commissioner Zacharjasz inquired about any lighting or signage. In terms of signage, Mr. McCullough stated that there isn't much and their intentions would be to replace it in kind. In terms of lighting, the plan is to replace what they currently have, including the night lighting facing the river.

Chairperson Greenberger noted that the project was wonderfully sensitive, includes a carefully crafted set of additions, and extended congratulations. He then acknowledged Mark Kocent from University of Pennsylvania, and continued by stating that quality design is possible when the design team is talented and when the client team has a clear vision.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Chairperson Greenberger asked for a motion to approve the final review at (00:24:52).

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

Presentations for Concept Review

1. 40-21

Add B. Anderson Elementary School 1034 S. 60th St

Review Type: Alteration of City property
Project Details: Schoolyard improvements
Submitted by: The Trust for Public Land

Elizabeth Class-Maldonado, Dan Mullin, and Sandy Batunkyi began the presentation at the minute mark (00:26:20). Ms. Class-Maldonado reviewed the existing conditions and site plans. Chairperson Greenberger asked Ms. Class-Maldonado what accounts for the odd configuration of the perimeter, and if it was due to the Philadelphia Water

Department's earth disturbance limitation. Ms. Class-Maldonado said yes, it was due to both budget and complying with the 15,000 sq. ft. earth disturbance restriction.

Chair Greenberger inquired about how the play area corresponds with the building entrances and how would the children get into the play area (00:38:38). The circulation appears indirect, but responds to existing service areas, adjacent neighbors, and topography.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (00:40:46).

Commissioner Roesch inquired about why all the asphalt area is needed and Chairperson Greenberger asked about the location of the tree trench areas, while others noted the poor drainage in existing conditions photos. Asphalt areas are needed for lining up the students and the tree trenches are located based on existing slopes. Many agreed that the proposal was good but appeared to have an arbitrary layout.

Commissioner Nixon inquired about the lighting design. Ms. Batunkyi stated that the lighting wasn't part of the scope for the project. Commissioner Nixon stated that good lighting would be a deterrent for afterhours vandalism. Mr. Mullin said that they could look at the existing lighting more closely. Chairperson Greenberger suggested looking at solar powered pedestrian scaled lighting, and recommended speaking with Joe Forkin, Executive Director of the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation about the waterfront trail lights.

Chairperson Greenberger suggested the design team return to get a second review when Commissioner Almiñana would be present and the Commission agreed.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Chairperson Greenberger asked for a motion for concept approval at (00:50:48).

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

2. 41-21

Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Bridge Rehabilitation

Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Schuylkill River

Review Type: Alteration of City property

Project Details: Bridge rehabilitation including deck replacement

Submitted by: Streets Department

Darin Gatti, Chief Engineer of the Philadelphia Streets Department, began the presentation at (00:51:58). This project is the rehabilitation of the MLK Drive bridge over the Schuylkill River, next to the Art Museum, at a critical connection for both recreational uses and vehicle travel. The bridge is deteriorated and is at the end of its service life, specifically the concrete deck is in very poor shape. There's also a significant need for better pedestrian and bicycle facilities to connect the trails on both sides of the river.

Chairperson Greenberger clarified that the project is for the lower bridge and not the Spring Garden Bridge. Mr. Gatti confirmed.

The presentation continued at the mark (00:53:38), with Joe Nicholson who works in the design unit. Mr. Nicholson went over the project's construction scope, which includes structural repairs, cleaning and painting, widening the bridge deck, replacing cobra head lights with pedestrian lights, and wing wall modifications. He also outlined project goals including maintaining the bridge's aesthetic features, improving the shared use path, and being consistent with the citywide Vision Zero program.

The estimated construction cost is \$12 Million. The second community meeting will take place in the summer of 2021 and complete final design will be the fall of 2021. Construction is scheduled to begin summer 2022 and completed construction and bridge opening in the fall of 2024. The City's investment for the project is less than \$1 million, therefore through coordination with the Public Art Director, they were informed that the project doesn't trigger the 1% for Art requirement.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (01:10:20).

Commissioner Febo San Miguel expressed concerns about the competition between walkers and bikers and asked if there were any provisions, whether through signage, regulations, or separation, to ensure the safety of all users. Chairperson Greenberger agreed and suggested two ways to help with the issue: (1) increase the width of the walking/biking path by decreasing the travel lanes or (2) require bicyclists to dismount while crossing the bridge. Commissioner Roesch agreed with these concerns.

Further discussion continued at the mark (01:14:30) between Chairperson Greenberger, Commissioner Febo San Miguel, and Mr. Gatti and Mr. Nicholson about the width and nature of the path itself, as well as pedestrians wanting to be protected from both bike and car traffic. Additional ideas were discussed for organizing the circulation of the pedestrians and bikes including using a rough aggregate paving to slow down bikes. The possibility of reducing a car travel lane in the future was mentioned, as this is being considered in the Eakins Oval plan for redesign. Should the lane reduction be possible, the proposed bridge design can be modified to expand the shared use path area.

Chairperson Greenberger suggested giving the project concept approval, with the expectation that when it returns, the Commission would see various alternatives being considered to address the problems of pedestrian and bike safety.

Questions and comments from the public at the minute mark (01:25:47).

Michael Noda commented on the possible lane reduction, stating that no bicyclist wants to be on a 10-foot shared path with pedestrians. He expressed concerns about the width and everyone utilizing the bridge safely, and reminded everyone that the path is also a commuter path, not just a recreational path.

Ben She strongly opposed the current configuration. He expressed that there is no feasible option without having a separated bike path. Mr. She suggested to give cyclist at minimum, a 10-foot by directional protective bike lane for use across the bridge.

Cameron Adamez agreed with Mr. Noda and Mr. she and added that having cars on the bridge is a risk to both pedestrians and cyclist. The long-term solution could be to remove car traffic all together.

Will Herzog asked if there was going to be a public participation component of the project, and asked about the capacity per hour for bikes and pedestrians.

Vaughn Campbell echoed what the previous speakers expressed.

Randy LoBasso stated that the proposal goes against what people are now thinking about the future of MLK Drive.

Jake Liefer mentioned that MLK Drive is completely open just to cyclists and pedestrians at the moment, and that is successful. Mr. Liefer encouraged the Commission to consider how they are planning and preparing for a future of continued growth for Center City and the rest of Philadelphia.

James Gitto agreed with previous speakers and added that for a full year, they've seen that car traffic isn't necessary on MLK Drive. Also, having experienced the pandemic, it's very likely in the future that everyone is going to continue to need to social distance.

Steph Davis and her family have been using MLK Drive to bike, walk, and run and asked, where would they go if not MLK Drive. Ms. Davis would like to see more safe spaces created for recreation.

This concluded questions and comments from the public (01:44:04).

Chairperson Greenberger stated that the Commission's task was not to solve the bigger problem of MLK Drive's use and circulation, but rather the bridge rehabilitation itself. The Commission agreed that the dual use path as shown in the rendering does not work. Therefore, the Commission needs to see revisions and options. The structural improvements to the bridge are of course needed and appreciated.

Further discussion continued at the minute mark (01:46:49). Commissioner Nasser would like to see a study of how many months out of the year bikers use the trail considering inclement weather. Also, he supported more community involvement. Commissioner Zacharjasz agreed with the concept approval; however, he did not agree with the shared use path design. Commissioner Roesch agreed with previous comments.

At the minute mark (01:49:29), Chairperson Greenberger asked if the Commission could put forward a motion to give the project concept approval, with the proviso to come back with a full analysis of the options to increase multiple levels of safety. The Commission agreed.

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

3. 42-21

Island Ave Trolley Station Reconstruction Island Ave at Lindbergh Blvd. and Tanager St.

Review Type: Construction within the public right-of-way

Project Details: Trolley station demolition and reconstruction

Submitted by: SEPTA

Emily Silva and Jen Dougherty, Director, of Long-Range Planning at SEPTA, began the presentation at (01:51:26). The Island Avenue reconstruction consists of a major road diet being led by the City Streets Department. The project includes two modern trolley stations, fully ADA compliant, located at Island Avenue & Tanager Place, and Island Avenue & Lindbergh Boulevard. Ms. Dougherty presented the pilot modern trolley station design and furniture and emphasized that they have been working with the Streets Department. The purpose of the trolley modernization program is to ensure a modern and accessible trolley system for the Philadelphia Metropolitan area.

Chairperson Greenberger asked for clarification on what exactly was being asked of the Commission for this item, recognizing the complexity of the larger plan. He asked if the presenters were asking for approval for the particular “kit of parts” at this location, or if they were asking for approval of the larger concept. Ms. Dougherty stated that they were asking for approval for the two Island Avenue stations only.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (02:05:55).

Commissioner Roesch asked why the upper crash barrier ended where pedestrians would be most vulnerable when they're inside the shelter. Additionally, where did they get the real estate to build the extension. Ms. Dougherty stated that the upper part of the crash barrier is transparent, and that the concrete barrier is the actual crash protection. She went on to describe that Island Avenue is a wide road with inner and outer lanes, and the Streets Department is rethinking the entire street design which is how the additional space was found.

Commissioner Nixon wanted to know if SEPTA had standards for the light pole distances, and if there's lighting embedded in the shelter. Ms. Dougherty stated that LED lighting was inside the shelter and the spacing for the poles is determined by the electrical designers to meet the SEPTA standards.

Questions and comments from the public at the minute mark (02:09:13).

Will Herzog asked if there was any consideration for additional ways to make pedestrians safer when they're exiting the stations such as crossing or warning signals, particularly at night. He also asked about the color temperature of the lights. Ms. Dougherty stated that the proposal is much safer for pedestrians than the current conditions. The crossing distance to get to the road diet is much shorter and each intersection has timed signals.

