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Salem Public Art Commission 98 Washington Street

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# Public Art Commission

# February 20, 2024

# 6:00pm

Meeting held remotely via zoom

# MEETING MINUTES

**Note:** All proposals, presentations, and/or documentation to be reviewed and discussed at this meeting can be viewed online at the following link: <https://bit.ly/SalemPACProposals>

## Meeting called to order at 6:36 pm.

* **Roll Call PAC:** Norene Gachignard, Becky Fisher, James Bostick, Gwen Rosemond, & Carly Dwyer-Naik. Absent: John Andrews & Hannah Gathman. Also present: Julie Barry.

## Meeting Minute Approvals

o **January 2023 Meeting Minutes –** Continued to March 2024 meeting.

## Chagall PAC Artist Proposal

Julie stated the Artists’ Row residency tenant sent a new proposal and their new artists can apply to be part of the team. Phe Needham, The Seawich, is the new artist on their team. Artist’s Row tenant selection falls under the PAC’s purview as well as their rotating artist, so the PAC reviews and votes on allowing new artists into the collaborative. The Chagall PAC’s tenancy will end in December 2024 and in March 2024 there will be a proposal for the new tenant cycle for 2025 and 2026.

Norene entertained a motion. Motion by Gwen to approve The Seawitch, seconded by Jim. All in favor.

Bostick noted that Phe is a member of Salem Arts, she is very engaged, and they will do well to have her.

## Stephen Young, Professor of Geography & Sustainability – Macro or Micro? Proposal

Professor Young noted that he studies the earth from space, with a focus on environmental climate change analysis, and he has always been struck by the beauty of the orifice as seen from space. He’s amazed by the patterns and scale, and whether people can decipher the imagery. These pieces were on display at about a dozen galleries including Yale, Clark University, the Museum of Science in Boston, and Tehran university, and many visitors returned to see the exhibition more than once. There would be minimal text but it’s mostly about the imagery and trying to determine what the images are. It makes people think about their perception of things. He always thought Salem and its many pedestrians would be a good location for this type of exhibit. The installation would be mounted on four fence post style cubes with 4 sides, 7-feet-high x 6-feet-wide, and the four cubes would be placed in various location. He suggested placing them at Charolette Forten Park but noted that they will be easy to move. One cube will have the intro and answers in English, Spanish, and French and the three remaining cubes would have the images.

Bostick questioned how the cubes would be kept in place nothing that they could be moved by others or the environment. Professor Young replied by using sandbags on the bars in between but he noted that several kids would be able to move it. Julie suggested the location be Derby Square which has security cameras. Jim asked if there would be challenges with other programming at Derby Square. Carly questioned the potential timeline and what would get the best run and if the displays were rainproof. Professor Young replied that the images were vinyl and can withstand the elements.

Becky loved the concept, was curious about how to frame the description of the installation and the story to tell. She liked letting the art speak for itself rather than being heavy on words. Professor Young noted that some will ask if the images were satellite or microscopic noting that nature has various pattern. Becky asked if the 4 large images would be placed on each side. Professor Young replied yes.

Norene also requested the intended timeline. Professor Young suggested it begin in mid-May to early July and run through the summer. Carly raised concerns with working around Arts Fest. Bostick raised concerns with working around the Salem Flea and Farmer’s Market. Carly noted that Derby Square will be used a lot and that means needing to move the pieces often. Professor Young was open to changing the length of time they were on display, adding that he wants to tour them and to start the tour in Salem.

Professor Young asked if vandalism is an issue in Salem. Julie replied that some pieces are damaged intentionally or by storm surges, adding that weather and lack of oversight is as issue at Charolette Forten Park. She once again suggested Derby Square, noting that the location it would be safer, and she would need to discuss it with her colleagues. Carly suggested Artists’ Row. Bostick noted that vehicles need to access it. Becky, still considering Derby Square, asked if the text be minimized to a QR code used to reduce the number of cubes and conserve space. Julie stated that strictly digital descriptions limit access to those without smart phones.

