

**Members**

Robin Echte, *Chair*  
Sarah Idstrom, *Vice Chair*  
Julie Anderson, *City Council Liaison*  
Lauren Walker, *City Council Liaison Alternate*  
Jan Brazzell  
Rachel Cardwell  
Janice Karroll  
Traci Kelly  
Donald Lacky  
Bill La Vergne  
Janet Matzke  
Jacqueline Peterson  
Michael Reynolds  
Mike Sweney

# Minutes

## Tacoma Arts Commission Community & Economic Development

**Staff**

Amy McBride, Tacoma Arts Administrator  
Naomi Strom-Avila, Cultural Arts Specialist

---

Date: September 14, 2009

Location: City of Tacoma Municipal Building, Room 16

Time: 5:00 pm

*Commission Members in Attendance:*

Robin Echte, Chair  
Sarah Idstrom, Vice-Chair  
Jan Brazzell  
Rachel Cardwell  
Janice Karroll  
Don Lacky  
Janet Matzke  
Jacqueline Peterson  
Michael Reynolds  
Mike Sweney

*Staff Present*

Amy McBride, Tacoma Arts Administrator  
Naomi Strom-Avila, Cultural Arts Specialist

*Guests Present:*

Judy Durkin  
Marilyn Mahoney  
Babe Lehrer  
Jim Shea  
Roger Edwards  
Fred King  
Blaine Johnson  
Andy Buelow  
Jennifer Dean  
Eddie Sumlin  
Kenji Stoll  
Ben Achziger  
Marty Bowlby  
Jeff Cunningham

*City Council Member in Attendance:*

Julie Anderson

*City Council Member Absent:*

Lauren Walker

*Commission Members Excused Absence:*

Bill La Vergne

*Commission Members Absent:*

Traci Kelly

**1. Call to Order**

**5:00 pm**

**Chair Echte**

**2. Excusal of Absences**

**5:00 pm**

**Vice Chair Idstrom**

Commissioner La Vergne had an excused absence. Commissioner Kelly was absent.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**5:01 pm**

**Vice Chair Idstrom**

Motion: Janet Matzke

Second: Michael Reynolds

Motion: Carried

---

**4. Approval of Agenda****5:01 pm****Vice Chair Idstrom**

Motion: Mike Sweney

Second: Rachel Cardwell

Motion: Carried

**5. Chair's Report:****5:02 pm****Chair Echte**

Commissioner Nebel has submitted a letter of resignation from the Arts Commission. Chair Echte thanked her for her service.

Chair Echte noted that public comment would be limited to two minutes.

Commissioners were given the code of ethics policy and a conflict of interest form to fill out and turn in. Chair Echte noted that she would be recusing herself from voting on the Goddess of Commerce gift proposal because of a perceived conflict of interest.

Chair Echte noted that there would only be a discussion regarding the Goddess of Commerce gift proposal and that the vote on the proposal would take place at the October Commission meeting.

**6. Staff Check-In****5:04 pm****Shunpike**

Shunpike will be giving a workshop titled Starting a New Arts Organization as part of their Accountability and the Arts series. It will be held on September 17, 6 pm, at Suite 133.

**Hilltop Artists in Residence**

Hilltop Artists in Residence is hosting their annual fundraising breakfast on September 23.

**Review Sign-up**

Commissioners volunteered to attend and evaluate Arts Projects and Anchor Fund events as follows:

<b>date</b>	<b>organization</b>	<b>event</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>
Sep 26 - Jan 10, 2010	Tacoma Art Museum	Joe Feddersen: Vital Signs	Robin Echte
Oct 1 - 8	The Grand Cinema	Tacoma Film Festival	Michael Reynolds
Oct 3 - June 6, 2010	Tacoma Art Museum	A Concise History of Northwest Art	Mike Sweney
17-Oct	SoJust	SoJust community festival	Jan Karroll
10-Oct	Northwest Sinfonietta	The Eight Seasons	Sarah Idstrom
	Old Town Business & Professional Assoc.	Classical Tuesdays in Old Town	Robin Echte
13-Oct	Tacoma Philharmonic	Stradivari Quartet	Janet Matzke
17-Oct			

Commissioner Reynolds had previously requested a plan for how to best communicate with and strengthen our relationship with Landmarks Preservation Commission. Amy noted that the two commissions have started sharing agendas and she is in conversation with Reuben McKnight to identify other ways for partnership. The request from the Landmarks Commission for the Arts Commission to review the proposed mural on the Rialto Theater is one example of how the two commissions can work together.

**7. Action Items**

**A. Goddess of Commerce Gift Proposal****5:07 pm**

Amy McBride set the stage by explaining the process and reminding the Commission that this is an information gathering session and that voting on the issues will take place at the October 12 meeting. She introduced Rich Price from Real Property Services at the City of Tacoma who is responsible for street occupancy permits and Mary Bowlby the Executive Director for the Tacoma Historical Society. She then acknowledged other members of the audience including Blaine Johnson, Fred King, Jim Shea and Roger Edwards.

Chair Echte reminded the audience that the Chair must acknowledge members of the audience for them to speak.

Ms. McBride reviewed the accession policy and the gift policy with the Commission to clarify the requirements for works to be included in the Municipal Art Collection. (Gift Policy and Accession Policy can be accessed at [www.tacomaculture.org/arts](http://www.tacomaculture.org/arts) they were also included in the September 14th packets)

The overriding policy is the Accession Policy that states **“Accessioned artwork shall be of distinctive artistic merit and aesthetic quality and will enhance the diversity of the Municipal Art Collection.”** **“Accessioned artwork shall be appropriate in and for its site, scale, material, form and content for both its immediate and general social and physical environment.”** Ms. McBride walked the Commission through the gift policy to review each consideration.

Commissioner Karroll requested a point of clarification regarding the relationship between accepting the artwork into the collection and siting the artwork at Pierce Transit Plaza. She asked if it was possible to accept the artwork, but not at that site.

Ms. McBride responded yes, except the proposal application has to have a site identified in order to be a complete application.

Chair Echte said that the piece could be accepted conditionally until another site was found but it would still need a new application because the proposed work is site-specific.

Ms. McBride explained that the Commission was being asked to do two things: first was to give a recommendation to Real Property Services regarding a street occupancy permit application requesting siting on Pierce Transit Plaza. The Commission's recommendation will be submitted as part of the permit that will ultimately be accepted or rejected by the Public Works Director.

Whereas the recommendation to accept or reject the piece is conveyed to City Council. Ms. McBride pointed out that it was not desired to accept a work “with a lot of holes” that would require staff time and resources to take on the obligation of siting the piece. The proposal has to come to the Commission with a site in mind in order to have a complete application.

Commissioner Karroll requested clarification as to whether Theater on the Square Park and Pierce Transit Plaza were the same thing. It was confirmed that they are.

Chair Echtle introduced Marilyn Mahoney and Babe Lehrer. They provided a briefing regarding their proposed gift to the City of Tacoma, the “Goddess of Commerce”. Marilyn indicated that she got involved with art after she retired as a teacher. She explained that she decided to create this piece after an article that Dan Voelpel had published in the News Tribune.

Marilyn read the statement included in Commissioners’ packets (labeled ‘artist statement’)

Marilyn provided information on the 10 images of past work that were submitted as part of the gift proposal application.

Commissioner Karroll asked if “Chloe” the mermaid was a gifted piece. The sculpture is sited at Salmon Beach in Marilyn’s community; it is not in the Municipal Art Collection.

Vice-chair Idstrom asked where the works were and Marilyn replied that they were in her home or at her children’s’ homes.

Commissioner Sweny clarified the scale of “The Natatorium” to be 11” w x 11”d x 7”h.

Babe Lehrer introduced the “Goddess of Commerce” through images explaining that she is 7’ tall and will stand on a 2’ base. “She is a very powerful lady. She is so strong that in one hand she can hold the glass museum and the Tacoma dome, St. Joseph’s hospital, Old City Hall, the Bostwick Building, Waddell Building, and Pierce Transit bus. She is a powerful lady. Her earrings will be cranes that raise container ships. In her left hand she carries a container ship. Down her back are fish that represent important industry, the fishing industry, the Port.”

Commissioner Karroll: “I noticed that the cranes were added after the maquettes and I did have a little trouble reading those as structural cranes. And is that red wax?” Marilyn responded that the earrings were red wax and were already cast in bronze. Babe pointed out the cityscape and indicated that the Pierce Transit bus was in the ‘cityscape’ because it was being proposed for Pierce Transit Plaza.

Chair Echtle suggested moving to discussion regarding the site and asked why the proposed site was selected.

Marilyn Mahoney responded “Because Pierce Transit provided us with 3 choices on that particular site and that was the choice when I met with Jeremy Rotando that we picked and there wasn’t any conflict about it at that particular time. But since, I guess there is a conflict, I mean I did meet with David Fischer of the Broadway Center for the Performing Arts (BCPA) and he was concerned about it because of his particular activities with the BCPA naturally, but I think they could co-exist.”

Marilyn Mahoney stated, “The base of this is on cement, with fish that are imbedded for the donors. The base of this is 39” x 30” so it is not really taking a huge area.”

Amy McBride asked, “So it is no longer on a 2’ base?”

Marilyn Mahoney replied “No, it isn’t any longer.”

Commissioner Sweny clarified, “I’m sorry, there are going to be donor names on the sculpture?”

Marilyn Mahoney answered, “On the embedded fish at the base, coming down the back.”

Commissioner Sweny clarified, “So on the sculpture itself?”

Marilyn Mahoney answered, “No, see the fish on the back? They are going to be embedded in the cement.”

Commissioner Sweney clarified, “And they will have names on them.”

Commissioner Karroll noted, “I don’t see it, I’m sorry. When you say fish, you mean fish in the base?”

Naomi Strom-Avila pointed out the fish in question.

Marilyn Mahoney stated, “Those are actually fish.”

