

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 17-4833 FOR THE PURPOSE OF REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE OREGON ZOO PUBLIC ART ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S THIRD MAJOR ART COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Date: November 2, 2017

Prepared by: Heidi Rahn
503-220-5709

BACKGROUND

Metro Code section 2.07 states the agency policy of spending one percent of direct construction costs, on projects valued at more than \$100,000, towards public art.

As outlined below, the zoo is addressing percent-for-art expenditures programmatically by dividing the designated one percent of direct construction costs into three allocations for artwork. Each allocation is essentially aligned with one third of the bond-funded zoo campus construction, geographically west, central and east. This resolution addresses the third of these three allocations, designated for the Polar Passage project environs site and associated central plaza.

In 2008 voters approved Ballot Measure 26-96 (the "Oregon Zoo Bond Measure 26-96") to support several improvements to the physical environment and operation of the Oregon Zoo with \$125 million in capital improvements. Staff determined the most effective use of the percent for art funds would be to designate them programmatically rather than on a project-by-project basis. This would enable a more strategic approach to the selection and installation of public art at the zoo and leverage the monies to greater effect for the public and the campus.

Metro Council passed resolution No. 11-4282 which approved a programmatic approach to using percent-for-art funds and established guidelines to provide the direction necessary for implementation of zoo bond percent-for-art program. The guidelines included appointing an Advisory Committee to:

- Recommend suitable art forms and work with the project architect to designate appropriate sites;
- Recommend program expenditures;
- Identify criteria for selection of each project's art, including artist's qualifications based on past work, highest aesthetic quality, and consideration for safety, durability, maintenance, safety and public access; and
- Select artists and art forms.

The Council will "maintain oversight, review and approval of the Advisory Committee's recommended art location and types."

The Oregon Zoo Public Art Advisory Committee (OZPAAC) roster of members, serving two-year renewable terms, is:

- Carlotta Colette, Metro Councilor
- John Forsgren, Forsgren Design Studio; formerly Regional Arts and Culture Council Public Art Advisory Committee
- Kregg Hanson, Oregon Zoo Foundation Trustee Emeritus, OZPAAC Chair

- Susan Hartnett, City of Portland Visitor Venues Program Manager, Oregon Zoo Bond Citizen's Oversight Committee Vice Chair
- Jiseon Lee Isbara, Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor, Oregon College of Art and Craft
- Anne Lauerma, Oregon Zoo Africa Keeper
- Margot Monti, Oregon Zoo Veterinarian Technician
- Anne Storrs, Artist

Polar Passage design partner and project manager Gregg Leicester from CLR Design joined the committee in making the third commission selection.

Several zoo staff participate in the OZPAAC process, but are not voting members of the committee: Zoo Director Don Moore, Zoo Bond Program Director Heidi Rahn, Zoo Public Art Administrator Tyson Stoianoff, Zoo Construction Manager Jim Mitchell, Zoo Education Curator Grant Spickelmier and Zoo Bond Program Coordinator Linnea Nelson.

Members of OZPAAC have put in an extraordinary amount of time and thoughtful consideration during this third commission selection. As contracted, the Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC) managed the process.

- March 9, 2016, OZPAAC reviewed the third major art commission timeline.
- June 1, 2016, OZPAAC reviewed a draft Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the third major art commission, and suggested key words for the RFQ. Five members are identified to serve on the artist selection subcommittee to narrow the pool for full OZPAAC consideration.
- June 16, 2016, OZPAAC members suggested additional key words and reviewed the final RFQ draft.
- July 1, 2016, a public Request for Qualifications (RFQ 3202) was advertised.
- By Aug. 9, 2016, 179 artists responded to the public RFQ to be considered to design, fabricate and install artwork associated with the Polar Passage/central plaza project.
- By Sept. 5, 2016, all 179 artist submissions were evaluated individually by the OZPAAC subcommittee members.
- Sept. 7, 2016, the OZPAAC subcommittee met and reviewed the top 30 artist submissions based on subcommittee evaluations to date, and selected 12 semifinalists for further consideration.
- Sept. 21, 2016, the entire OZPAAC selection committee met and evaluated the top 12 submissions. From 12, four finalists were selected.
- Nov. 16-18, 2016, the four finalists were invited for a tour and interview at the zoo, which took course over three days. The finalists toured the zoo site, met with project architects and Polar Passage staff, and presented their initial thoughts and approaches for public art for the site.
- Nov. 18, 2016, OZPAAC selected Edwin and Veronica Dam de Nogales from a pool of well-qualified artists for their exemplary artistic merit, artwork that delivers a powerful message aligned with the project theme, commitment to work that responds to site and audience, their collaborative nature and their ability to deliver beautiful, impactful work within budget.

The RFQ directed artists to keep in mind the general goals for the zoo's entire public art program:

- enhancing the site and the visitor's experience
- inspiring curiosity about art, the zoo and nature

- considering issues of sustainability and conservation
- increasing awareness and appreciation of the zoo as a community asset
- encouraging dialogue, interaction and engagement by people of all ages
- appropriateness to site in terms of both scale and materials.

Over the past year since November 2016, Edwin and Veronica Dam de Nogales have worked with the project design team, zoo staff and OZPAAC to choose sites and art designs that explore the four main themes of the Polar Passage project:

1. Polar bears and their habitats are amazing.
2. Polar bears are struggling with the effects of climate change.
3. Our keepers and bears work together as partners in conservation science.
4. You can make a difference for polar bears.

They have proposed three sculptural pieces made out of cast aluminum. The largest and primary sculpture is referred to as the “melting ice bear” that depicts a polar bear on an iceberg, with a smaller portion of the iceberg separated from the main piece. Both the bear and iceberg base have open spaces that suggest melting and disappearing are in progress. The proposed location for the sculpture is near the north entry to the Polar Passage project, in a wide section of the visitor walkway in front of the open-air interpretive building that will provide a quiet environment for the visitor to interact with the sculpture and contemplate it. The sculpture will be oriented to face the interpretive center, where the visitors will be able to learn more about conservation science and action. This location also provides long sight lines – approximately 30 to 40 feet – from various sides, which is important for the visitor’s approach to the bear.

The sculpture is intended to convey the connection of the bear to the ice, a sense of fragility and loss, and hope that our actions can change that loss. It is designed to be approached, to be touched, and provide a photo opportunity for visitors, and for the viewer to make eye contact with the bear. The focus is on global warming and the human impact on our environment with an underlying message of “empathy leads to action.” The sculpture has been designed for safety and discourages climbing.

A specific aluminum alloy was chosen as the material for a variety of reasons, including that the light color best approximates the white polar bears and arctic ice, it is resistant to corrosion and light weight, and will not get as hot in the summer sun as would bronze or a darker material. Aluminum is also associated with recycling and responsibility as a green material given that well over 90 percent of it ever made is still in use (or reuse) today. It is a wonderful material for announcing the polar bear as an “ambassador” of global and environmental responsibility and protection. The aluminum can be spray coated for protection, or allowed to form a white, chalky protective coat, which could even better approximate the natural bears and ice.

Two other proposed sculptures are aluminum bear benches planned to be installed facing each other on either side of a walkway entry near the Polar Passage deep pool on the south end of the habitat. One bench is a bear standing on all four legs. The second bench is a bear in a sliding or reclining position. The benches present lighter, more jovial, playful bears than the melting ice bear. The two bear benches together create a feeling of family, as the young bears would be together in the wild. The benches will also be visible from a raised terrace along the main “zoo street.” The at-grade concrete under the bear benches may be a lighter color, to give the subtle feel of being on an iceberg.

The melting ice bear and the two bear benches bracket either end of the Polar Passage habitat, and are appealing to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. They are an integral component of the project design, complementing the vision of the project and elevating the visitor experience.

ANALYSIS/INFORMATION

1. **Known Opposition** None.
2. **Legal Antecedents** Metro Council Resolution No. 87-717, “For the Purpose of Establishing Guidelines for the Implementation of a One Percent for Art Program,” approving guidelines to provide a process for selecting, purchasing, commissioning, placing and maintaining the art purchased with art set-aside funds.

Metro Council Resolution No. 11-4282, “For the Purpose of Establishing Additional One Percent for Art Program Guidelines for Oregon Zoo Ballot Measure 26-96 Construction Projects,” approving guidelines to provide a process for selecting, commissioning, and placing the art programmatically, rather than on a project-by-project basis, for zoo bond funded projects.

Metro Council Resolution No. 11-4292, “For the Purpose of Approving the Oregon Zoo Bond Implementation Plan,” approving the design and construction of a suite of capital projects identified in the Bond Implementation Plan.

Metro Code section 2.07.070 requires that the Metro Council shall adopt by resolution guidelines for implementing percent-for-art program. The guidelines shall be interpreted in such a manner to fully carry out the purposes of the ordinance.

Metro Council Resolution No. 13-4437 “for the purpose of review and approval of the Oregon Zoo Public Art Advisory Committee’s first art commission recommendations.”

Metro Council Resolution 15-4652 “for the purpose of review and approval of the Oregon Zoo Public Art Advisory Committee’s second art commission recommendations.”

3. **Anticipated Effects** Artwork installation will coincide with construction of the project.
4. **Budget Impacts** The Bond Implementation Plan, approved by Council, allocates funds to project scopes including percent-for-art expenditures. The artist contract was included in the Fiscal Year 2018 zoo bond program budget, approved by the Metro Council as part of the Metro Budget.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the Oregon Zoo Public Art Advisory Committee’s recommendations for three cast aluminum polar bear sculptures by the artist team of Edwin and Veronica Dam de Nogales in the visitor walkways associated with the Polar Passage project.