



**CITY OF
MOUNT
DORA**

**Leisure Services
900 N. Donnelly St.
Mount Dora, FL 32757
352-735-7183
Fax: 352-735-3681**

E-mail: parksandrec@cityofmounddora.com

**PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION MEETING
City Hall Board Room, 510 N. Baker Street, Mount Dora, FL 32757
August 24, 2021 at 3:30 PM**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Melissa Christians, Thomas Decker, Susan Grogan, James Lesperance,
Maryann McNamara, Harlow Middleton, John Wesner

ABSENT: None

CITY STAFF: Christopher Carson – Cultural & Special Events Coordinator, Amy Jewell
– Leisure Services Director, Jen Schwarz – Leisure Services Operations
Manager, Jeanann Hand – Leisure Services Administrative Coordinator,
Shelby Eldridge-Planning and Development

I. Call to Order

Mr. Decker called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

II. Roll Call

III. Approval of Minutes

A. June 22, 2021

**MOTION by Mr. Lesperance, SECONDED by Mr. Middleton to approve the
minutes from June 22, 2021 on the condition of the correction to note the absence
of Maryann McNamara.**

AYE: Christians, Decker, Grogan, Lesperance, McNamara, Middleton, Wesner

NAY: None

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

IV. Public Comment

V. Presentations

VI. Action Items

VII. Resolutions

VIII. Ordinances

IX. Discussion Items

A. Draft Mural Ordinance

Ms. Eldridge explained the Mural Ordinance developed from the work of the Special Code Advisory Committee formed in 2018 to work on the City's sign code.

Mural applications would be received by the City Planning Board, and evaluated against the guidelines in the Mural Ordinance. An application could be moved on to the Historic Preservation Board, if applicable, and then to the Public Art Commission for consideration even if the Committee advised against the application. However, applications that were not in line with the Mural Ordinance would have more difficulty being approved because of their lack of adherence to the ordinance. Murals would only be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Board if the mural is to be located in the historic district. All applications would receive final review by the Public Art Commission. Decisions regarding mural applications could be appealed to City Council.

The City's definition of mural, primary façade and the difference between a mural and a commercial sign were discussed. When asked, Ms. Eldridge explained existing signs and murals would be grandfathered in. A mural may contain elements representing a business, but cannot contain commercial copy. The intent of the ordinance is to preserve the historic character of downtown, keeping murals off the main façades of buildings, but allowing them on alleyways and secondary façades. Murals would be allowed on residential structures.

Public Art Commission member Harlow Middleton had been part of the Committee drafting the Mural Ordinance. The Committee had concluded their meeting schedule. The ordinance was being presented to the Historic Preservation Board on August 25th, and would then be submitted to City Council for their approval.

Mr. Decker suggested the limitation of political messages. Ms. Eldridge and Mr. Middleton explained government could not limit content.

The City had not yet decided on a fee for application, but would be looking at similar municipalities as a basis for their decision.

Mr. Decker objected to the prohibition of fluorescent or neon paint, asking whether it could be added to the ordinance that the mentioned colors may be used upon permission. Ms. Eldridge informed the intention is to avoid confusion regarding traffic and right of way indicators. She assured Mr. Decker interested parties could appeal to use the mentioned colors and possibly be granted permission to do so. Ms. Eldridge said applications could be approved by staff “with conditions.”

Mr. Wesner inquired whether painted house numbers would be subject to the ordinance. Ms. Eldridge explained residential areas are allowed a defined amount of expression signs and copy area.

Painting a structure to emphasize architectural detail would not be considered a mural, so would not require a mural application. Portions of the ordinance regarding artist involvement in mural removal and inspection of murals had been omitted from the final ordinance draft. Murals would not be allowed on the primary façade of a residence.

Ms. Eldridge clarified for Ms. Grogan that artwork could not extend more than six inches from the surface of a building, nor add to a building’s height. Exceptions are always possible, although they would be difficult to grant because the limit is written into the code. Ms. Eldridge emphasized the main interest of the ordinance is to maintain the character of the historic district.

B. 2022 Pride Month Banners and City Banner Policy

Commission members and City staff resumed conversation that had been started at June’s meeting regarding the display of Pride Month banners in 2022. The City’s policy for overhead banners was included in the current meeting’s agenda packet to provide context for discussion of establishing a City policy for themed boulevard banners and flags.

Ms. Jewell explained the ambiguity regarding City authority over the downtown business district. Up until this point, the banners have displayed only City themes. The Commission should determine the purpose and messaging of their banners: what will

they mean to the Commission, what will their intention be. The Commission may want to create a calendar for the display of banners and flags throughout the year.

The banner policies of other cities were discussed by Commission members. Mr. Decker was not in favor of accepting banner applications from nonprofit organizations as other cities do. He would rather focus on artistic banners, and remain with seasonal or City themes.

Mr. Decker proposed the banners not be hung from every available pole, which would likely bring the expense to less than the projected \$7,000.00.

The current cost estimate would only supply the banners or flags, but not compensate for labor of installation. Mr. Wesner mentioned the City's current staffing challenges. Mr. Decker proposed that if the banners or flags were a project initiated by the Commission, the Commission would assume the cost. If the banners or flags were the project of another party, the other party would be responsible for the expense.

Mr. Wesner voiced support for a Black History display. It was suggested it might be part of an overarching theme of Inclusivity. The banners could be displayed not just in the Northeast, but throughout the City. Mr. Wesner voiced his preference for flags rather than banners because of their greater affordability and ease of installation and removal.

Four times per year was suggested as a reasonable schedule for the changing of banners or flags. The issue of fairness in choosing themes was considered. Mr. Middleton asserted a well written policy would help guide the City in making fair and objective decisions in assessing banner or flag applications.

It was also agreed current banners were past their period for visually appealing display. Commission members and City staff agreed future banners should be of improved material and production quality in comparison to the banners previously ordered for this purpose. The colors of past banners faded quickly. More vibrant colors would be favored when choosing new designs. Prior experience has set the Commission up for successful banner projects moving forward. Mr. Lesperance would like to see more simplicity in chosen designs. Ms. McNamara favors flags over banners for their ease of changing and visibility. Ms. Christian suggested a dog theme, perhaps as part of a larger theme.

The portion of the Commission budget previously designated for this project may not be what they will actually have available for it; the City budget is still being finalized, so an actual figure for the Commission budget has not yet been defined.

Commission members concurred that banners and flags should remain a City project and not be open to nonprofit application. They should be changed at least four times per year. Ms. Grogan suggested artists should be able to apply without being limited to a particular theme.

Mr. Carson put forward that seasonal flags (rather than banners) could be confusing, or their artistic impact could be lost among the City's official regular display of national, state, and City flags. He suggested banners might be a better choice for the Commission's intention.

Mr. Middleton expressed concern residents of the City may object to tax dollars being spent on banners and flags.

A banner/flag annual schedule will be presented to the Commission for their approval at the next meeting. Upon the Commission's agreement, it will then be brought before City Council.

X. City Staff

A. Ongoing Project List

City staff and Commission members reviewed the updated ongoing projects list. The development of the Public Art Master Plan will most likely influence this list.

B. Ongoing Budget Balances

City staff reviewed the specifics of the updated Public Art Commission budget. There is \$14,167.00 remaining from developer funds and \$16,667 to be approved by Council in the 2021/22 City budget.

An explanation of the accumulation and disbursement of developer funds took place. The City's Planning Department recently informed Leisure Services that developer PUD money may or may not be spent on Public Art. According to planning documents, the allocated developer funds may also be spent on infrastructure, economic development, or projects for the public good.

The Dora Landings funds must be spent on a project placed within Dora Landings. These arrangements were negotiated by the City's Planning Department. Developers donate money when their projects don't meet City code. Mr. Middleton asked how we could obligate those funds immediately. Mr. Wesner suggested initiating acquisition of pedestals for the Art on Loan project.

Mr. Decker reminded staff and members about funding guidelines communicated at the formation of the Public Art Commission. Ms. Jewell reminded them a past Council cannot require a future Council to allocate dollars in any way, except in the case of a Capital Improvement project that may take place over multiple years. Mr. Decker recommended staff and members examine past documents regarding the Commission's purpose and funding, including the Public Art Ordinance, which called for an annual art plan as well as a five year master plan.

The Public Art Master Plan may help with securing funding by establishing public art as a City priority. Ms. Jewell noted Mount Dora is known as an art community. The Master Plan will reinforce that identity.

Mr. Middleton agreed the Public Art Master Plan will help with funding. He commented favorably about art at the entrance of another subdivision.

Mr. Lesperance described Timberwalk. It is unclear whether Timberwalk will have a park in which to place art.

Mr. Middleton suggested involving the public in choices to gain their support. It was clarified the City Manager could approve spending of up to \$50,000.00 of the developer funds without consulting the Commission. The new Purchasing Policy will allow the City Manager to spend up to \$75,000.00.

Mr. Middleton voiced displeasure with the developer funding approval process. Ms. Jewell suggested a solution may be for each party who might receive the developer funds to have an opportunity to lobby for their access to them.

Mr. Carson suggested the Commission promptly move forward with choosing projects and request the funds to accomplish them.

Murals would not qualify. Members suggested projects that might include infrastructure and public benefit in order to receive the developer funds.

C. Public Art Master Plan Update

City staff recently participated in a Zoom meeting with Josh Lapp from Designing Local. Mr. Lapp defined a project timeline, and what the firm needs from the City and the Commission to proceed with the creation of the plan. He will visit Mount Dora during the November Craft Fair. He considers Commission members stakeholders and

ambassadors to the City for public art. Commission members made suggestions regarding stakeholders.

Designing Local is estimating the creation of the plan will take nine months. Ms. Jewell cautioned against rushing the process. The cost of the project was explained. Pertinent documents had been uploaded for Designing Local's review.

City staff will present monthly updates at each meeting throughout the project.

XI. Communications and Reports

A. Commission Member John Wesner

B. Commission Member Melissa Christians

C. Commission Member Susan Grogan

D. Commission Member Maryann McNamara

E. Commission Member James Lesperance

F. Vice-Chair Harlow Middleton

G. Chair Thomas Decker

XII. Future Meeting Dates

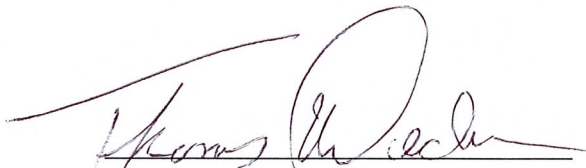
A. September 28, 2021, 3:30 PM

B. October 26, 2021, 3:30 PM

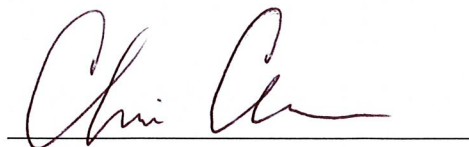
C. November 23, 2021, 3:30 PM

XIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Decker at 5:02 PM.



Mr. Thomas Decker
Chairperson



Mr. Christopher Carson
Cultural & Special Events Manager