



The Philadelphia Art
Commission

Established 1911

Minutes

The Philadelphia Art Commission

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

Remote – Zoom Meeting – Hosted by DPZ

Members Present: Robert Roesch, Carmen Febo San Miguel, José Almiñana

Raed Nasser, Steve Hartner, Sarah McEneaney

Robert Roesch

Chair

José Almiñana

Carmen Febo San Miguel

Bridget Collins-Greenwald

Raed Nasser

Sarah McEneaney

Mario Zacharjasz

Steve Hartner

C. Beige Berryman

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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.*

Before handing the agenda over to the Commission, Ms. Berryman took a moment to congratulate Commissioner Roesch for his first day as the newly appointed chairperson and to welcome Sarah McEneaney as a newly appointed commissioner.

Chairperson Roesch called the meeting to order at the minute mark (00:02:37).

Minutes

- June 9, 2021 meeting minutes

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Roesch asked if there was a motion to approve the June minutes and did a consensus vote of the Commission at the minute mark (00:03:02).

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

Report of the Sign Committee – June 23, 2021

Second Reviews:

1. **91-21**
SEPTA Jefferson Station Entrance
1000 Filbert Street

First Reviews:

1. **92-21**
Veterinary Emergency Group
1213 Walnut Street
2. **111-21**
Citizens Bank
1515 Market Street
3. **112-21**
Harvest
501 S Broad Street
4. **110-21**
Grocery Outlet
25 W Hortter Street

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission on the Sign Committee Report, Chairperson Roesch asked if there was a motion to approve the recommendations of the Sign Committee at (00:03:41).

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

Administrative Agenda

1. **116-21**
Grace Murray Hopper Achievement Plaque
447 N Broad Street
Review Type: Encroachment in the public right-of-way
Project Details: Sidewalk recognition plaque
Submitted By: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Philadelphia section

Ms. Berryman presented one administrative item. The proposal is for an achievement recognition plaque for Grace Murray Hopper, who invented the Compiler in 1952. The Compiler is a computer program that translates computer code written in programming language into another language. The proposed sidewalk plaque will recognize her work and is fitting to be placed in front of the Mathematics, Civics, and Science Charter

School along North Broad Street. The location is also near where she once worked. The plaque will be inset into the sidewalk concrete flush with the surface.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (00:05:27).

Commissioner Almiñana asked if the entire sidewalk concrete panel would be replaced as part of installing the signage. Ms. Berryman replied yes.

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Roesch asked if there was a motion to approve the administrative item at (00:06:10).

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

Presentations for Second Review

1. 108-21

Climate Justice Initiative Mural

1700 Spring Garden Street

Review Type: Art in the Benjamin Franklin Parkway Area Overlay

Project Details: Exterior mural

Submitted By: Mural Arts Philadelphia

Ron Whyte introduced the Climate Justice Initiative mural project. Sharie Hersh continued the presentation focusing on the final design of the project. She described in detail the goals of the project, the symbolism of the components of the art, and the content of the multiple infographic panels.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark in video (00:21:10).

Commissioner Almiñana wanted to know how people would walk up to the infographic panels to view the information. He was concerned about the adjacent open space having an informal dirt trail leading to the mural, and that the ground might need to be stabilized with a more formal path with gravel. Ms. Hersh showed a view from the corner of 8th and Spring Garden Streets and added that they are also proposing to have a repurposed shipping container with tables and chairs to provide a welcoming environment for visitors. Further discussion continued about stabilizing the ground for expected pedestrian traffic and a possible one-way circulation path with general agreement that a gravel path was needed.

Commissioner McEneaney raised concerns regarding the infographic panels. The white background presents a stark contrast to the mural, a color that blends with the mural background may be more pleasing. Commissioner Febo San Miguel shared her concerns about recognizing the Puerto Rican community that was pushed out of the area, as well as the policing and red lining that occurred. The use of QR codes on the panels to direct viewers to additional, more detailed information was discussed.

Commissioner Febo San Miguel also asked about lighting. Ms. Hersh said that additional lighting was not part of the proposal but that the existing open space may already be lit, she would need to confirm.

Chairperson Roesch suggested that the mural as presented could be approved, but the Commission needed to see more details about the shipping container location, the groundcover to mitigate foot traffic damage, and detailed images of the infographic panels including how the QR codes would be incorporated (00:36:27).

Ms. Hersh asked if an administrative review was possible for the additional items. Commissioner Febo San Miguel recommended approval because the issues that were raised at the concept review were addressed and the new questions could be presented at another time to the staff through Ms. Berryman. Commissioner Nasser asked for clarification if the current review was under consideration for concept or final approval. Commissioner Almiñana confirmed that the project was for final approval.

Commissioner Almiñana then stated that he supported the motion to give final approval with the proviso that the requests for additional information are coordinated through staff. Commissioner Nasser seconded this motion.

Ms. Berryman polled the Commission: Commissioner Almiñana, Commissioner Febo San Miguel, Commissioner Hartner, Commissioner Nasser, Commissioner McEneaney, and Chairperson Roesch. The Commission voted unanimously for final approval (6-0).

Presentations for Concept Review

1. 117-21

William H. Hunter Schoolyard Improvements 2400 N Front St

Review Type: Construction project located on City property

Project Details: Site improvements

Submitted By: Salt Design Studio

This presentation began at the minute mark in video (00:42:21).

Katrina Rogus gave an overview of the project and existing conditions, describing that it is mostly concrete with few trees currently. The proposal is for outdoor classroom spaces, a rain garden, exterior “entry corridor”, two basketball courts, main play area (universally inclusive), and new plantings.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark in video (00:55:38).

Chairperson Roesch asked Ms. Rogus to clarify which areas were “soft” surfaces and which were painted surfaces. The painted surfaces include the basketball courts and the concrete pavement along the main entry corridor. The other colorful surfaces in the drawings are soft, the main play area is rubber safety surfacing and any of course the green planted areas. Further discussion continued about the life expectancy for the painted surfaces.

Lighting was then asked about (00:56:33). No additional lighting is part of the project, but the building provides plenty. A night rendering depicting the light quality was requested.

The Commission also requested clarification on whether or not the budget required a Percent for Art component.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark in video (00:59:40).

Commissioner Almiñana asked what kind of trees they were proposing to save – Tilia Cordata. He asked the team to reconsider this, as their root system would not be improved as part of the project, additional multi-use space would be gained, and the cost reduction might outweigh the benefits of saving the trees.

The visual graphics painted on the basketball courts was discussed. The pattern may be too busy for practical use and should be simplified.

Chairperson Roesch inquired about the two sails for shade at the main entrance and added that more sails may be needed where the tables and chairs are located. Commissioner Almiñana asked if the team consulted with the teachers about how they would like the outside classrooms to be designed. Ms. Rogus replied yes, and added that the teachers were consulted and they were responsive.

Chairperson Roesch then summarized the items to bring back for the Commission's review: clarification on the Percent for Art program, a night rendering, final tree planting plan, basketball court surface design, reaching out to teachers once more, and additional shade sails over the seating.

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Roesch asked if there was a motion for conceptual approval (01:12:24).

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

2. 119-21

Maplewood Mall Public Art

Greene Street Plaza near W. Armat Street and Greene Street

Review Type: Art installation on City property

Project Details: Artwork on capstones of seat walls

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

Stephanie Fuentes began the presentation at the minute mark (01:13:33) and gave an overview of the project and mentioned that community input was collected as part of the final review of the proposals. An online and in-person survey was opened from March 24th through May 7th and collected 272 responses with the majority being local residents of Germantown, who access or live by the Maplewood Mall on the regular basis. With approval of this proposal, fabrication can begin in the fall and completed by spring of 2022.

At this point, Kate Kaman proceeded with the presentation of her art and design for the bench capstones. Brass details will be inlaid into terrazzo and sealed with epoxy. The final patterns are not set yet at this point.

Commissioner Almiñana asked about the installation sequence, specifically if the skateboard deterrents could be fully incorporated into the design from the start and not

added later. Ms. Kaman said she would consider this idea, but also mentioned the importance of having a flat surface for applying the epoxy.

Chairperson Roesch expressed concerns about the brass getting too hot in the summertime, and asked Ms. Kaman to look into the heat threat. He also requested a plan view of the capstone design at the final review.

Commissioner Febo San Miguel inquired about the lighting and requested night images at the final review. Commissioner Almiñana suggested adding a slope to the capstones for water drainage. Ms. Kaman thought this was a great idea.

Seeing no questions or comments from the Commission Chairperson Roesch asked if there was a motion for conceptual approval (01:39:00).

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

Chairperson Roesch summarized the Commission's requests for final approval: night image of the lighting, plan of the art work, clarify if heat is a problem on the brass elements, slope the surfaces for drainage, and details on the design and installation of the skateboard deterrents.

Chairperson Roesch asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Commissioner Febo San Miguel and seconded by Commissioner Hartner.

The July 14, 2021 Art Commission was adjourned at the minute mark (01:41:18), ending at 11:11 a.m.

The next Art Commission will be held Wednesday, September 1, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom.