

Cambridge Arts Council

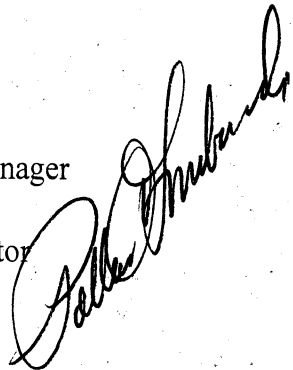
57 Inman Street Cambridge, MA 02139 (617) 349-4380

Memo to: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Pallas C. Lombardi, Director

Re: City Council Order #65

Date: 5/12/98



Attached is the report I received from the Public Art Director and the Public Art Commission today in response to Council Order #65 and per your request.

PROCEDURES FOR SITING PUBLIC ART

A report prepared by
Hafthor Yngvason
Director of Public Art
Cambridge Arts Council

May 12, 1998

REPORT ON THE PROCEDURES FOR SITING PUBLIC ART
Prepared by Hafthor Yngvason, Director of Public Art

5/12/98

In response to Council Order #065, dated 3/2/98, regarding report on the process to revise the procedures for siting public monuments and art in Cambridge, including the current procedures as well as a survey of other American cities, the following is offered:

The Cambridge Arts Council's Public Art Commission (PAC) and the Public Art Director have reviewed and revised the guidelines for implementation of the Cambridge Public Art Ordinance. The recommendations are being reviewed by the Law Department to confirm that they are in accordance with the Ordinance.

With the new Guidelines, the PAC and the Public Art Director wish to establish and reinforce procedures that engage the community in direct interaction with commissioned art and artists. Towards this end, the Guidelines recommend that the following be emphasized in all public art programming: a) education and outreach; b) direct public participation in artist selection; c) extension of the role of community Art Committees throughout each project; d) and implementation of an annual Public Art Forum.

In some instances, the PAC's recommendations formalize and expand upon procedures that have already been initiated and implemented, to varying degrees, in recent projects. For instance, community art committees were formed to participate in the artist selection process for Central Square, Frisoli Youth Center, the Water Treatment Facility, and Morse School. The new Guidelines recommend that the role of such committees be formally and systematically expanded to provide advice and feedback throughout the course of each project.

It is the PAC's intention to continue evaluation of the public art procedures and review them with artists and the community at public art forums. The Arts Council held such a forum in March to discuss and to disseminate information on the public art program. The Public Art Commission is exploring additional forums to involve diverse groups in the City.

PROCEDURES

As part of the review process for the Guidelines and in response to the City Council's request, the Director of Public Art did a survey of public art practices in other cities. Currently, there are over 140 legislated public art programs on municipal, county, and state levels in the U.S. Two kinds of programs were selected for review: a) municipal programs similar in size to Cambridge (including Bellevue, Washington; Deluth, Minneapolis; Evanston, Illinois; and Santa Cruz, California); and b) larger city and county programs that are recognized in the field for their innovative approaches to public art (Seattle, Washington; Phoenix, Arizona; and San Jose, California).

The survey shows that there are two general methods for siting public art:

- 1) The general location of public art is determined by a requirement that the art be placed in or about the construction project from which funds for the art are derived. This is required by the Cambridge Public Art Ordinance and is common to many public art ordinances developed at a similar time as the Cambridge Ordinance (including Evanston, Bellevue, and Santa Cruz)

2) An approach used by some larger cities, counties, and states (including Seattle, Washington; Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona; San Jose, California; and Broward County, Florida) is to develop a *masterplan* for the general geographic location of public art. This approach replaces the process of selecting sites on project-by-project basis with a comprehensive city-wide plan that incorporates public art into urban design and community development programs. The strength of this approach is that it provides a strategy and criteria for: a) selection of sites for art based on the importance and visibility of the site; and b) the allocation of public art among various neighborhoods, based on community needs and strengths. *The masterplan approach requires greater flexibility in the use of art funds apart from facilities than is specified in the Cambridge Public Art Ordinance.* Considerable resources are required for the development of a masterplan; the City of San Jose, California (population 1,360,000) has allocated \$75,000 for a development of a masterplan for the city.

There are also two common methods for site selection for public art within the general geographic location or project confinements.

1) One or more possible locations for art are specified before artist is selected. The locations are usually chosen by a committee consisting of representatives of the public art agency, the commissioning agency, project architect or designer, and sometimes community members. A prospectus is developed, specifying the location (often with the aid of architectural drawings) along with other requirements that may apply, such as size and artist media. Artist's develop proposals or submit completed artworks that meet the requirements specified.

Some programs (e.g. Evanston, Il., Corpus Christi, TX, and San Francisco, CA) use this approach for projects where the architecture is mostly completed before the artist's involvement. *Many programs have moved away from this approach to encourage more community involvement during proposal development (as opposed to artists developing proposals in relative isolation in response to the formal requirements).*

2) The location of the art is proposed by the artist selected for the project. A request for qualifications is developed by the public art agency, with input from the commissioning agency, containing general information on the scope and nature of the project. The artist is selected based on his/her prior work and appropriateness of his/her approach to the project's overall requirements.

The strength of this approach is that it encourages further engagement between the artist and the community during proposal development. Once under contract, the artist meets with the project architects or designers, staff of the public art agency and the commissioning agency, steering committees, and other groups and individuals involved in the shaping of a particular project. The artist may recommend a site for his/her design or collaborate with the project architect or designer on some aspects of the capital project. The artist's proposal(s) are approved by the public art agency in consultation with the commissioning agency based on review of the proposal's feasibility.

CONCLUSION

The common purpose for percent-for-art legislations, including the Cambridge Public Art Ordinance, is to provide funding for aesthetic improvements for public construction projects. As the survey of public art practices reveals, many public art programs are trying to move

beyond the model of commissioning art for pre-established sites within such projects. The narrow scope of the artist's services according to this model limits the artist's potential involvement with the community as well as his/her potential contribution to the facility design.

As stated above, large programs with a flexible funding mechanism have commissioned masterplans to involve artists early on in urban design and to distribute art projects according to community needs and strengths. Where the funding is limited to individual construction projects, more viable opportunities for artist involvement in the design, as well as opportunities for a meaningful dialogue between the artist and the community, can be created by bringing the artist on board early on in the project development. To make this feasible, however, funds for the artist's design services need to be appropriated no later than the appropriation of funds for the architectural design.



Cambridge Historical Commission

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William B. King, *Chair*, Allison M. Crump, *Vice Chair*, Charles M. Sullivan, *Executive Director*
M. Wyllis Bibbins, Suzanne R. Green, Helen F. Moulton, Robert G. Neiley, Jo M. Solet, *Members*
Jennifer Jones, Anthony C. Platt, *Alternates*

March 26, 1998

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director
Cambridge Historical Commission

Re: City Council Order #065- 3/2/98
Public Art Acceptance Policy

At its meeting on October 7, 1997, the Cambridge Historical Commission unanimously adopted the following resolution:

That, with respect to applications for proposed private gifts of art on public land over which the Historical Commission had jurisdiction, Certificates of Appropriateness would not be granted without the prior approval of the artwork by the Public Arts Committee. Furthermore, applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for art on private property within the jurisdiction of the Commission, the Commission would not grant the Certificate without first seeking a recommendation from the Public Arts Committee.

This resolution was adopted after consultation with the Director of the Cambridge Arts Council and was intended to allow coordination between the policies and practices of the two agencies.

cc: Pallas Lombardi, Cambridge Arts Council



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10.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

May 18, 1998

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 5, regarding a report on the process to revise the procedures for siting public monuments and art in Cambridge with the current procedures as well as a survey of other American cities, received from Director of the Arts Council Pallas Lombardi as well as from Director of the Historical Commission Charles Sullivan.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment

Consent Agenda #10

365-5

A report on the process to revise
the procedures for siting
public monuments and art in
Cambridge with the current
procedures as well as a
survey of other American cities.

In CityCouncil May 18, 1998

Referred to

City Manager for more
information on motion of
Councillor Born