



**PUBLIC ART ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
(PAAC)**

**October 1, 2020**

**Meeting held electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192**

**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Eryne Donahue

- Chair/Artist of Recognized Standing  
in New Westminster

Councillor Mary Trentadue

- Council Representative

Kathy Curry

- Arts Professional Representative

Peter Leblanc

- Arts Commission Representative

Janice Meehan

- Community Member

Stephen O'Shea

- Arts Professional Representative

David Vivian

- Arts Professional Representative

Craig West

- Urban Designer

**REGRETS:**

Neal Michael

- Community Member

Autumn Sweet

- Urban Designer

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Todd Ayotte

- Manager, Community Arts & Theatre

Rob McCullough

- Manager, Museum & Heritage Services

Sarah Joyce

- Director/Curator, New Media Gallery

Carilyn Cook

- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

## EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

**MOTION:**

*THAT pursuant to Section 90 of the Community Charter, members of the public be excluded from the Closed Meeting of Committee immediately following the Regular Meeting of Committee on the basis that the subject matter of all agenda items to be considered relate to matters listed under Sections 90(1) (b) of the Community Charter:*

*90 (1) (b) personal information about an identifiable individual who is being considered for a municipal award or honour, or who has offered to provide a gift to the municipality on condition of anonymity.*

**CARRIED.**

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

## 1.0 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

### 1.1 MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the Agenda for the Public Art Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for October 1, 2020 be adopted as circulated.*

**CARRIED.**

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

## 2.0 ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

### 2.1 Adoption of the Meeting Minutes of July 16, 2020

**MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the minutes of the July 16, 2020 Public Art Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.*

**CARRIED.**

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

## 3.0 PRESENTATIONS

There were no items.

## **4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **4.1 Sportsplex Public Art Project Update**

Todd Ayotte, Manager, Community Arts and Theatre, advised that the Nathan Lee, the artist selected for the Sportsplex Public Art project, has been contracted and has begun working with the City's facilities and parks staff to review the site conditions to finalize placement, footings, lighting and logistics for installation, etc. The project has moved into design development and it is anticipated that the artwork will be installed in January 2021.

## **5.0 NEW BUSINESS**

There were no items.

## **6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION**

### **6.1 Wow Westminster Public Art Update**

Todd Ayotte, Manager, Community Arts and Theatre, provided a summary of events regarding the September 13, 2020 New Westminster Pier Park fire which included the Wow Westminster public art installation. Mr. Ayotte advised that over the days following the fire, staff, in conjunction with the piece's original engineers and Biennale, provided as much information as possible to New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services regarding the installation in the hopes that it could be saved. Unfortunately, due to structural damage to the Pier the iconic art installation could not be salvaged. He shared that staff had been in touch with the artist who expressed a desire to be kept apprised of the City's next steps and noted that community members continue to express to staff and via social media what the sculpture meant to them and the community.

Councillor Trentadue shared that the installation was part of a long-running Biennale project comprised of the Blue Trees, the Urban Trees public furniture, and Wow Westminster. She stated that the installation sparked conversation in the community, bringing public art to the forefront and the installation became the focus of some of New Westminster's most iconic photos.

Rob McCullough, Manager, Museum & Heritage Services, advised that all of the City's Arts & Culture Managers were on hand to witness the dismantling of the installation and shared that he inquired about retaining a piece of the artwork such as corrugated siding and a welded joint, which demonstrated the tension between the unit, and which would be added to the museum collection if it is not incorporated into a commemorative art piece.

Sarah Joyce, Director/Curator, New Media Gallery, shared that witnessing the fire was upsetting and advised that the existing piece's materials should not be used in any other artwork unless it is created by the original artist.

In response to questions from the Committee, staff provided the following comments:

- A piece of the installation was saved for archival purposes; however, the remaining pieces were unsalvageable for any other use;
- The insurance aspect of the fire is currently being addressed and, currently, there is no information to share;
- The next steps will be long and involved, eventually addressing public art at the Park, in whatever iteration that may be;
- The Downtown Business Association offered support immediately after the fire and community support for future public art is also being seen by staff;
- Once the Pier Park is rebuilt and we know what kind of space we have to work with, staff could reach out to the artist with respect to a commemorative piece as he has offered to help in a future project; and,
- Information on the Biennale collection could be put on the website which will help keep the memory of the Wow Westminster installation alive.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee provided the following comments:

- It was the City's most significant public art piece due to the view corridor and placement.
- The installation was an inspirational public art piece as well as a great gathering place which the City was known for;
- The conceptual component of the piece should be shared with the public when it is commemorated;
- If advanced, a commemoration should be done under consultation with the original artist;
- More can be learned about the piece on the Biennale website, including information about the artist;
- Many people are using the Wow Westminster image on hats, pins, etc., and enquiring as to where funds can be donated to support ongoing arts in the City;
- Perhaps a portion of the installation could be used in the new iteration of the Park although it would not be as prominent as the original piece;
- The momentum of increased interest in public art brought on by the fire and subsequent dismantling of the Wow Westminster piece should be acted upon with respect to engaging in a dialogue with the community about public art, additional public art programming, etc.;

- This has highlighted the City’s need for a Public and Community Art Coordinator;
- As there seems to be a lot of interest in exploring the Biennale collection, perhaps an art walk or other event commemorating the artwork of the Wow New installation could be planned, when appropriate;
- The installation was proof of the vital importance of provocative art in the community that promotes conversation; and,
- Although saddened at the loss, the Committee can discuss how to bring more great pieces to the City as even though the flagship is gone, there are more opportunities for public art.

**7.0 NEXT MEETING**

November 5, 2020 – To be confirmed.

**8.0 ADJOURNMENT**

**ON MOTION**, the meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Certified Correct,

Original Signed  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Eryne Donahue**  
Chair

Original Signed  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Carilyn Cook**  
Committee Clerk