Ben She reiterated Will's comment and added that leaning surfaces instead of benches are a mistake.

Cameron Adamez agreed with previous comments and asked if there would be any future upgrades such as electronic notifications. Ms. Dougherty said that they were

working with the Streets Department to install conduit and fiberoptic cables to enable electronic notifications in the future.

Elaine Luczka, part of the project team, emphasized Ms. Dougherty's previous responses and mentioned budget restrictions.

Commissioner Nixon asked if there were bike racks and parking spaces for the two stations. Ms. Dougherty said that there are not, however, bikes will be permitted on the new trolley cars themselves.

Chairperson Greenberger recommended increased amenities, noting that the larger the shelter size the better, and that bench seating should be included. In addition, the crash barrier design should appear as part of the pedestrian amenities rather than an element designed just to address automobiles.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Chairperson Greenberger stated that SEPTA will come back once they've finalized the design, then asked if there was a motion for concept approval at (02:23:31).

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

Chairperson Greenberger noted that Commissioner Zacharjasz had to leave at 12:05 p.m. and the Commission still had quorum.

4. 43-21

Bethel Burying Ground Memorial

400 Catharine St

Review Type: Public art proposal

Project Details: Public art memorial and removal of recreation center building

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

Before the presentation began, Chairperson Greenberger took a moment to acknowledge Margot Berg, who will be leaving the City after providing 14 ½ years of service. Ms. Berg had been before the Commission with public art proposals on many occasions and has always brought a tremendous degree of professionalism, concern for the artist, concern for the artwork itself, and concern for public opinion. The Commission thanked Ms. Berg for her dedicated years of service.

Margot Berg began the presentation at (02:26:32) with a background of the Bethel Burying Ground Memorial project. The site is on both the local and national historic registers, and the public art memorial necessitates the removal of the recreational center building and the reduction of the size of the tennis court to reduce encroachments. Public engagement was part of the process.

Karyn Oliver then began her presentation on the installation itself, which initiated with research and investigation about the "dignity of space." Walking through the project, Ms. Oliver began describing the entrance gates and threshold experience. She then

described the pavers that include humidity-activated inscriptions. Planters inspired by cradle graves, the reuse of original bricks to form paths and seats, and quotes add to the overall sense of discovery in the piece. Overall, the memorial includes various components including entrance gates, pavers with inscriptions, decorative planters, and brick paths and seat walls.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (02:46:44).

Chairperson Greenberger complimented Ms. Oliver on her thoroughness and detail, stating that it is a beautifully conceived idea on many levels.

Commissioner Nixon stated that the work was exquisite and that it's an incredible way to memorialize graves of individuals, link the past and the present, and that she really appreciates the design intention.

Commissioner Febo San Miguel stated that the project has such a beautiful deep a complex way of bringing the reality of racism into a completely different context and hopefully bringing people together for healing and reconciliation.

Commissioner Roesch added that the presentation was moving and was impressed by the concept of connecting the loss of life with the weather.

Further comments continued at the minute mark (02:50:13) between Chairperson Greenberger, Commissioner Roesch and Ms. Oliver concerning the nuances of the paving pattern, which reflects the complexity of life. The Commission found the memorial to be deep, beautiful, and complex, and commissioners noted that the space will offer visitors a memorable experience.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Chairperson Greenberger suggested giving final approval, with expectation that any major changes to the design should come back to the Commission. The Commission agreed (02:53:19).

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

5. 44-21

Rail Line Underpass Enhancement Project 9th and Berks Streets

Review Type: Public artwork in the street right-of-way

Project Details: Mural on SEPTA underpass

Submitted by: Mural Arts Philadelphia

Maya Curtis began the presentation at (02:54:58), with an overview of the project's background, site details, maintenance and authorization, artist selection, community engagement, design development, and finally proposed artwork. DHCD commissioned Mural Arts Philadelphia, (MAP) to lead the community engagement and artistic

development processes, to coordinate with partners, and oversee the production of the artwork.

At (03:04:52) Chairperson Greenberger had an initial question, were there were two walls involved or one. Ms. Curtis said one wall, located across from the entrance of the Temple University train station. Commissioner Febo San Miguel asked about the lighting. Ms. Curtis stated that lighting wasn't a concern as the existing lighting is ample. Moving on, questions were asked about how the existing staining and dirt on the wall was being addressed. Ms. Curtis stated that the artist has taken those concerns into consideration with their design. Chairperson Greenberger asked Ms. Curtis if she thought, after the next round of community engagement, that there would be some revisions to the project. She said yes, they are prepared to return in April with slight revisions and final approval.

Commissioner Febo San Miguel thanked the team for including Spanish language in the project.

Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion for concept approval (03:09:47).

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

The March 10, 2021 Art Commission was adjourned at the minute mark (03:10:40), ending at 12:40 p.m.

The next Art Commission will be held Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom.