

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 10, 2020

5:30 PM

Remote Meeting Via Zoom

Members Present:

Janis O. Manwaring, Chair
Michael Giacomo, Vice Chair
Bettina A. Chadbourne
Robert C. Williams

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager
Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,
Recreation, & Facilities
David Hickling, Airport Director

Members Not Present:

Randy L. Filiault

Chair Manwaring called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

1) **Katie Scherwin- Proposal for Permanent Public Art Installation-Airport Property**

Chair Manwaring announced that Katie Scherwin was unable to attend the meeting and that Adam Schepker would be speaking in her absence.

Chair Manwaring welcomed the Director of Parks, Recreation, & Facilities, Andy Bohannon, who explained that this proposal relating to public art pieces was brought before the Committee last cycle. City staff needed additional time to take the opportunity to review Resolution R-2018-22 to ensure the best way to move forward with the project. Mr. Bohannon noted that it would be their recommendation tonight for the art installation to move forward.

Mr. Bohannon explained that the need during the review process is for the proposal to address certain questions in the resolution. The questions in R-2018-22 were then addressed by Mr. Bohannon.

- Whether the Public Art reflects aspects of the City's history, unique environment, cultural identity, or community-at-large;
 - Mr. Bohannon stated this is an accurate statement because the base plates used for the sculpture were from a scrap pile at the airport. Mr. Schepker then took his creative liberty and utilized the base plates to create the piece. The sculpture is a nice reflection of what the airport has used in the past. Mr. Bohannon noted that people will have the ability to learn and gain an educational experience from this piece of work.

- Whether the Public Art aesthetically enhances public spaces or environment to which it relates or interacts;
 - Mr. Bohannon stated that the art does enhance the space by providing the property with a history of the airport. In addition, there will be an educational component located off to the side of the piece. Mr. Schepker will provide a narrative about the piece and what it means to the airport.
- Whether the Public Art is commensurate in scale with its surroundings;
 - Mr. Bohannon explained that one of things they take into account when introducing a piece of art, is that it does not take over a particular space. This particular piece does fit in the area and is located across from the terminal building near a trail head. It was noted this is an area where there are a lot of dog walkers, which will be an opportunity for these people to explore the piece.
- Whether the Public Art is feasible to produce and display;
 - Mr. Bohannon stated that the piece is technically feasible to produce and display. Mr. Schepker already has all of the pieces together and is ready to install.
- Whether the Public Art is unique and original and not mass produced or standardized;
 - Mr. Bohannon stated that the piece was definitely unique, not repetitive and is a custom piece of art.
- Whether the Public Art is durable, constructed of materials that will survive in the environment in which it will be placed, and is reasonable to maintain in terms of time and expense;
 - Mr. Bohannon explained how the piece will rust over time due to the nature of the materials. However, the piece should withstand the New England weather. The artist has explained how he intends to maintain the piece over time. With proper techniques the piece will last 15-25 years. In addition, Mr. Bohannon noted there is a one percent (1%) of the construction cost given back to the maintenance of the project based on the resolution.
- Whether the artist(s) and or organization(s) submitting a proposal for Public Art can demonstrate that the artist(s) and or organization(s) is (are) recognized by critics and peers as one who produces works of art;
 - Mr. Bohannon stated the artist is known in the area of Cheshire County and beyond. Mr. Schepker has already created a piece of art on the Cheshire Rail Trail down on Eastern Avenue. The piece is made of bicycle parts and fits the motif and entrance of the Cheshire Rail Trail. Mr. Bohannon noted that the piece is a nice reflection of public art.
- Whether the Public Art is in a location that allows for necessary maintenance;
 - Mr. Bohannon explained that the piece was originally going to be placed off to the side by the labyrinth. The location has moved and was one of the questions they wanted to verify. Mr. Bohannon reported that they did walk the property with Mr. Schepker to verify this was the best location. There will be a reduction in maintenance around that area. Mr. Bohannon noted there was little bit of

concern but they will work with the artist and maintenance at the airport to overcome any issues.

- Whether the Public Art is designed to be reasonably protected from environment degradation, damage, vandalism, or theft;
 - Mr. Bohannon stated that he is not sure of any piece that is designed to be vandal proofed. The location is very visible and should anything happen to the piece it would be noticed right away.
- Whether the Public Art is affixed to a structure or building and whether structure of building is expected to remain in good condition for twenty (20) years;
 - Mr. Bohannon stated that in speaking with Mr. Schepker the material can be expected to last a period of time within the criteria.
- Whether the Public Art creates a public safety, health, or security concern;
 - Mr. Bohannon stated the piece does not present a safety concern in their opinion. One of the things Mr. Bohannon took into consideration about safety was equating it to playground equipment. As far as safety, he questioned if the holes between the two pieces is something an arm could go through easily and come out. Mr. Bohannon explained they have looked at these types of issues and have worked with artist to assure this will not be an issue. There will also be insurance that is provided in the provision. The fixture will be a permanent piece of art and once adopted by the City Council will be the property of the City of Keene.

Mr. Bohannon stated the second piece of art in question will come in a separate document sometime in the spring. In addition, Mr. Bohannon wanted the Committee to be aware that the Public Works Department and Parks and Recreation Department is working on a fillable pdf form that will take out some of the questions that occurred last time. Mr. Bohannon noted that this make it easier for artists to submit inquiries to the City.

Chair Manwaring welcomed comment from the Director of the Airport, David Hickling. Mr. Hickling stated that from the standpoint of the airport this is an exciting addition that will add to the area. He noted the use of parts of the runway edge light bases to make this piece of art really blends in with the property. Mr. Hickling noted that the location of the piece will not impact landscape maintenance.

Councilor Giacomo asked what the expected setback off the main access road is for the piece at the new location. Mr. Bohannon responded the setback is close to the wooded area. The new location looking from the terminal building is where the old fire training area was located. Off to the right of that entrance setback is where the piece will be located. Mr. Bohannon stated they wanted to make sure there was a setback far enough away for snowplow removal to ensure there would not be any damage to the piece.

Councilor Giacomo noted that he asked about the setback in regards to plowing in addition to salt spray. He noted that salt spray has the potential of accelerating corrosion of steel parts.

Councilor Williams asked what the installation process was and who would be doing the work. Mr. Bohannon responded that it is the artist's responsibility for the installation of the art while working along with City staff. Mr. Schepker will also need to follow through with Dig Safe to make sure that location has been checked.

With no further comment, Chair Manwaring welcomed comment from Mr. Schepker.

Mr. Schepker began by stating that he is extremely humbled to be a part of this growth of art in the community and grateful for this opportunity. This is something that he has been passionate about for a long time. Mr. Schepker added that he is grateful to Georgia Cassimatis, from Friends of Public Art, Katie Schwerin and all of the wonderful people that have built up this momentum. Mr. Schepker grew up in the area and it warms his heart to see this happening here.

Mr. Schepker explained that Ms. Schwerin approached him about the possibility of creating a sculpture. He got excited and then went over to the airport and looked around the scrap piles. Mr. Schepker discovered these disks that are base plates for the runway lights. The disks are described as having wavy concentric circle patterns that are visually interesting. Mr. Schepker then began putting the pieces together and came up with a hexagon honey comb shape. His vision was to create a piece that had an interesting dynamic between the backdrop of nature and the piece itself. Mr. Schepker used steel for the frame and created some sturdy legs with two footings. The piece will be bolted down to a cement pad that will be built with rebar in order to make sure it is strong. The finish used on the frame will be with a material that will help protect the piece for a long time. He noted that the steel is soft and will rust quickly if not protected. Mr. Schepker stated that the disks are galvanized steel and will be good to go for a long time. In addition, the hooks that hold each disk together are stainless and will also be good for a very long time.

Mr. Schepker stated that based on the weather there may be time to install the piece this year but realistically they may end up installing in the spring.

Mr. Schepker looks forward to hearing from the public on their thoughts about the piece. In addition, he hopes the momentum of public art in the area will inspire sculptors around the region and country.

Chair Manwaring welcomed additional comments.

Councilor Williams stated that he thinks this is a great idea and that public art is important and enriches the soul. One of his concerns is the location of the piece being all the way down at the airport. Councilor Williams noted that he does not think the piece will be seen enough. He wondered if it would be a good idea display the piece some place downtown on a temporary basis since it cannot be installed until the spring. Councilor Williams added that it would be nice to have this public art at the future location of the arts corridor.

Mr. Schepker responded that he is an artist that enjoys making things and loves to see things happen. However, in terms of formalities and getting approvals Mr. Schepker stated

this would create another level of discussion with City Council. Mr. Schepker noted that Councilor Williams did have a good idea and would be amazing.

Councilor Chadbourne added that Councilor Williams has a great idea and there may be a simpler solution. She noted there are empty store fronts downtown and owners are sometimes willing to display these types of things. Councilor Chadbourne recommended asking store owners if they would be willing to host something of this nature. In addition, she noted that it may not have to be so complicated and may not have to involve the City.

Councilor Giacomo thanked Mr. Schepker and Ms. Schwerin for their hard work in putting together this comprehensive proposal. In addition, he stated that he was looking forward to seeing the sculpture.

Chair Manwaring then recognized Georgia Cassimatis.

Ms. Cassimatis, introduced herself as the founder of the nonprofit organization, Friends of Public Art. She explained the organization is responsible for facilitating public art projects that are free to the public to enhance cultural, social and economic vitality in the Monadnock Region.

Ms. Cassimatis explained that Ms. Schwerin contacted her to help move through the process of working with the City and completing the proper paperwork. Ms. Cassimatis did not have any part in selecting the art as she does not have opinions in that way. The idea is to help get the project going. Ms. Cassimatis invited anyone in the public that wishes to do public art to contact her in order help work within the guidelines.

Ms. Cassimatis added that Councilor Williams and Councilor Chadbourne's idea to have the piece displayed downtown was a great idea. She noted that she does have some names of storeowners that may be interested in participating in displaying the piece. Ms. Cassimatis looks forward to seeing many more public art sculptures in the area.

Vice Chair Giacomo made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and install the proposed Public Art Piece by Adam Schepker to be placed at the Dillant-Hopkins Airport in accordance with Resolution R-2018-22.

2) REPORT OUT - Maintenance of the Wilson Pond Dam-City Manager

Chair Manwaring recognized the City Manager and welcomed her presentation.

The City Manager stated that she is asking to report this out of Committee and to give an update on the conversations she has had to date with the school district regarding Wilson Pond Dam.

The City Manager displayed a map of the Wilson Pond Dam area indicating the location of Wilson Pond and the Wilson Dam Pond.

The City Manager stated that the Wilson Pond Dam and the Keene High School's athletic fields are two parcels and together they were donated in trust to the Keene High School Athletic Association. She stated they were "donated in trust to be used as an athletic field for games and exercise for said high school and for other public schools of said city and for other such schools uses for similar public purposes". She stated the trustees of the KHS athletic Association leased the premises for \$1 to the union school district of Keene for the premises known as Alumni Field. The school has had a maintenance agreement with the trustees regarding the dam. However, the dam has received very little maintenance over the years. Since the dam is part of the parcels that includes both Wilson Pond and the Alumni Fields they are in a trust that restricts their use. Any attempt to separate them would require legal action through probate court. The dam has deteriorated and the state has sent the school a notice of disrepair that requires the dam to be repaired. The school engaged Dubois & King as their engineer to provide a probable cost of construction of approximately \$500,000. The City Manager noted this was a rough preliminary number. The City Manager stated her understanding from the conversations over last several months was that the Alumni Association is not interested and would not give approval for the dam to be removed. They are only interested in repair.

The City Manager stated that last year the school began conversations with the City. The school stated they would fix the dam for approximating \$500,000 if the City took over ownership and all the responsibilities of the dam. The City Manager stated the school wants to keep the ownership and control of the fields. After several meetings between school and city administration it was determined the dam could not be separated from the pond unless a cy-près action occurred through the courts. It is the City Manager's understanding that the Trustees are not now interested in a cy-près. The City Manager stated that school administration began requesting the City take care of all maintenance responsibilities, future repairs and replacements of the dam once they do this original repair. However, the school administration will no longer be requesting ownership.

The City Manager explained that the financial responsibility related to the dam was part of the donation of the fields. The school has the ability to recoup expenses related to the repairs and maintenance of the dam through their tuition agreements for the high school. Based on this information they have not been able to come to an agreement as to why these costs should be solely born by the City of Keene tax payers, should the City take this responsibility. The City Manager noted the Superintendent has been great to work with and they have had productive meetings. However, they have not been able to come to an agreement on who should carry the financial burden related to the dam.

The City Manager is asking to report this out of MSFI with the understanding the school is discussing in one of their committees of sending a letter to Council with their final proposal. The City Manager explained that once the letter is submitted it will be referred to the appropriate committee. The City Manager stated she thought the appropriate committee

would be the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, but it would depend on what is stated in the letter.

The City Manager added that Councilor Jones initiated a communication regarding the maintenance of Wilson Pond which originally placed this on the MSFI agenda. Councilor Jones was unable to attend this meeting but met with the City Manager earlier in the day. The City Manager reported that Councilor Jones was in agreement this should be reported out this evening.

Vice Chair Giacomo made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends that the communication from Councilor Jones relative to maintenance of the Wilson Pond Dam be reported out of Committee.

There being no further business, Chair Manwaring adjourned the meeting at 6:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jennifer Clark, Minute Taker
November 13, 2020

Additional Edits by,
Terri Hood
Assistant City Clerk