



CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION
MEETING
OFFICIAL MINUTES
MARCH 28, 2023

ALPHARETTA CITY HALL
COMMUNITY ROOM | 2 PARK PLAZA | 6:00 PM

This summary is provided as a convenience and service to the public, media, and staff. It is not the intent to record proceedings verbatim. Any reproduction of this summary must include this notice. Public comments are noted as heard by the Cultural Arts Commission, but not quoted or paraphrased. This document includes limited presentation by the Cultural Arts Commission and invited speakers in summary form.

I. CALL TO ORDER

- ❖ Chairwoman Cookson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

- Cultural Arts Commission Members - Present
 - Melody Cookson (Chair)
 - Michael Barsky (Vice Chair)
 - Sabine Genet
 - Dianna Smeal
 - Shital Foster
 - Sumita Patel
- Cultural Arts Commission Members - Absent
 - Gene Andrews
- Staff
 - Kim Manning – Cultural Services Manager, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
 - Amber O'Dwyer – Administrative Office Coordinator, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. Cultural Arts Commission Meeting Minutes from January 24, 2023

- ❖ Chairwoman Cookson called for a motion to approve the minutes.
 - Commissioner Smeal offered a motion to approve the minutes, as written, from the January 24, 2023, Cultural Arts Commission meeting.
 - Commissioner Foster seconded the motion.
- ❖ The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

b. Cultural Arts Commission Special Called Workshop Minutes from February 28, 2023

- ❖ Chairwoman Cookson called for a motion to approve the minutes.
 - Commissioner Smeal offered a motion to approve the minutes from the February 28, 2023, Special Called Workshop of the Cultural Arts Commission.
 - Commissioner Foster seconded the motion.
- ❖ The motion was approved unanimously (5-0-1) with commissioner Sumita Patel abstaining.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- There was no old business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Lakeview Public Art Application – Mural “Strolling Gaze” by Thomas Turner

- Bennett Snyder with the TPA Group came forward to present the item.
- Mr. Snyder reminded the Commission that the artist was approved two months prior.
- At this time, the muralist has drafted the mural design digitally and in full color since the black and white hand sketch presented.
- Townhomes and retail will border and frame in the central green.
- The green is built to be an overflow for the restaurants and gathering space for the residents and employees.
- Unfortunately, Thomas is out of town and could not be present to deliver his vision.
- The design is panoramic and is 7’ tall and 70’ wide.
- The artist was inspired by the Alpha Loop and wanted to tie in wildlife that inhabit the development and lake that will remain on the development.
- There were requests for additional splashes of color to the digital rendering which the artist usually does when actively painting so this is hard to depict in the design currently presented.
- ❖ Chairwoman Cookson called for a motion to approve the mural.
 - Commissioner Barsky offered a motion to approve the design.
 - Commissioner Smeal seconded the motion.
- ❖ The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION Q&A:

RE: Lakewood Central Green Mural

- C Commissioner Smeal thought the artwork was fabulous and found great movement in the design despite commentary on the fish illustrated in the design.

VII. STAFF PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

a. Cultural Arts Master Plan FY2024

- Kim Manning, Cultural Services Manager for the Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services Department came forward to present the item.
- The plan and funding was proposed for the FY24 budget.
- While it appears it may be approved, we cannot know for sure until Council takes a formal vote.
- Staff is currently in talks with the consultant to begin preliminary conversations.
- She noted that Chairwoman Cookson made some talking points that we could review to start discussion.
- Chairwoman Cookson reviewed her talking points and the pros behind having a master plan approved as it has been declined in the past which included but were not limited to:
 - Doing a master plan with a professional saves time and alleviates staff.
 - The plan would save money by not only utilizing staff time but also help avoid costly decisions down the road that could prove disadvantageous.
 - The plan could help identify private funding sources.
 - The plan would also help in the maintenance of an open mind to ideas to avoid fulfilling personal agendas of commissioners who wish to have their ideas included (an outside consultant will ensure unbiased, objective results).
 - The consultant recommended is also local and knows the demographic.
 - STEM is now STE-A-M, so it's important to ensuring the "A" remains in the program.

CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Q Could a copy of a report the consultant did for another City be provided to commissioners? What was the total requested for the consultant? (Barsky)

A Yes. \$30,000 requested.

Q Could commissioners receive a copy of the talking points digitally? (Smeal)

A Yes

C Commissioner Genet stated that none of the initiatives or goals were achieved by accident. A plan and a vision are important as well as the tools to see a promising future for Cultural Arts.

C Chairwoman Cookson reminded everyone to be in contact with the councilmember that appointed them.

Q When will the item be presented before Council?

A During the budget process though a set date has not been provided. Staff will keep commissioners informed. She also mentioned this would help with the idea of arts along the Alpha Loop which is an initiative soon on the horizon.

Q Would now would be a good time for commissioners to reach out? (Cookson)

A It would be good to go ahead and get the ball rolling.

Q Can you provide clarity on the Alpha Loop? (Foster)

A A few neighborhoods bordering the Alpha Loop are inquiring about art sculptures along the loop and whose responsibility those sculptures would be.

Q When can the consultant begin if approved? (Cookson)

A Staff is not sure but could ask the consultant when they meet in April if she would be able to provide an estimate.

b. Community Theater Space

- Kim Manning, Cultural Services Manager for the Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services Department came forward to present the item.
- North Point Mall mentioned that malls in Texas have piloted the idea of a theater in a mall space.
- Alpharetta needs a community theater and North Point could use the foot traffic, so it seems like a mutually beneficial idea.
- Currently the idea is in its infancy and is being conceptualized but are looking at the space where the old Foot Locker used to occupy. Nothing has been approved yet but have currently titled the theater "The Spotlight Theater".
- The layout proposed and presented would seat 150. The space would be flexible and mobile, so it is not a permanent fixture but temporary and modular.
- The space would be used for free with only utilities to be paid.
- Only the first round of the concept and negotiation points have been discussed to include the City Administrator.

CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION DISCUSSION

RE: Community Theater

Q What about the technical equipment for the space? (Smeal)

A We would but the proposed build-out would be stage, lighting, sound, etc.

Q Could the Alpharetta Symphony use the space? (Smeal)

A The space is conducive to a theater setting but is open to any art leader/community group. Options could be dance recitals, concerts for Music Match, etc.

Q What is the ceiling height? (Cookson)

A 10 feet. Looked at raising it but cost would not offset the limited increase in height.

Q Would the theater impact the proposed developments for the mall site? (Patel)

A No as it is a temporary set-up.

- Q What about security and storage of items between productions? (Smeal)
- A Similar to a mall store, there would be security as with any store in the mall as well as a load/unload area. Restrooms would be used in the food court space. Concessions can be done via permitting.
- Q In terms of administration who would be responsible for scheduling? (Cookson)
- A Staff has built in a part-time staffer that could help with that component but still so earlier on, so staff does not know the full impact.
- Currently the hope is to have the idea rolled out by fall. The build out should be easy (painting black walls, removing retail shelves in the space, refurbishing mirrors, reusing items, etc.)
- Q If there is a good reception by the community, would it be considered into the new development of North Point? (Cookson)
- A Unfortunately we are unable to comment on that at this time.
- Q Is 150 the max? (Patel)
- A For the most part, yes.
- Q Any chance of a field trip? (Cookson)
- A Absolutely!
- Q Are you looking at ACT1 or black box theater or another group to produce shows? (Cookson)
- A We do not wish to limit it to city productions but open it up to the community to include high school shows, via an application process.

VIII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

- Commissioner Smeal stated the *Black & White* gallery reception on Saturday night was incredible!
- Kim Manning stated over 327 people came out for the reception.
- Nancy Murphy commented there were 145 artists from all over the country ranging from Alaska, to New York, to Georgia, who showcased work.
- Artists were very pleased with the center. The outreach is working!
- Commissioner Genet mentioned that in April a protagonist and producer of a film about his family in the end of WWII in Germany is bringing the movie to the Arts Center. The producer is a descendant of a famous German author who campaigned for democracy and human rights. The film follows his family's story and secret letters discovered in a desk and the journey behind the exploration of these letters.
- Chairman Cookson stated she went and saw ACT1's production *Silent Sky* and commented on how huge the space is at the Innovation Academy. It's a large space to fill and prefers a small, more intimate setting.
- Commissioner Smeal gave gratitude for the free tickets.

- Commissioner Genet commented on the *Into the Woods* production by Alpharetta high School and the great talent.
- Chairman Cookson also commented on the level of talent in the area.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

- ❖ Chairwoman Cookson called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - Commissioner Barsky made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - Commissioner Foster seconded the motion.
- ❖ With there being no further business to consider or discuss, Chairwoman Cookson adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Amber O'Dwyer
Administrative Office Coordinator
Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services