

The Philadelphia Art
Commission

Established 1911

Minutes

The Philadelphia Art Commission

April 14, 2021 - 9:30 a.m.

Remote – Zoom Meeting – Hosted by DPZ

Members Present: Alan Greenberger, Jose Alminana, 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 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

- March 10, 2021 meeting minutes

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Commissioner Roesch asked if there was a motion to approve the March minutes at (00:03:15).

Upon the motion made by Commissioner Nasser and seconded by Commissioner Zacharjasz, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the March minutes (6-0).

One Parkway Building

1515 Arch St.

13th Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19102

215-683-4674

artcommission@phila.gov

Report of the Sign Committee – March 24, 2021

Second Reviews:

1. **61-20**
Lincoln Square
1000 road Street

2. **180-20**
Vibrant Coffee
222 Rittenhouse Square

First Reviews:

1. **56-21**
Electricians Local 98
1719 Spring Garden St

2. **54-21**
Beyond/Hello
1201 Walnut St

3. **55-21**
Paris Baguette
1709-17 Chestnut St

4. **57-21**
Santander Bank
2000-24 Market Street

5. **58-21**
See Sharp
200-10 Lombard St

6. **59-21**
South 16th Street Flats
262 S 16th St

7. **60-21**
Motto
29-31 S 19th St
Zoning: CMX-5; projecting and building ID signs

8. **61-21**
Extra Storage Space
500 N Columbus Blvd

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Commissioner Roesch asked if there was a motion to approve the Sign Committee Report at (00:04:08).

Upon the motion made by Commissioner Nasser and seconded by Commissioner Hartner, the Commission voted to approve (6-0).

Ms. Berryman then introduced an appeal of one of the Sign Committee recommendations, the Motto projecting sign at 29-31 S. 19th Street (00:04:47).

Tim began his appeal presentation at (00:07:36). The purpose of the sign is to direct foot traffic to the entrance of the hotel. The blade sign is also a standard requirement of the Hilton company. Therefore, the request was made for the Commission to reconsider and allow the installation of the sign.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (00:09:04).

Commissioner Almiñana agreed with the conclusion of the Sign Committee and added that the wishes of an individual hotel chain should not influence what the regulations are in the City of Philadelphia. The canopy sign as shown in the photograph is visible from the sidewalk and the street. Commissioner Zacharjasz agreed with Commissioner Almiñana and the Sign Committee that the projecting sign was unnecessary.

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Commissioner Roesch asked if there was a motion to disapprove the projecting sign and support the recommendation of the Sign Committee (00:11:27).

Upon the motion made by Commissioner Nasser and seconded by Commissioner Zacharjasz, the Commission voted unanimously (6-0).

Administrative Agenda

1. **65-21**

MLK Recreation Center

2101 Cecil B. Moore Avenue

Review Type: Minor construction on City property

Project Details: Roof replacement

Submitted By: Converse Winkler Architecture

2. **63-21**

Crosswalk Mural

2nd and Laurel Streets

Review Type: Art in public right-of-way

Project Details: Asphalt painting within street intersection

Submitted By: Northern Liberties Business Improvement District

3. **66-21**

Lemon Hill Mansion Rehabilitation

1 Lemon Hill Drive

Review Type: Minor construction on City property

Project Details: Mechanical systems upgrade and minor exterior grading

Submitted By: Philadelphia Parks and Recreation

Ms. Berryman presented three Administrative Items at the minute mark (00:12:46).

The MLK Recreation Center roof replacement project involves a complete removal of all existing roof membrane across all three structures within the facility. The facility is a gym, a center hall, and a community center. Roof materials include built-up bitumen for flat roof sections and metal panels for the Mansard roof sections, these will be replaced in kind and in color. All existing roof profiles will remain and there will be no impact on the exterior visual appearance of the building.

The 2nd and Laurel Streets crosswalk mural has received the Streets Department approval and a public paint day is planned for June to complete the installation.

The final administrative item, the Lemon Hill Mansion rehabilitation project, includes electrical, mechanical, and life safety systems through the installation of new chillers and upgrades to the cooling system; new electrical wiring, outlets, grounds; and various safety upgrades that include fire alarm, security and lighting protection. The exterior impact of the project will be limited to regrading select areas of the site to correct drainage slopes. This scope of work has been reviewed and approved by the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

Seeing no questions or comments about the items for administrative approval, Commissioner Roesch asked if there was a motion to approve at (00:15:35).

Upon the motion made by Commissioner Febo San Miguel and seconded by Commissioner Nasser, the Commission voted unanimously to approve administrative items (6-0).

Presentations for Second Review

1. 20-21

Arrott Transportation Center

4679- 4681 Frankford Avenue

Review Type: Construction project located on City property

Project Details: Renovation to station egress structure

Submitted by: SEPTA

Ms. Emily Silva began the presentation at (00:16:50) addressing the Commission's previous concern about the sloped ledge or knee wall. The plan is to enclose the exit stairs and to move the turnstiles to the bottom of the stairs for improved security. Currently, the turnstiles are at the top of the stairs. The low, sloped ledge will be near the stair run. Regarding the material of the knee wall, it is proposed as a sloped concrete wall with a tile finish and a cast concrete cap to shed water.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (00:19:29). Commissioner Zacharjasz thought that they responded to their previous questions. Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission or public, Commissioner Roesch asked if there was a motion to approve at (00:19:43).

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

2. 40-21

**Add B. Anderson Elementary School
1034 S. 60th Street**

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

The presentation began at (00:21:09) with Elizabeth Class-Maldonado addressing the Commission's previous request about the design and plantings. Over a three-month period, The Trust for Public Land held participatory design and community workshops to help determine an overall vision for the schoolyard. Site design layout decisions are based on the student access points into schoolyard. The plant selection was provided by PWD recommendations. The plants would be drought tolerant and tolerant of urban conditions such as high temperatures and pollution. The plan includes two stormwater basins on site as well as rain garden plantings. Dan Mullen added that they will look into having solar and security lighting in the future, which was mentioned by the Commission at last month's meeting.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (00:32:52).

Commissioner Almiñana reiterated the previous suggestions and underlined the need to include lighting during this phase of the project, but acknowledged that solar lights are easier for retrofitting than lights needing underground cables.

Ms. Class-Maldonado clarified the turf material, the impervious safety surface, and finally that the schoolyard is not intended to be used at night.

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Commissioner Roesch asked if there was a motion to approve at (00:36:50).

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

3. 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

Darren Gatti began the presentation at the minute mark (00:38:24) stating that this bridge proposal only includes the bridge design itself and not the larger trail or network issues, and that the project is designed to be adaptable to whatever future scenario and alignment is settled on for MLK Drive. The bridge needs repair and the goal is to create a safer and more functional crossing for all users.

Regarding the shared use path, the preliminary plan is to install Directional Arrows and Yield to Pedestrian signs on both ends of the shared use path. The path's final pavement markings and signage is subject to Planning Commission review and

approval. The Planning Commission has worked with the Streets Department to develop a process for review and approval of shared use paths because bicycles aren't permitted on sidewalks by the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code. Mr. Gatti stated that the bridge design could easily adapt to a lane drop if needed in the future, the safety railing can be relocated without affecting the overall design.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (00:53:11).

Commissioner Roesch asked for clarification if the Commission would be approving the current proposal and not any possible future conditions. Commissioner Febo San Miguel pointed out that the second presentation responds to one of the Commission's requests to include signage that aids in the protection of the walkers and bikers. Mr. Gatti added that a public hearing will be held with the Planning Commission. Commissioner Almiñana reiterated that future implications of the improvements to Eakins Oval need to be considered at this time.

Chairperson Greenberger inquired about the jurisdiction of the Commission. Commissioner Roesch and Commissioner Zacharjasz clarified they were approving the current scheme only. Commissioner Febo San Miguel and Commission Attorney Claudia Becker agreed with the previous comments.