Bostick loved the images, adding that they are fantastic, mesmerizing, and tie in with the current exhibit at the PEM. He raised concerns with voting to approving it without John Andrew’s opinion and expertise with the events at Derby Square. Professor Young was open to creating a prototype. Bostick suggested the pieces would probably need to be moved weekly. Carly agreed, and questioned who would move them and to where, with so much activity on Derby Square. She suggested feedback be requested from John or Carly. Julie noted that she manages the calendar for Derby Square and knows what is scheduled but would also want to speak to John and Carly. She noted that vendor markets are also a concern, and other locations could be considered, like in a grassed park where it can be anchored, in the spring. Professor Young suggested Salem Common. Julie replied that Salem Common would require numerous approvals. Professor Young had no concerns with the spring of 2025. Julie noted that spring will bring less conflict with schedules.

Becky asked if the cube could be unfolded to become a four-panel wall. Professor Young was open to it noting that he was in the process of changing the design. Julie suggested using a straight structure to conceal a dilapidated wall along on Mill Street, although it has more vehicular traffic than pedestrian traffic. Carly suggested the higher elevation at The Willows given its recent impact from the environment and storms. Julie noted that The Willows would get a lot of food traffic but would need Parks & Rec approval. Becky felt that Salem Common would make a good location and would love to see public art there. She asked if it could be straight but against a building. Julie suggested weighing it down against Old Town Hall. Bostick noted that unfolded and flat will create wind issues vs. a structure that can be weighted down and reiterated wanting feedback from Jim. Carly suggested approval pending the location.

Norene entertained a motion. Motion by Carly to approve the project being on display in Salem pending the location determination, seconded by Becky. All in favor.

* + **Project Updates**

Julie stated that the artist for the Charlotte Forten memorial project was in Salem at the beginning of the month and conducted 5 community engagements, one being a children’s workshop. They received good feedback on facial likeness, facial expression, and what writings to include. The final design will return to the PAC in April or May, and both the PAC and Charlotte Forten review committee will need to sign off on facial features prior to it going to the fabricator.

Signage Grants:

Julie stated that they received the small of the two grants they applied for for signage and they are waiting to hear back on the larger grant amount.

PAC mini grants for March:

Julie stated that the announcements are out and suggested the PAC tell Salem artists and performers to apply. The grant amounts are between $500 and $2,500. She noted that the ones award in September 2023 are contracted and are still being deployed. The sculpture will be erected in March, the Camera Obscure Exhibition will be at Old Town Hall in April, and the vocal quartet will perform in June.

Public Artist in Residence:

Julie stated that Claudia has completed her residency and Julia has moved into the studio. A press release will be sent out in the spring.

Old Town Hall:

Julie stated that they are moving forward with exterior renovation. The Architect will begin Construction Documents soon and will help apply for funding. The Phase II - Restoration and Renovation will include weather sealing, new storm windows, repointing, adding an ADA ramp into the basement and a new enlarged platform at the front entry, and they will require some funding to close the gap. For the Phase III – Interior Renovation, she’s working with the Architectural Heritage Foundation for structuring a capital campaign with a 3–5-year timeframe.

Charolette Foten Park:

Julie stated that someone was selected, the design of the shade structure has been contracted and it will be installed this summer with the sculpture to be installed in September.

Artist’s Row:

Julie stated that a couple of the building will receive new roofs, the project has been advertised but no bids have been received yet.

Black History Month and Old Town Hall:

Julie stated that they are looking for volunteers while the exhibition is open. There will be an idea boards on Charolette Forten Park with idea by Salem students and a suffragette exhibition on the second floor. The event will run from February 24th through February 29th and starting at 11AM at February 29th Gwen will be a guest speaker. An actress from History Alive will perform a reenactment and recite some of Charolette Forten’s poetry.

## Other Business-

## No other business to discuss.

* **Adjourn-** Norene entertained a motion to adjourn. Moved by Jim, seconded by Gwen. Meeting Adjourned at 7:25 pm.

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