Commissioner Karroll acknowledged understanding.

Commissioner Reynolds asked, “The names of the donors, they made donations to .....?”

Marilyn Mahoney replied “to the sculpture”.

Chair Echtle invited members of the audience to speak or ask questions regarding the “Goddess of Commerce.”

No public comments were made.

Commissioner Lacky asked if any other sites had been considered besides Pierce Transit Plaza.

Marilyn Mahoney replied that she had originally wanted to site it on a triangle of land in Tollefson Plaza in front of the Carlton building because the Carlton building was designed by the architect Darmer as had the original Chamber of Commerce building on which the original sculpture stood. After having approached Eric Anderson she was informed that there was a moratorium for 2 – 3 years on that site because the city was trying to have Lars Gemsoe arrive from Denmark to help plan the plaza.

Commissioner Karroll asked, “How much time is left on the moratorium?”

Marilyn Mahoney replied, “I think there are 2 years left.”

Chair Echtle asked a point of clarification regarding donor names on a city owned piece, “Is there precedence or anything that needs to be considered?”

Amy McBride responded that this would be taken under consideration 2C of the gift policy related to “receiving pieces with no restrictions” or at least restrictions need to be clarified and taken into consideration. The city would have to be sure of all commitments made to the donors. What are donors being promised when they contribute?

Commissioner Sweney asked, “We would also want to know if the donor names are part of the art or not? In terms of maintenance and other issues? If something happens to one of the names, does the city have an obligation to fix that?”

Babe Lehrer responded, “I am trying to understand your questions.”

Commissioner Sweney clarified, “We would be acquiring a work of art. If something happens to a fish with a name on it would it be the city’s responsibility to maintain that part? If someone wanted their name removed or something, would that be a detriment to the artwork? Are the donor names part & parcel of the artwork? As integral to the art as everything else?”

Babe replied, “I would think so.”

Marilyn clarified, “It’s not actually on the sculpture, it is around the base of the sculpture; It’s two separate.”

Vice-chair Idstrom made the point that people will look at names and wonder what people gave to. It would be a very public piece if this placement occurs and there would be a lot of people with no idea what the relationship was between the names and the fish.

Amy McBride stated that the base appears very shallow and asked how the sculpture would be attached to the concrete and into the ground. She also asked if the artist was aware that there is a membrane below this area.

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "Yes, actually there is not a membrane in this area. Jeremy Rotondo made sure that this was solid ground. Pierce transit will remove all the bricks and prepare it for the cement and then the bolts that will hold the sculpture in place."

Commissioner Matzke asked, "The image looks like the concrete tapers to the ground. Is that correct?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "It is more flat than tapered."

Marilyn Mahoney started to describe the installation process and asked if there was a design from Kevin Keating (Bronze Works) of the installation in the submittal. There was not.

Marilyn Mahoney stated, "I know how to do this because of the "mermaid" sculpture. A piece of metal will be buried inside the cement which will probably be about 2 feet below the surface and there will be two or more prongs that come up, that are actually screws. Then inside the sculpture there is a metal armature that goes through and you screw the upper piece to the bottom piece."

Amy McBride asked, "Then do you fabricate the rest of the sculpture on site? How do you connect it?"

Marilyn Mahoney stated, "You put it together on site."

Amy McBride clarified, "So you are actually welding it on site?"

Marilyn Mahoney answered, "You screw it."

Amy McBride asked, "Except if you have bolts coming up and a complete sculpture coming down over them, how is it screwed on? When do you get access?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "I am not sure how they will do it with this one. I just know how we did it with the mermaid."

Commissioner Karroll asked, "The finish/patina... How will this look in 10 years?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "Should look pretty good. It will have the classic brown patina and it is quite dark."

Commissioner Karroll pointed out that the fish at the base were so much darker than the figure and wanted to know if that was the intent.

Marilyn Mahoney responded that the fish in the base would match the rest.

Commissioner Cardwell asked, “The space that is chosen seems to be a very high trafficked area even if you take the farmer’s market out of the equation a lot of people are around and business who use the space. Do you envision this impeding the uses that are there now? Will it be in the way of the farmer’s market? Will it be in the way of the BCPA? Has there been any concern about the placement of it?”

Marilyn Mahoney replied, “Well David Fischer, I just now saw a letter that he wrote, I didn’t see it before.”

Commissioner Cardwell replied, “I just want to hear your response to this.”

Marilyn Mahoney answered, “I will try to give you a response although I haven’t read the letter. Basically I think of the Portland model. Portland has a square downtown that is functional for all kinds of activities and has free standing sculptures throughout that plaza; I don’t know the name of it. I can’t imagine that it would because it will be like a person standing there. A rather big person, but a person. I believe it can be a happy marriage between the sculpture and the BCPA and Farmer’s Market.”

Amy McBride pointed out that the application specifically asks if the applicant has communicated with the surrounding community members and that Marilyn Mahoney responded yes and listed “Fred Roberson, contractor, Gray Lumber.” McBride then questioned how these people were surrounding community members.

Marilyn Mahoney replied that they are contributors.

McBride pointed out that those are not the surrounding community such at the BCPA or the Farmer’s Market. She asked if Marilyn Mahoney had talked with them and if they expressed concern as their letters indicated?

Marilyn Mahoney responded that she did not talk with Farmer’s Market people. She said “Greg from Pierce Transit was going to talk to the Farmer’s Market.” Marilyn noted that she had spoken with David Fischer and he had expressed concern because they do use that area. But she indicated that David seemed to say that he wouldn’t make ‘a big obstacle of it’. She noted, “These were the sites that Pierce Transit gave me.”

When asked if she had communicated with any other surrounding community members, Marilyn Mahoney responded that she had talked with Steph Farber and invited him to see the 'Goddess' and didn't know if he ever did. She did not talk with other businesses across the street.

Commissioner Reynolds thanked the applicants for their submission and indicated that he had been to the site and wanted to go on record to say “In part of what may be problematic for the farmer’s market and the Broadway Center activities, it is in view of 5 other pieces of public art.”

Chair Echte asked, “Is there a concern about this?”

Commissioner Reynolds replied, "I am very concerned about that because the aesthetic siting is important not only for the piece itself, but the aesthetic relationship to the other artwork is important as well. We want to be cautious about cultivating artistic clutter in any spot in the city, but particularly in high visibility spots such as this. None of the submitted information helps us see this."

Vice-chair Idstrom noted, "This was a point brought up in David's letter that when the pieces were placed in front of the Pantages there was a plan in place. When pieces were designed for that area, there was a public art plan in mind to help define the theater district."

Chair Echtle asked if they have a date when the remaining funds will be raised.

Babe Lehrer responded that they have some pledges that go into next year. "So we will have it within the first three months of next year."

Then Babe Lehrer indicated that she heard the word maintenance. Ms. Lehrer commented that she is responsible for the Clegman sculpture sited outside Lowell elementary and "can speak from authority that bronze doesn't require any maintenance, it is 'zero'."

Commissioner Sweney pointed out that bronze isn't necessarily without its maintenance issues. Bronze can require extensive conservation, oxidation can be a major problem, and it depends upon how the piece is fabricated. There have been numerous bronze works that require maintenance. It has to be fabricated well.

Commissioner Sweney questioned the engineering of the footing asking if a structural engineer had reviewed the piece.

Marilyn Mahoney responded that Bronze Works is doing it, "they are casting the piece and will install it and they can get an engineering design if necessary."

Commissioner Sweney recommended having a structural review for liability.

Marilyn Mahoney noted, "I think we provided, I think Kevin provided a bunch of information."

Amy McBride replied, "He gave a small e-mail; remember I asked you if you wanted to submit anything else? You indicated that this is what he had." Amy McBride read the e-mail narrative included in the packets indicating that the narrative referred to a .jpg drawing that was never received. In addition to the e-mail there were spec sheets on general casting and the properties of silicon bronze.

Marilyn Mahoney asked, "You didn't get the .jpg?"

Amy McBride responded that there was a sheet with an image but it was strange and unrelated.

Commissioner Karroll questioned the variances in the pictures of the base. "Then I heard you say that the base will be smaller than pictured here? The 39" yes, or no?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "The base of the main sculpture is 39" from the front to the back and 30" wide."

Commissioner Karroll asked, "The base isn't terribly raised but is it up enough? If you have crowds?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "No it's flat, it's flat."

Commissioner Karroll clarified, "It's flat with the bricks?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "No, yes it will be. The bricks will be taken out and the cement will be replacing the bricks."

Commissioner Karroll indicated that her concern was about trip hazards.

Marilyn Mahoney stated, "It has to be level."

Amy McBride asked, "How are the fish going to be level?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "They are down in the cement"

Commissioner Karroll asked, "Can you walk over them?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "Yes, there is an example like this in Gig Harbor."

Jan Brazzell asked, "What is the relationship between Pierce Transit and the City and this proposal? I am referring to the letter from Jeremy Rotondo dated March 30 where it says that they should be able to provide adequate space as long as they receive permission from the City because the City of Tacoma owns the air rights. So that is why you are coming to us? How is this related to whether or not we own the piece?"

Amy McBride explained that because the City of Tacoma owns the air rights, they have to have a street occupancy permit. The street occupancy permit requires a recommendation from the Arts Commission regarding the siting of the piece in that location even if they weren't wanting to donate the piece to the city. If that were the case and the Commission gave the recommendation for the street occupancy permit to site the piece there and they agreed, then, according to the letter dated March 30, Pierce Transit would need to have an agreement with the Tacoma Historical Society to cover liability and future maintenance, etc..

Commissioner Brazzell asked, "Is there a difference if the City owns it? If the City agrees to accept it as a gift then the Tacoma Historical Society doesn't have to take responsibility for the piece?"

Amy McBride replied, "Correct, if the city takes ownership, we take responsibility for the liability, maintenance and stewardship after installation."

Commissioner Brazzell asked, "Why wasn't the option sought to ask for permission to site the piece there with ownership either by Tacoma Historical Society or Pierce Transit rather than ownership by the City?"

Babe Lehrer replied, "Neither one of them wanted it, neither wanted to take ownership."

Commissioner Brazzell asked, "How come?"

Babe Lehrer replied, "It's their policy. Pierce Transit is providing the space. Pierce transit gave us the choice of two places and this place was chosen. They own the dirt, but not the air."

Commissioner Brazzell clarified, "This proposal is asking the City to own the artwork instead of the Tacoma Historical Society or Pierce Transit."

Babe Lehrer replied, "That is why we are here, to ask the City to own this piece of art."

Marilyn Mahoney noted, "The Tacoma Historical Society is a non-profit organization and they do not own artwork."

Amy McBride asked, "So who would Pierce Transit contract with if the City did not choose to accept this piece? Who would be responsible for liability?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "I got a quote for liability insurance for the sculpture."

Commissioner Cardwell clarified, "You personally?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "Actually, an organization."

Rich Price clarified the relationship between Pierce Transit and the City of Tacoma explaining that Pierce Transit has a bus turnaround on Commerce that is located under plaza. The City owns the air rights as part of that development. If this piece is privately owned and sited on city property, it is up to the applicant to provide all liability, etc... to maintain the piece. If the City accepts the piece into the collection then the street occupancy permit is no longer necessary and the City takes on all responsibility.

Commissioner Cardwell asked, "Are the other two sites any more favorable to the stakeholders [BCPA & Farmer's Market]?"

Chair Echtle replied, "I am not able to determine that although I believe that David Fischer is talking about the larger issue of planning our artistic acquisitions and this Commission is committed to making intentional choices."

Amy McBride noted, "The Farmer's Market uses the whole space. All these sites would be where a booth is. Every spot is a potential booth."

Commissioner Lackey noted, "The three sites only look like they are a few feet apart from each other."

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "They aren't very far apart. They are very close to the street, right in that area where it goes out a ways."

Amy McBride asked, "So the image doesn't accurately show it?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "It shows it pretty accurately, they are inside the ring, but the ring is close to the curb."

Commissioner Karroll said, "I have one more aesthetics question. At what point did you make the decision to put these earrings on this woman and does that have some relationship to the original "Goddess?" I understand the buildings and their relationship to the city and I assume the cranes mean building in progress, but I am a bit concerned about that."

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "The Port."

Chair Echtle asked, "Can you talk about the estimated value of the piece?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "The first appraisal from Irene Mahler was \$65,700 and then the appraiser found out I am not a professional artist, I really don't have any public art, so she reduced the appraisal to \$43,700."

Chair Echtle asked, "How do you know that is why she reduced it?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "She called me and told me."

Commissioner Reynolds said, "Point of clarification re: our mission. Clearly one of the issues we are talking about is how the Arts Commission should entertain gift proposals on an opportunistic basis vs. considering public art on a large scale or with a visionary concept of public art. Is that part of our discussion?"

Chair Echte replied, "We need to be looking at this individual ask in the context of the larger picture, always."

Commissioner Reynolds replied, "How we deal with opportunistic approaches?"

Commissioner Karroll asked, "Were there any other sites besides this that you were looking at?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "We liked Pugnetti Park at 21st and Pacific. We would really like to have it there. We spoke with Mike Slevin who indicated that Pugnetti Park was in negotiation. [It is owned by WSDOT according to Rich Price]. He also suggested Ruston Way that we never pursued."

Rich Price noted, "We would need to seek the concurrence of WSDOT in order to do that."

Marilyn Mahoney asked, "So we could do that?"

Laughter.

Commissioner Sweney said, "I want to talk about the artwork itself. There has been a lot of discussion regarding the logistical aspects of this piece. The application refers to the original incarnation but this is clearly a new interpretation, your own spin. I would love to hear from you why this should be part of the collection? This is a re-interpretation so the history of it is lost in my mind."

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "The piece is representative of our time now. In 1885 she was just a symbol. There is symbol of wheat, an anchor and an oar. I tried to take those symbols and make them contemporary. Put down the city, the ship, the crane earrings and the fish which kind of, just sort of, symbolize industry that is leaving."

Commissioner Sweney replied, "I am still wrapping my head around why this is something the City should want?"

Marilyn Mahoney replied, "Because she was a symbol that people identified in the past and I think she is a symbol that people will identify with in the future. And I think, with women's suffrage being celebrated in 2010 it is a feminine model. Look around you, how many feminine representations of art do you see? And because I am a woman, and an artist, and a teacher."

Chair Echte thanked the presenters.

## **B. Rialto Mural Presentation**

**6:04 pm**

Amy McBride clarified that the Commission's role is to provide input on the design and content of the mural, not approving or disapproving the mural. The Landmarks Commission requested that the artists consult with the Arts Commission on the design and content prior to the finalization of their proposal.