Ms. Becker explained under the Home Rule Charter, if there are modifications made to a project that the Commission approved previously, those modifications have to return for a review. An approval condition was suggested: if there are revisions related to the elimination of a traffic lane, then the Commission would require the Streets Department to return (00:58:48).

Chairperson Greenberger expressed that the traffic lane reduction is a terrific idea and suggested that the proposal would need to come back for approval once the lane configuration was determined. Mr. Gatti agreed. Commissioner Roesch added that last month the Commission put forward a motion to give the project concept approval, with the proviso to come back with a full analysis of the options available to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety (01:07:56). Chairperson Greenberger said that he's comfortable with a modified concept approval, however, he isn't comfortable with giving final approval to the scheme knowing that it's going to change and that the Commission supports the change.

Questions and comments from the public at the minute mark (01:14:03).

Richard Gliniak asked the Commission to oppose the bridge proposal and stated that a lane drop is a must.

Isabel Melvin asked the Commission not to approve the design as proposed.

Ben She asked the Commission to deny the concept as proposed.

Inga Saffron asked if having safety barriers encourages automobiles to drive faster and also asked why we would start with a design that is inadequate.

Vincent stated that the bike path should be mandatory and agreed with previous comments.

Warren Dobney supported the lane reduction.

Arrick was concerned if the barrier is removed than user conflicts will still exist.

Nelson Pavolsky supported the need for more open space.

Lori Song from the Bicycle Coalition appreciated the clarifications that came out of the discussions.

Vaughn Campbell stated that a safety barrier is essential.

Ian Litwin (staff) read three emails of public comments that were received.

Question and comments from the Commission continued at the minute mark (01:23:05).

Commissioner Hartner stated that the use of the bridge isn't under the Commission's purview but that it's aesthetics and design is within their review purview.

At the minute mark (01:56:00), Chairperson Greenberger offered a motion, that the Commission approve the repair of the bridge deck but exclude anything related to the manner in which lanes are used, separated, or designed until the Streets Department returns to the Art Commission. Thus, the Commission isn't approving the width of the bike lane or the railing locations. The Commission is simply approving the repair of a bridge. Commissioner Hartner clarified for the motion that the widening of the bridge deck is included.

The final motion was formed. The Art Commission voted to approve the bridge deck repair, including the deck widening. They disapproved any configurations on the bridge, including any alignment of safety barriers, traffic lanes, and pedestrian and bicyclist paths. The proposal must return to the Art Commission to get the alignments approved, and before the bridge reopens after the deck reconstruction.

Upon the motion made by Chairperson Greenberger and seconded by Commissioner Roesch, Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana, Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Roesch and Chairperson Greenberger. The motion was carried by the Commission (5-1). Commissioner Nasser disapproved. Commissioner Zacharjasz abstained.

4. 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 Cutis began the presentation at (02:02:07) with a revised design and the artist Brad Curry provided details. Since meeting in March, they refined some of the words in the background, as well as the shadows and building silhouettes. They were able to integrate Spanish language words and phrases with the help of APM.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (02:09:33).

The Commission unanimously agreed that the project was absolutely beautiful.

Upon the motion made by Commissioner Zacharjasz and seconded by Commissioner Nasser, 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 (6-0).

Presentations for Concept Review

1. 67-21

Victory Brewing Company

1776 Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Review Type: Construction in the Benjamin Franklin Parkway Area Overlay

Project Details: Exterior façade renovation

Submitted by: Pearl Properties

Reed Slogoff from Pearl Properties began the presentation at (02:11:21). Due to COVID-19 the Embassy Suites Hotel closed, and the development team quickly started the process of converting the building into apartments. The main focus of the Commission's review however is for the adjacent retail space which is planned to become space for the Victory Brewing Company. Plans include exterior façade improvements, landscape improvements, and signage.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (02:18:21).

Commissioner Almiñana asked if they were proposing to remove any street trees along the Parkway. The trees are staying and will be maintained by Philadelphia Parks and Recreation.

The Commission continued to discuss the project materials and the existing outdoor sculpture. Currently the darkly colored sculpture contrasts with the white façade materials, but the proposal is for the façade to become darker in color.

Ms. Berryman clarified that the building improvements that are under the Benjamin Franklin Parkway Overlay are under review currently, and the signage will come through the Sign Committee for their recommendation at another date (02:24:29).

Chairperson Greenberger expressed that he was in support of the proposal but needed to see a physical sample of the proposed blue tile being proposed for the façade. An on-site review would be arranged. Commissioner Almiñana stated that the project is a great improvement for the Parkway. There was agreement that more accurate renderings of both the landscape and the conditions around the sculpture are needed at the next review. Commissioner Roesch added that he's looking forward to seeing the rendering of the sculpture.

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve for concept review at (02:28:18).

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 concept review (6-0).

2. 69-21

**Seaport Museum Food Concession Structures
211 S Christopher Columbus Blvd**

Review Type: Construction project located on City property

Project Details: New food concession structures

Submitted By: Albert Taus and Associates Architects

Andy Barrios began the presentation at the minute mark (02:30:19). He stated that they are seeking support for several outdoor Seaport Museum concession stands that will be converted from shipping containers. He reviewed the proposed site plan locations within plaza areas and existing conditions.

Questions and comments from Commission at the minute mark (02:34:52).

Commissioner Zacharjasz inquired about the materials and they were confirmed to be metal which is durable enough for the proposed reuse. Discussion continued to clarify if the structures block existing windows. The windows are already blocked from interior modifications.

Chairperson Greenberger mentioned that the building has an odd relationship to its context and therefore the small colorful, incidental additions of the concession stands add some life to the surroundings and certainly do not harm to the public environment.

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission or the public, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve for final review at (02:38:32).

Upon the motion made by Commissioner Zacharjasz and seconded by Commissioner Roesch, Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Nasser, Commissioner Roesch, Commissioner Zacharjasz and Chairperson Greenberger. The Commission voted unanimously for final approval (5-0).

3. 68-21

**Waste Transfer Station
5201 Umbria Street**

Review Type: Construction project located on City property

Project Details: New structure within existing waste facility site

Submitted By: Streets Department

At (02:40:28), Kevin McCartney began the presentation by reviewing the overall site plan of the existing transfer facility that the City runs. The Streets Department is seeking to build a new facility to the south of the existing facility using a pre-fabricated building system. Mr. Paul Graebener spoke briefly about the building plan. At (02:50:56) Swarupa Samant explained some of the building details including the texture and colors of concrete footings, foundation walls, and elevations. Some perimeter trees will remain but much of site's vegetation has already been cleared. The Streets Department is

managing this project and is using Capital Program funding, the City's Percent for Art program requirements are not applicable.

Questions and comments from the Commission at minute mark (02:57:22). Chairperson Greenberger shared his screen to show an aerial image of the site. The proposed building height is 65 feet, leading Commissioner Zacharjasz to inquire about fencing, trees, and other screening treatments. It is a prominent corner despite the industrial use.

Chairperson Greenberger stated that he was comfortable with issuing concept approval but would like to see an image from the corner of Domino Lane and Umbria Street, with the appropriate trees and vegetation shown, to understand the visual impact. In addition, a sample of the building material is needed for the next review.

Discussion continued about the possibility of any architectural improvements, understanding that pre-engineered buildings have a limited "kit of parts" available. It was determined that increasing the window size, investigating roof overhangs, and investigating the use of semi-transparent wall panels were options that would be researched by 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 (03:08:47).

Upon the motion made by Commissioner Zacharjasz and seconded by Commissioner Hartner, Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Nasser, Commissioner Roesch, Commissioner Zacharjasz and Chairperson Greenberger. The Commission voted unanimously for concept approval (5-0).

Finally, Chairperson Greenberger announced that he would be resigning from the Art Commission after the June 2021 meeting. He thanked the Mayor for the opportunity to serve for five years and thanked the Commission members. He also mentioned that Commissioner Nixon will also be stepping down in early summer.

The April 14, 2021 Art Commission was adjourned at 12:42 p.m. End time in video: (03:12:12).

The next Art Commission will be held Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom.