



CITY OF DURHAM | NORTH CAROLINA

Date: February 17, 2014

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager
From: Kevin Dick, Director, Office of Economic and Workforce Development
Subject: Location Change for Public Art Project Grant for Brenda Miller Holmes

Executive Summary

This item recommends the acceptance a public art mural to be installed on city property and the approval of a contract amendment to allow for the location change in the public art grant agreement with Brenda Miller Holmes for a project to create a Durham Civil Rights History mural. The proposed new location is the west wall of the Durham Convention Center, facing Morris Street. The item also recommends that the City Council hear a brief presentation by the artist, about the mural design, at the scheduled Work Session.

Recommendation

The Office of Economic and Workforce Development recommends that the City Council

1. Approve the installation of a civil rights mural by Brenda Miller Holmes on the west wall of Durham Convention Center, a facility jointly owned by the City of Durham and Durham County, subject to final approval of the mural design by the City and County administrations; and,
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute a contract amendment to change the installation location of a civil rights mural to the west wall of the Durham Convention Center under a public art grant of \$20,000 to Brenda Miller Holmes.

Background

On June 22, 2009, the Durham County Board of County Commissioners approved the use of \$25,000.00 for a Public Art Grant Initiative Pilot Project. The funding for the project is supported by Cultural Master Plan implementation funds, transferred to the City by the County. On November 21, 2011, the Durham City Council approved the Resolution Establishing a Public Art Policy. On February 9, 2012, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development issued a Request for Proposals for a Public Art Pilot Project with an application deadline of March 29, 2012.

After a review by the staff of OEWD and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Equity Assurance, eight applications were found to be responsive and were forwarded to the Public Art Committee of the Cultural Advisory Board for review. The proposal by Brenda Miller Holmes was the highest scoring proposal, scoring 87 points out of a possible 100. Following a review of the scoring and a discussion of all proposals, the Public Art Committee, at its April 24, 2012 meeting, voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Holmes proposal. The committee's recommendation was forwarded to the Cultural Advisory Board which, at its April 27, 2012 meeting, unanimously endorsed the Public Art Committee recommendation.

The City Manager approved the recommendation, and the contract was executed on July 20, 2012. The project completion date was scheduled for July 20, 2013.

The project has engaged community members in learning about the history of the civil rights movement in Durham and in collaborating to create design elements for a mural based on this exploration. The finished mural was planned to be located on a building at 112 W. Main Street, or at an alternative location mutually agreed upon by the artist and the City.

In February 2013, the building at 112 W. Main Street was sold, and the new owners did not agree to accept the mural because of alternative plans they had developed for the wall in question. The artist negotiated with multiple building owners in order to gain permission for an alternate location. She also worked with City/County Planning on procedures for necessary approvals from the Historic Preservation Commission, based on which alternative building was selected. Ultimately, the Convention Center was chosen because the west wall had been painted previously and should not raise historic preservation issues.

On February 10, 2014, the Durham County Board of County Commissioners approved a recommendation by the County staff to "Approve the use of a rear wall of the City-County owned Durham Convention Center" as the location for the mural. The Durham Arts Council and the History Hub management have both endorsed the proposed location, which will be next to the Durham Arts Council and visible from the History Hub. The History Hub will also be collaborating with the artist to build educational programs at the Hub about Durham's civil rights history based on the mural.

As part of the process, the artist has engaged 30 community members to participate in the design and painting of the mural. This group has been involved in a series of public workshops on Durham's civil rights history, individual research on people and events in that history, and on design workshops in which elements to be included in the final design have been developed.

It was anticipated in the original contract that the mural would be painted in the summer of 2013. A significant number of the participants are students and teachers. Several of those students were high school seniors who left Durham in the fall of 2013 to attend college. Others are local high school students and Durham teachers. The artist requested of the City that the painting of the mural be delayed until early summer 2014, so that the actual painting can begin in May 2014 when those students return from college, and so that the other students and teachers will have the time to participate after the end of the 2013-14 school year. This will allow the team that has been working on

the project to participate in its completion. The City manager approved the contract extension on July 20, 2013, extending the completion date to July 20, 2014.

Issues and Analysis

A major priority of the City of Durham is increasing and strengthening the economic stability of the City. Studies have demonstrated that arts spending contributes to economic activity and local government revenues, encouraging visitorship and associated spending. Public art adds to the appearance of neighborhoods and promotes a sense of place. The content of the mural will highlight important aspects of Durham's civil rights history and serve as an educational tool both for the schools and for the general public. Staff endorses the recommended location, which would serve to promote the continued revitalization and vitality of downtown Durham.

The project, in addition to its inherent value, will serve as a pilot program to develop and test implementation procedures for the new Public Art Policy. The Public Art Committee will use the project to evaluate the effectiveness of that implementation process. The encouragement of public art is a stated goal of the Downtown Master Plan, Citywide Strategic Plan and Durham Comprehensive Plan.

Alternatives

The City Council may reject the recommendation to use the Convention Center west wall. Not approving the location would delay an opportunity to complete a project of artistic, historical and educational merit.

Financial Impact

Funding for the project is supported by Cultural Master Plan implementation funds designated for public art, as provided for that purpose by Durham County. Approval of the proposed location will have no impact on the General Fund.

SDBE

The Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance Department reviewed the original proposal submitted by Brenda Miller Holmes of Durham, North Carolina and determined that it is in compliance with the Ordinance to Promote Equal Business Opportunities in City Contracting.