Jennifer Dean from Urban Grace Church introduced the mural by providing background on the mural. She noted that about a year ago Urban Grace Church applied for an Innovative Grant through the Neighborhood Council. The proposal was to create a public mural in the 9<sup>th</sup> and Market St. neighborhood. It was decided to pursue putting the mural on the Market St. side of the Rialto building instead of on the Urban Grace Church parking lot because it would have higher visibility.

Urban Grace started the process to initiate the mural on the Rialto Theater wall in the Spring of 2009. They worked with the artists from Fab-5, the Landmarks Commission, Broadway Center for the Performing Arts, City of Tacoma, and the New Tacoma Neighborhood Council. Jennifer notes that everyone involved up to this point has been in support of the project. Landmarks Commission gave full support, recommending that Urban Grace and the artists work with the Arts Commission to help with the design and artist aspects of the mural.

Jennifer Dean and Fab-5 met with the New Tacoma Neighborhood Council on September 9 to go over some of the final design elements. The Council was supportive and gave the stipulation that the mural include recognition to the Neighborhood Council for the funding. The Council also noted that they wanted to see the Leonardo Da Vinci quote, "All our knowledge has its origins in our perceptions", used on the mural instead of the proposed Malcolm X quotes.

Jennifer noted that the proposed design has a middle eastern Persian inspiration with repetitive geometric and floral designs. On the right and left side are areas of graffiti art. The actual graffiti used on the mural would blend with the pattern of the design. Fab-5 has other graffiti murals in Tacoma. This mural is different from what they normally create. Jennifer noted that it was "something new and forward moving."

Kenji Stoll, one of the artists for the mural, talked about the process for creating the mural. He passed around a packet of information regarding the process. The first step would involve prepping the wall, including getting rid of old paint and putting down a layer of exterior latex paint. The background design would be applied with spray paint using stencils to ensure a precise, clean design. The actual design has not been determined yet. The freeform lettering art would then be applied as well as the quote and the funding recognition.

Chair Echtle asked if the quote would be in the graffiti art. Kenji explained that they wanted the whole mural to work with the building and the composition of the building. The proposed layout of the mural was designed to give balance and symmetry to the piece. They would prefer to keep the quote in the middle of the mural to maintain this balance.

Chair Echtle asked if the correct term is "freeform art" or "graffiti art". Kenji noted that he uses both terms but that "graffiti" is a hot-button word and in the context of this mural, it would more appropriately be called "freeform art".

Amy McBride asked for clarification that the mural would be composed, not just "slapping graffiti" on the wall. Kenji confirmed that the mural would be composed with intent.

Commissioner Karroll asked if the graffiti portion of the mural would change. Kenji answered that the graffiti portion of the mural will be permanent. One of the artistic team members has created some sketches of the mural. The ideas include the use of middle eastern brush styles into the freeform art so that it meshes with the background and with the concept of the mural.

Chair Echte asked if the artists have done with painting process on another mural before. Kenji noted that one of his artistic partners has created a wall on 54<sup>th</sup> and South Tacoma Way using a similar process including a background color, a stencil overlay and then the inclusion of freeform art.

Commissioner Reynolds asked if the color palette will be the same as that shown in the proposal. Kenji answered that it would not. The final color palette has not been determined yet. The artists do not want the color to be too bright. They want it to work well with the surrounding area and hold together as a complete mural, and not to be seen as an “Islamic mural” or a “graffiti mural”.

Commissioner Reynolds asked if the artists had thought about including the canopy into the artwork. Kenji said the artists have been more focused on the wall space and had not talked about integrating the canopy into the artwork. Commissioner Reynolds invited the artists to look at the canopy as an opportunity because it currently detracts from the wall due to its scale. Amy McBride noted that more information would need to be researched to see if the canopy would be an option.

Vice Chair Idstrom asked if the two freeform pieces of the mural would be identical. Kenji answered that they would not be identical. The artists are working closely together on the designs for the pieces and they will be complimentary and similar in aesthetics and style. The pieces will share the same color palette.

Commissioner Brazzell asked what the concept behind the freestyle pieces is and what the artists are hoping to convey with the pieces. She also asked for some background information on Fab-5. Kenji explained that the initial concept was based on the renaissance of Tacoma and on the idea of “broader thinking and new ideas.” They felt the mural should be initially beautiful and expand conversation, specifically about the perception of graffiti and the middle east.

Eddie Sumlin, Executive Director of Fab-5, noted that the piece showcases how graffiti can be an art form. He went on to explain that Fab-5 is a multi-disciplinary youth arts group working in movement (break dancing), visual art (urban/freeform art), and experimental music. They work with all ages of youth, giving them an opportunity to work in the creative arts. Fab-5 does their own programming which takes place in the Spring on Saturdays. Throughout the remainder of the year, they tour through the middle schools, via the Sparx program. They also get contracts to take their programming into other facilities.

Chair Echte asked for public comment.

Fred King introduced himself as a member of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, a board member of the BIA of Tacoma, and a resident of the Vintage Y in downtown Tacoma. Fred noted that he admired Urban Grace church and the artists for their earnestness and talent. But, he noted that the theme of the proposal was trouble for downtown Tacoma. While the pattern is appealing, he felt that he graffiti was not appropriate for downtown. He noted that he loves downtown for “its dignity, for its beauty, for its parks, for its museums”. He expressed that the graffiti was an art form that comes out of railroad yards and that there is enough of it already downtown without needing to have public-sanctioned graffiti art. He asked the Arts Commission to encourage the artists to find an art form that does not glorify vilification of existing buildings and murals. Fred also noted that the Landmarks Preservation Commission approved the use of the wall but did not approve the mural as it was presented to them. Also, the people who live in the downtown area do not feel the New Tacoma Neighborhood Council represents them.

Blaine Johnson introduced himself as a resident at the Vintage Y, a member of the BIA board, and involved in the ownership and development of properties in the neighborhood. Blaine commended Urban Grace Church for their energy and engaging the urban scene. He also noted that the artists were articulate with passion and vision. Blaine noted that he came into the neighborhood about 10 years ago and fought blight, of which graffiti has been a problem. He felt that Kenji articulated clearly the difference between graffiti and freeform. Blaine noted that he likes the graffiti on Embellish and some other places. He recognizes the concern that some people have in thinking that some people would look at the backdrop and the freeform art and think it is an invitation to add to the mural with their own graffiti. He noted that the artists are proposing a “tighter form” of graffiti so that it does not look like someone just came along and “slapped something over a beautiful mural.” He encouraged the artists to be sensitive to these concerns and incorporate them into the piece. If the artists can do this, he said that it should be a very successful project. Blaine noted the concern Fred King had brought up about respecting the urban environment. “From a personal standpoint, I admire what you are trying to do, I admire what the church is trying to do, and I will be very excited to see this and perhaps it will prove it could be another element could be put on some other buildings as we go forward.”

Jim Shea introduced himself as a Tacoma resident. He stated he supports everything that Blaine Johnson had said. Jim suggested that the artists be allowed to do their work and that “this is a time when a little bit of free expression won’t hurt.” He referred to the Tacoma Dome art and ensuing controversy that the proposed art could be dangerous and also to when a group of Japanese citizens wanted to put a piece in the Puyallup Fairgrounds and were told that they could put the piece in the parking lot but not on the fairground for fear of what someone could do to the piece. He noted that despite these fears, if the piece was a disaster, it could easily be covered over with a coat of paint. “I’m for putting out something real, letting them do their thing.” Jim also noted that he was alarmed by the xenophobia attached to the proposed mural and had confidence that the Arts Commission would not follow that same path. He concluded by saying, “Let this happen, please.”

Chair Echte reminded the Commission that they were not giving their permission for the mural to happen, only providing expertise. She thanked all of the guests for sharing their thoughts and opinions.

Commissioner Karroll stated that she liked the juxtaposition of the Islamic patterning with the freeform art. She asked if the artists had looked into whether the freeform overtop the Islamic design insults their culture in any way. Kenji Stoll noted that the artists aren’t focused on the one pattern shown in the proposal and they are looking into another artist who specializes in patterning and designs to take the pattern and interpret it in his own way.

Chair Echte said that it was important to note that the mural isn’t “Islamic-specific art”.

Eddie Sumlin added that they wanted to produce an “absolutely original pattern so it has influence.” As such, they are collaborating with an artist who does pattern work to create a new pattern. He also noted that the actual lettering that will be put on each side of the mural will be in collaboration with the pattern design.

Commissioner Karroll asked who has final approval of the mural. Amy McBride noted that the Neighborhood Council has the power to move forward with the mural. They have already approved it.

Chair Echtle thanked the presenters and asked Commissioners to think about the piece, the methodology and give recommendations to the artists regarding the piece.

Commissioner Sweney suggested that since the artists are interested in having some input, they convene a committee of people who have vested interest in the mural, and have an open conversation with them about the mural. He also noted that Fab-5 has deep roots in the community and their work is respected enough that vandalism of the mural should not happen.

Eddie noted that instead of inviting graffiti, the mural will act as a way to encourage other street artists to try and do a public piece of work. He noted that they currently do it on walls because they have no other space. He feels it will reduce the level of graffiti in downtown Tacoma.

Commissioner Karroll clarified that Fab-5 is working to “try and bring it forth as a legitimate emerging art form.”

Vice Chair Idstrom agreed that it was important to get other cultures involved in the discussion.

Commissioner Cardwell suggested that the conversation be carried throughout the creation of the piece and when the mural is done, that the conversation be continued “because it is an incredibly significant piece for Tacoma and for, I would argue, the world at the moment.”

Chair Echtle thanked the guests for presenting and the lively dialogue.

### **C. Funding Allocation**

**6:38 pm**

Commissioners were given a spreadsheet outlining ways to reallocate unused Wintergrass funds to Anchor Fund organizations. One option is to reallocate the remaining \$15,479.10 to all 11 remaining funded Anchor Fund organizations.

Chair asked for a motion to accept the proposed reallocation

There was a motion: “I so move.”

Motion: Jan Karroll

Second: Rachel Cardwell

Naomi Strom-Avila noted that there was a second option which is to reallocate the \$15,479.10 to all Anchor Fund except those who were funded at the minimum amount.

Chair Echtle called for a motion to accept the reallocation of the funds according to the first option (A), dividing the funding between all Anchor Fund organizations.

There was a motion: “So move.”

Motion: Don Lacky

Second: Jan Karroll

Commissioner Sweney pointed out that there was talk of having a subcommittee to talk about ways to reallocate the funds but since the funds need to be reallocated back into the Anchor Fund, there was no need to have conversation about other options.

Commissioner Lacky asked if it was alright for some organizations to, after the reallocations of Wintergrass funds, receive a grand total of more than \$30,000, which was the initial top limit of the Anchor Fund awards. Naomi noted that the original allocation of Anchor Funds could not go above \$30,000 for any organization but this is a different matter since the Commission is reallocating funds. Amy noted that the Commission could make a decision to go above the \$30,000 limit in this instance. There is no legal reason why the Commission cannot allocate above \$30,000, it is a decision that is up the Commission to make.

Commissioner Cardwell had a concern about giving extra funding to organizations that scored low in the panel process.

Chair Echte called for the vote on option A.

Aye: Robin Echte, Jan Karroll, Mike Sweney, Janet Matzke

Motion: Failed with only 4 ayes.

Chair Echte called for a motion to accept the reallocation of the funds according to the second option (B), dividing the funding between all Anchor Fund organizations except those who were funded at the minimum amount.

There was a motion: "So moved."

Motion: Rachel Cardwell

Second: Michael Reynolds

Nay: Jan Karroll, Michael Reynolds, Don Lacky, Janet Matzke

Motion: Passed with 6 ayes.

**D. AMOCAT Award Nominations/Selection            6:45 pm**

Naomi outlined the nominations for the AMOCAT awards as follows:

**Category: Community Outreach by an Artist**

- Heather Schlegel
- Lucas Smiraldo
- William Kupinse
- Candi Hall
- Eddie Sumlin

**Category: Community Outreach by an Organization**

- D.A.S.H. Center for the Arts
- Hilltop Artists in Residence

**Category: Arts Patron**

- Blaine Johnson
- Click! Cable TV
- Artist Trust
- Greater Tacoma Community Foundation
- City Arts

Commissioners had no further nominations and voted as follows:

<b>Category: Community Outreach by an Artist</b>	<b>Round 1</b>	<b>Round 2</b>	<b>Round 3</b>
Heather Schlegel	2	1	

Lucas Smiraldo	2	2	
William Kupinse	2	3	5
Candi Hall			
Eddie Sumlin	3	3	4
<b>Category: Community Outreach by an Organization</b>			
D.A.S.H. Center for the Arts	2		
Hilltop Artists in Residence	7		
<b>Category: Arts Patron</b>			
Blaine Johnson			
Click! Cable TV	3		
Artist Trust			
Greater Tacoma Community Foundation			
City Arts	6		

The AMOCAT Awards for 2009 are as follows:

**Category: Community Outreach by an Artist**

William Kupinse

**Category: Community Outreach by an Organization**

Hilltop Artists in Residence

**Category: Arts Patron**

City Arts

**E. Art at Work Month**

**6:50 pm**

Naomi passed around a sign-up sheet for Commissioners to volunteer with various aspects of Art at Work month. Commissioners volunteered as follows:

**Material Distribution (deliver brochures and hang up posters - list of locations will be provided)**

Janet Matzke

Mike Sweney

Jan Brazzell

Don Lacky

**Opening Party, October 29, 6 – 9 pm (registration tables, meet & greet)**

Janet Matzke

Mike Sweney

Jan Karroll

Jan Brazzell

Robin Echtle

Sarah Idstrom

**Arts Symposium, November 14 & 15 (registration table, speaker introductions)**

Jan Karroll

Jan Brazzell

**Art Slam, November 18, 6:30 – 9 pm (set up for reception, meet & greet, registration table)**

Janet Matzke

Jan Karroll  
Robin Echte  
Sarah Idstrom

Naomi passed around a mock up of the Studio Tour brochure. She noted that the main Art at Work brochure and Studio Tour brochure will be an all-in-one piece this year.

The studio tour has 75 participating artists and collaborative studios.

The opening party will feature a quartet from the Tacoma Youth Symphony, Mayor Baarsma will be handing out the AMOCAT Awards, and Bill Kupinse and Tammy Robacker will read poetry.

Naomi passed out the lineup for the Arts Symposium which includes sessions on copyright, internet usage, fundraising, working with galleries, artist spotlight on Robert Horner who is creating the public art for the Center for Urban Waters, financial management, and marketing. There will also be drop-in clinics with Shunpike and Artist Trust as well as an Arts Legal Clinic with Washington Lawyers for the Arts.

Chandler O'Leary and Jessica Spring are creating a letterpress poster for Art at Work 2009.

Art at Work is being sponsored by Washington State Arts Commission, Weekly Volcano, City Arts, Click!, and ShowCase media.

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm