

City of Takoma Park
Arts and Humanities Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 25, 2018

The Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission met on Tuesday, September 25, 2018, in the Hydrangea Room, Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park.

Members Present: Emily Dufton, Eric Gordon, Ebonee Harlee, Madona Tyler LeBlanc, Joelle Rabion, Tommy Parlon (Chair), Marilyn Sklar, and Courtney Tompkins

Members Absent: Kevin Adler, Christoph Michaud, Gloria Tseng-Fischer, and John Warren

Staff Present: Brendan Smith, Arts and Humanities Coordinator

Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Tommy Parlon at **7 pm**.

Welcome, Introductions and Commissioner Announcements

Members of the Commission informally updated the group on their recent activities.

Adoption of Minutes

A motion was made by Marilyn Sklar and seconded by Courtney Tompkins to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2018 and June 12, 2018 meetings as presented.

We Are Takoma Cultural Series

Smith provided information on upcoming *We Are Takoma* events and encouraged commissioners to give the introductions.

Docs in Progress

Docs in Progress will be moving into a new space in Silver Spring and will be reducing their screenings in Takoma Park. Smith said there will be some openings for film screenings next year and asked the commissioners for any recommendations for filmmakers.

Lectures

Smith informed the group there is an opening for a lecture on November 1. Sklar said there is a historian who works with Montgomery County scholar who will be publishing

a book on Josiah Henson, an escaped slave who was the inspiration for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Sklar will provide her contact details to Smith to inquire about a lecture.

Exhibits

Smith announced that art exhibitions coordinator Shanthi Chandrasekar had resigned because all of the work for the art exhibitions was now being performed by City staff.

Poetry

The new poet laureate Kathleen O'Toole was unanimously approved by the Commission and the City Council to start a two-year term. She has started doing the introductions at the Third Thursday Poetry Readings and is planning some poetry workshops with students and senior groups.

Holiday Art Sale

The call for vendors was issued this week with an Oct. 15 deadline. It is free to apply and there will be a new \$25 vendor fee to offset the City's costs for hosting the art sale. Smith encouraged commissioners to publicize the call for vendors. Smith will follow up with a poll for Commissioners to volunteer for two-hour shifts at the art sale. There is an art therapist interested in putting together workshops that day. Harlee asked if there is data on the number of sales by artists and Smith said a poll of previous vendors showed most of them were successful. Harlee also said the food truck and refreshments helped, and she suggested they be included this year.

Public Art

Fiber artist Stacy Cantrell installed has installed two yarn caterpillars on New Hampshire Avenue just south of University Boulevard. There is a video about the installation on the City of Takoma Park's Facebook page. Cantrell plans to wash sections of the caterpillar and turn them into baby blankets to be donated to local organizations. She also will install a large octopus on top of the clock tower in Old Town Takoma Park.

Car Charger Project

A call for proposals for designs to be used as vinyl wraps for two electric vehicle charging stations was released for a downtown location and in the Community Center parking lot. Gordon said he tried informing artists that he works with about the proposal but there wasn't much information about the dimensions of the car chargers. Smith said the next step would be to review the submissions with involved parties. Rabion and Parlon expressed interest in serving on the committee.

Future Projects

New library boxes with Friends of the Library. The Friends of the Library would build six new boxes and then an artist would be commissioned to paint them. These boxes

would be installed in underserved parts of the city. The project would also involve the artist painting six existing boxes in prominent areas of the city.

We also have approximately \$20,000 to commission a larger and more permanent piece of public art (perhaps a sculpture). We still need to figure out what it would be and where it would be installed. Sklar suggested the idea of a light installation, but that it would probably be temporary, and perhaps we could portion some of the money for this purpose. Gordon suggested installing something along the Sligo Creek trail, which would need to go through Montgomery County parks. Sklar said she will find out what could be done about collaborating with the Montgomery County parks. Rabion also mentioned the trail across from Montgomery College. She noted that it's dark and it would be interesting if something motion-activated could be installed there.

Cultural Plan

Smith announced that the Cultural Plan will be presented to the City Council on November 28. He encouraged commissioners to attend the meeting and perhaps speak about it to the Council. The Council will vote on the plan on December 5. Sara Daines handled most of the design of the Cultural Plan which is almost complete.

Street Festival

The festival is Sunday, October 7. Smith will email commissioners to sign up for volunteer slots.

Commission Membership

There are three vacant positions, but two of the three positions must be filled by residents before the third position could be filled by a resident or non-resident.

Election of Officers

A motion was made by Sklar and seconded by Harlee to re-appoint Parlon and Tompkins as chair and secretary, respectively, and to appoint Dufton as Vice-Chair. Commissioners unanimously approved.

Miscellaneous Items

Smith informed commissioners that a page about the Arts and Humanities Commission will be included in the Winter City Guide. He suggested that commissioners submit a photo and short bio by September 28. Gordon said the art exhibition looks great.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at **7:48 pm**.

Respectfully Submitted
Courtney Tompkins, Secretary