

Minutes of the meeting

Present: Steve Sullivan, Chair; Edna Southard, Vice-Chair; Robert Benson, Recording Secretary; Stefanie Hilles, Carole Katz, Joseph Prescher; excused: Norm Krumpe

1. The special virtual meeting of the Public Arts Commission of Oxford (PACO) was **called to order by Steve Sullivan at 10:03AM.**

2. Announcement

Stefanie Hilles announced that the Oxford Police Department (Chief John Jones) and the City of Oxford (Mike Dreisbach, Director of Services) have approved the plan for the bicycle rack. The only thing left to do is to determine what the deadline for submissions is in the Call for Entries.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that the wording in the Call for Entries would be July 31, 2021, with the proviso that, if necessary, PACO would continue to accept submissions until an award was made.

2. The **Agenda** was approved

3. New Business

Comprehensive Plan Update & PACO's role in the planning process

Steve Sullivan suggested that we go through the template provided by Ass't City Manager Jessica Greene and brainstorm ideas based on our vision statement, our founding document, and our experience on the commission as well as short- to long-term residents of the Oxford.

To begin the discussion, the commissioners defined the current conditions in the most general way: Oxford is divided between a substantial number of arts advocates and an outspoken group of people resistant to public art. The town is unusual in that it has no conventional daily or weekly newspaper while the student newspaper (*The Miami Student*) and the online student weekly (*Oxford Observer*) have not demonstrated any sustained commitment to public or even campus art.

Thus, this seems to be a situation that has to do with the culture of Oxford as a town/gown community as well as with a lack of a public forum for presenting and discussing the arts. This has led to a misunderstanding about the multi-valent value of public art.

Aspirational goals that were discussed included finding ways to engage already extant groups of varying sorts: Enjoy Oxford, the Chamber of Commerce, civic clubs, the Oxford Visual Arts Connection, OCAC. A public meeting in which citizens could offer their own ideas and respond to suggestions from others could help bring attention to some of the important aspects of public art support.

Members of PACO also suggested that creating public/private partnerships could have a very positive effect and could help generate such community activities as an art fair during summer months.

Steve Sullivan suggested several items for further development:

- Art should proactively be part of infrastructure planning.
- Art should be among the first things that greet people who are arriving in Oxford.
- Art should be understood as integrating the best features of our town and supporting infrastructure and citizen interaction.
- Art “trails” facilitate and enliven wayfinding throughout town with major installations at transportation hubs and gathering areas.

Steve Sullivan promised to publish his notes on the discussion for review and development at the forthcoming regular meeting of PACO on Tuesday, April 13, 2021.

Adjournment: The meeting was **adjourned at 11:12AM**
Respectfully submitted,

Robert Benson, Recording Secretary