



The Philadelphia Art  
Commission

Established 1911

## Minutes

The Philadelphia Art Commission

May 12, 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, Natalie Nixon

Alan Greenberger

Chair

José Almiñana

Carmen Febo San Miguel

Bridget Collins-Greenwald

Raed Nasser

Natalie Nixon

Robert Roesch

Mario Zacharjasz

Steve Hartner

### **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.*

C. Beige Berryman

Staff

Chairperson Greenberger clarified the order of the agenda, stating that two of the sign appeals will be heard at the end of the agenda. He also announced the withdrawal of one of the Administrative Items, the SEPTA 11<sup>th</sup> Street station improvements.

### **Minutes**

- April 14, 2021 meeting minutes

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve the April minutes and did a consensus vote of the Commission at the minute mark (00:04:43).

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Roesch and seconded by Commissioner Nasser, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the April minutes (8-0).*

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## **Report of the Sign Committee – April 28, 2021**

Second Reviews:

1. **55-21**  
**Paris Baguette**  
1709-17 Chestnut Street

First Reviews:

1. **82-21**  
**Terrace on 18th Street**  
1776 Benjamin Franklin Parkway
2. **76-21**  
**Capsule**  
1929 Sansom Street
3. **77-21**  
**Penzeys**  
233 Market Street
4. **72-21**  
**Philadelphia Jewelry Appraisers**  
126 S 8 St

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve the recommendations of the Sign Committee for the first and second reviews and did a consensus vote of the Commission at the minute mark (00:05:15).

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Nasser and seconded by Commissioner Febo San Miguel, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the recommendations of the Sign Committee for the first and second reviews (8-0).*

## **Administrative Agenda**

1. **84-21**  
**Southwest Water Pollution Control Plant Facility Access Gates Betterment**  
**8200 Enterprise Avenue**  
Review Type: Minor construction on City Property  
Project Details: PWD facility access gates upgrades  
Submitted By: Trans-Pacific Engineering Corps.

Ms. Berryman began her summary at the minute mark (00:05:47). The Philadelphia Water Department owns and operates the pollution control plant. The project is intended to improve multiple facility access gates with security upgrades around the plant, control upgrades, and electrical and civil site improvements.

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve the administrative item and did a consensus vote of the Commission at the minute mark (00:06:38).

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Roesch and seconded by Commissioner Febo San Miguel, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the administrative item (8-0).*

## **Presentations for Second 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 began the presentation at the minute mark (00:07:42). At the April Art Commission meeting an overview of the project proposal was provided. The Commission requested more detail on the east elevation of the building, the landscape, and the facade materials. The subsequent submission addressed these items and included an updated rendering of the eastern elevation area.

Discussion began at the minute mark (00:09:35). Chairperson Greenberger inquired about the façade material behind the sculpture at the corner. Commissioner Zacharjasz raised concerns about the pewter color of the exterior wall not offering enough contrast with the existing sculpture. Commissioner Roesch suggested treating the bronze, as a resurfacing of the sculpture would protect it and make it appear darker. He also asked for clarification about the structural support for the sculpture. Commissioner Almiñana asked who owns the statue. Mr. Gindhart responded that ownership documentation was lacking but that private ownership is suspected. He also clarified that the sculpture's support would be properly reinforced.

At (00:25:43), Commissioner Roesch added that the sculpture doesn't appear in the public art collection's online listing, thus supporting the suspicion that it is privately owned. He recommended that a plaque should be added and Mr. Gindhart said it would be.

Chairperson Greenberger praised the building improvements that lowered the ground floor to be flush with the sidewalk level. Others also praised the project for adding elegance to the location.

Commissioner Almiñana encouraged the street trees to be carefully monitored and to supplement the tree pits for better tree health. He also suggested that the planting bed in front of the sculpture at the corner be restrained in its palette, as the location is very busy.

Before the motion, Chairperson Greenberger stated that this item, the building improvements, is distinct from the upcoming sign appeal item. Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to approve at the minute mark (00:26:54).

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Nasser and seconded by Commissioner Zacharjasz, Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana, Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Nasser, Commissioner Roesch, Commissioner Chairperson Greenberger, and Commissioner Nixon. The Commission voted unanimously for final approval (8-0).*

## **Sign Appeal:**

### **1. 111-20**

#### **Victory Brewing Company**

1776 Benjamin Franklin Parkway

The Victory Brewing Company appeal of the Sign Committee decision started at (00:28:58). Mr. Gindhard asked Ms. Berryman for clarification regarding the Sign Committee's recommendation for the nearby monument sign. Ms. Berryman replied that the revised design of monument sign is approved, and only the signage on the sides of the canopy is being appealed. Chairperson Greenberger asked about the background on what was proposed and the nature of the recommendation from the Sign Committee to understand what the appeal is about.

Discussion began at the minute mark (00:32:03) between Chairperson Greenberger, Commissioner Almiñana, Commissioner Zacharjasz, Commissioner Roesch, and Commissioner Nasser regarding the effectiveness of the copy on canopy the sides. There was agreement that the signage was too busy, detracted from the other more successful signs on the building, and the blade sign type was not appropriate for the location.

Chairperson Greenberger asked for clarification on whether they were voting on the appeal, or the recommendation of the Sign Committee, which was denial of the sign. Ms. Becker clarified that at the beginning of the meeting, the Commission voted to accept the recommendations of the Sign Committee. Therefore, the current vote is on the appeal.

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion to deny the appeal.

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Zacharjasz to deny the appeal and seconded by Commissioner Nasser, Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana, Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Nasser, Commissioner Nixon, Commissioner Roesch, Commissioner Zacharjasz and Chairperson Greenberger. The Commission voted unanimously to deny the appeal (8-0).*

## **Presentations for Concept Review**

### **1. 85-21**

#### **Ziehler Playground**

**200-64 E. Olney Avenue**

Review Type: Construction project located on City property

Project Details: Site and building improvements

Submitted By: Salt Design Studio

Steve Buck began the presentation at the minute mark (00:44:06) with an overview of the project, including the design of a new playground, improvement to the basketball court and picnic area, new site furnishings, seating, court and recreational field lighting, and critical repairs to the pool. Stormwater solutions, fencing, the entryway, and mural wall were described in greater detail.

The building's canopy treatment was also thoroughly described. The existing columns are being reused, and the deck materials will be replaced but along the same slope. The renovated canopy structure will be separate from the rest of the building's roof as a solution to address safety concerns but also to keep the original architectural intention.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (01:02:25). Commissioner Roesch asked about fulfilling the Percent for Art requirement, and about the lifespan of the paint being used on the basketball court. Mr. Buck stated that initial plans are to have a sculpture located in the entry plaza. The paint material that will be used is standard for basketball courts for City recreation centers. Commissioner Almiñana asked about the material composing the landscape berm, as artificial turf would hold up better than natural lawn over time. Given that natural lawn was being proposed, he suggested that shade trees be planted in place of the berm to provide cooling near the basketball courts.

Further discussion continued at the minute mark (01:06:45), with Chris Soffietini and Commissioner Almiñana, about the canopy's materials and design. The steel structure would be preserved and the deck replaced. The new deck material would provide a better light quality in the space below. Commissioner Nixon inquired about the buildings across the street from the site, which are Grover Washington Middle School. Commissioner Febo San Miguel inquired about the lighting. Mr. Soffietini stated that general site lighting, as well as court and field lighting are all being provided. Commissioner Roesch asked about the possibility of having solar panels on the roof. Due to the budget, solar is not possible at this time, but Mr. Soffietini clarified that it could be added in the future should funding become available.

Commissioner Zacharjasz asked if the soffit material was metal – yes, it is. He voiced a concern about the durability of the material over time. Chairperson Greenberger inquired about the extent of the chain link fence being replaced (01:15:55). Lower ornamental fence will be used behind the rain garden, but the extent of the chain link fence near the entry is still being determined. Commissioner Greenberger urged the fence to be reduced as much as possible to allow the entry area to feel welcoming.

Chairperson Greenberger asked if there was a motion for concept approval at the minute mark (01:23:00).

*The motion was made by Commissioner Roesch and seconded by Commissioner Febo San Miguel. Then Commissioners Almiñana and Roesch clarified the motion by summarizing the elements that had remaining questions and should be addressed at the next review including the landscape berm, fence locations and type, energy system opportunities for sustainable options, material durability, and the Percent for Art component. Chairperson Greenberger confirmed that the motion was made, seconded, and amended (01:24:32).*

*Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana, Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Nasser, Commissioner Nixon, Commissioner Roesch, Commissioner Zacharjasz and Chairperson Greenberger. The Commission voted unanimously for concept approval as amended (8-0).*

## 2. 86-21

### **Christ Church Garden**

#### **22-34 N 2<sup>nd</sup> Street**

Review Type: Construction in the Independence Hall Area Overlay

Project Details: Landscape and circulation improvements

Submitted By: Olin

At the minute mark (01:26:26) Brian Velleman began the presentation with an overview of existing conditions, proposed site plan, and improvements which are to be completed in two phases. The scope of work does not include any areas outside of the perimeter walls. He described the existing paving as being deteriorated, the need to revitalize the grounds and their plantings, and the goal to create a circulation path and new gathering spaces that invite the community to linger.

Brian Velleman continued his presentation. The site is historic and will be kept open to visitors throughout the renovation by phasing the work. The perimeter walls will not be disturbed. Drainage issues will be corrected, and existing brick pavers will be reused as much as possible. The improvements are taking into consideration the future installation of a bell which is currently located indoors.

Questions and comments from the Commission began at the minute mark (01:37:46). Commissioner Roesch asked if the area where the Sycamore tree is being removed is being replaced with pavers and if additional trees were being planted. Mr. Velleman confirmed. Commissioner Almiñana asked for clarification if the Sycamore tree was being replaced with new trees to equal the loss. Commissioner Nixon inquired about how vandalism around the memorial sites and Mr. Velleman stated that the new plantings would provide more protection.

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Commissioner Roesch asked if there was a motion for concept approval at the minute mark (01:42:00).

*Chairperson Greenberger had excused himself from the meeting, thus Commissioner Roesch chaired the remainder of the proceedings.*

*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 Nixon, Commissioner Roesch and Commissioner Zacharjasz. The Commission voted unanimously for approval as amended (7-0).*

*The Commission returned to the remaining two appeals of the Sign Committee recommendations.*

### **Sign Appeals**

#### **2. 56-21**

#### **Electricians Local 98**

1719 Spring Garden St

The Electricians Local 98 signage presentation began at the minute mark (01:43:30) by Henry Clinton. The proposal is for four 10'-7 15/16" X 7'-4 9/16" digital signs on the existing façade facing Spring Garden Street. He described the digital sign proposal as being illuminated but not animated and recessed into the column line behind the front face of the façade. He also

described the setback of the building itself, as being at least four to five feet behind the adjacent existing buildings. The surrounding context was further described. The agreement with the Spring Garden Civic Association was also outlined.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (01:51:44). Commissioner Almiñana asked about the variance that had been granted for the sign, and how much square footage was granted compared to how much the zoning code allows. The amount as a percentage was not available at the time.

Commissioner Roesch asked if a signage plan for Spring Garden Street existed that might provide a framework to guide this decision, as the proposal was radical. Commissioner Almiñana questioned the relevance of using the Comcast Tower lobby screen as a precedent because the conditions at this location are different, especially the outdoor lighting conditions. He expressed uncertainty about the purpose of the signs. Commissioner Zacharjasz agreed and asked what would prevent others from putting up electronic signs along this street. Commissioner Nasser asked to what extent the community had been engaged. Additionally, Commissioner Febo San Miguel asked about the number of signs, and if two signs would be more appropriate than four.

Commissioner Nixon returned to the idea of having a plan in place before a decision could be made, and asked who might write the plan and what the timeline be. Commissioner Roesch suggested that City Council and the community would need to work together to develop a plan. Commissioner Febo San Miguel suggested that the Commission deny the appeal. Commissioner Nasser agreed.

At the minute mark (02:09:38), council for the Art Commission, Claudia Becker, stated that the Home Rule Charter gives authority to the Art Commission to approve signage at this location. She also suggested that the Planning Commission would be the City agency which would help to write a plan, but they are advisory. Ms. Becker reminded the Commission that some form of action taken should be taken today to prevent the 60-day time period from expiring, after which applications are deemed approved. Further discussion continued with the Commission and Ms. Becker to clarify the role of the Signage Committee and their recommendation, as well as the scope of the Planning Commission, Art Commission, and the Zoning Board jurisdiction. Lastly, commissioners clarified that Spring Garden Street is also under PennDOT jurisdiction.

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Commissioner Roesch suggested for the Commission move to uphold the decision of the Sign Committee (02:20:31).

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Nasser, and seconded by Commissioner Zacharjasz, Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana, Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Nasser, Commissioner Nixon, Commissioner Roesch and Commissioner Zacharjasz. The Commission voted to uphold the recommendation of the Sign Committee (6-1). Commissioner Hartner opposed the motion.*

### **3. 75-21**

#### **Dollar General**

1901 Callowhill St

The Commission heard the appeal of the Sign Committee recommendations for Dollar General at 1901 Callowhill Street. The presentation began at the minute mark (02:22:58) and clarified that the wall sign was recommended for approval but the projecting blade sign was denied, and thus that recommendation is being appealed. Greg Feldman argued that the blade sign provides visibility to those on the street and sidewalk. At this point, Sarah James Myatt spoke more specifically about what Dollar General brings to the community.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (02:27:55).

Commissioner Roesch commented that blade signs are generally discouraged and suggested for the Commission to uphold the recommendation of the Sign Committee.

*Upon the motion made by Commissioner Nasser and seconded by Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Nasser, Commissioner Nixon, Commissioner Roesch and Commissioner Zacharjasz. The Commission voted unanimously to uphold the decision of the Sign Committee (7-0).*

The May 12, 2021 Art Commission was adjourned at the minute mark (02:31:08).

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