PUBLIC ARTS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
January 17, 2017
MINUTES

TIME & PLACE:
The Public Art Advisory Board of the City of Truth or Consequences, New Mexico met in the conference room in the Administration Annex at 401 McAdoo, Truth or Consequences, New Mexico on Tuesday, January 17, 2017 at 4:00 P.M.

PRESIDING OFFICER:
The meeting was called to order at 4:09 PM by Sid Bryan.

ATTENDANCE:

Sid Bryan, Tourism
Cary "Jagger" Gustin, Sierra Arts Council (Proxy for James Durham who resigned.)
Juan Fuentes, City Manager

Absent: Eduardo Alicea, Art Representative
        Jia Apple, Business Community

Other Staff Present: Linda Sparks, Secretary
Visitors Present: Linda DeMarino, Sazi Marri, Jeff Barbour

QUORUM: There being a quorum present, the Board proceeded with the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
A motion to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2016 meeting was made by Juan Fuentes, seconded by Jagger Gustin, and it carried.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:
Jagger reported that James Durham resigned from the Sierra Arts Council, and consequently would not be able to serve on the Public Arts Board as their representative. Jagger will be taking James place on the Board. It is not known at this time whether he will be replaced at a later date.

Linda DeMarino was called upon to report on the status of the progress on the Art Park.

Linda DeMarino reported that Will Powell, architect with NM MainStreet, came in November along with some other people. They came to the conclusion that they needed to pull in additional help with this. The MainStreet Board voted to talk to Sabina and actually allot money to hire her. Sazi explained that Sabina will do some creative renderings that they can actually see what is possible in that space because Will is
having a hard time producing anything. Linda added that Will is having a hard time wrapping his head around the whole space and some of the problems that they have, and Sabina seems to be more open to it because Will is more of an architect and Sabina is more of a designer. They expect Sabina to be more helpful with what they have. Sazi explained that Sabina is actually a landscape architect that deals with parks and public art spaces. Will is more comfortable dealing with buildings because he has said more than once that this is the hardest thing he has ever had to do. Linda stated that they reached out to Sabina and what she needs from us is a civil survey, topography, site utilities, meets and bounds. From Jeff, Sabina needs the number of pieces and their sizes. Jeff replied that he could send her a list of all the pieces that he has. Linda suggested that he also send a couple of pictures of what he has to forward on to Sabina.

Jagger stated that they’ve asked David Senn to survey it up as a comp for us and he will do that.

Sazi stated that Bill Sletton has someone who is willing to do the topo survey for $250. The City should be able to locate the utilities. And, they already have the meets and bounds.

Sid asked Jagger if when he spoke to Mr. Senn, he said ‘a topo survey’.

Jagger replied, no. What he will do is come in and mark all the points on the corners and separate the lots out so that you can actually see where the City property is and the private property on either side.

Sazi explained that he is doing the civil survey so somebody else will do the topo survey and we will have to pay for that one. Bill has negotiated a really great price on it. They raised some money from the card sales for this project so they will be able to apply some of the money towards that.

Sid asked if that person can do the regular survey as well as long as he is doing the topo.

Sazi answered, no. They don’t do regular surveys. They are able to do a topo from afar with a computer. David Senn has offered to generously . . . (interrupted). Jagger finished the sentence with “do that for us as a comp”.

Jagger continued saying that he suggested to MainStreet that we apply for a building permit and get Robbie, Building Inspector, on board with us. Instead of waiting a year and springing it on him, we should just apply and get him on board so that he will help us with any issues we may encounter. He thinks it’s a good idea to do that.

Sazi commented that MainStreet agreed.

Linda stated that we can’t apply for anything when they don’t know what they’re doing.

Sid asked if Sabina would be coming here physically.
Sazi replied that she has already come twice to look at it. She is really excited about it. She also went over to see Jeff’s rockets. She has a grasp of not only the town because she loves . . . She said this town is so incredible, the potential with the waters and the mountains; she gets the whole picture which is why Sazi is excited about having someone at work like that.

Juan asked if we can have a timeframe.

Sazi answered that Sabina is really fast, so as soon as we are able to get her what she needs with the surveys, she should really quickly move . . . (Interrupted) Jeff asked how long will the surveys take.

Jagger asked if he should call David Senn. He doesn’t want to pressure him, but. Jagger said he sent him a nice letter and the description weeks ago, doesn’t remember exactly when, but he did send it to him.

Linda suggested that Jagger ask him what his timeframe is.

Sid said; I’d call him tomorrow so he has time to get his schedule in order.

Sazi stated that Bill is coming back really soon so he’ll be able to get the topo. Sazi doesn’t know who that company is and how long that process takes.

Jagger stated they spoke to a contractor. The contractor has worked here forever so he knows. He said there needs to be a 5’ setback on the City property from the property line all the way around it. He said Robbie would know that for sure.

Sid stated his understanding is that that area can have zero lot lines like the other buildings on that side of the street and all the others are zero lot lines.

Jagger asked if it wouldn’t be Robbie to ask that. He would know that.

Sazi stated that she is sure Sabina will be getting in touch with Robbie to get all applicable ordinances and make sure that she designs it up to code.

Juan asked if Sabina is also with MainStreet.

Sazi answered, no. She is in El Paso. She’s done some projects that she was aware off so she was in her radar.

Juan asked if she is doing it on a contract.

Sazi replied, yes. We’re going to pay her for her services.

Juan asked if she has given them an estimate of how much it’s going to be.

Sazi answered, yes. She said anywhere from $500 to $800, but that she will pro bono part of her fees. Sabina said she will be using an architect and that’s where most of the
costs would come. Sabina told her that she wants to pro bono a lot of her fees because she wants to be a part of it.

Sid asked if when Senn does the survey, if it will also show approximately where the alley is.

Jagger replied that when he spoke to him on the phone, he explained the project to him and he was on board immediately and offered to help. He told him they wanted all the points put in on each of the corners between the City property and the 2 private lots on either side so that there aren’t any questions about where those points are at.

Sid stated it was an issue that went on quite a while with the City when we had a rain similar to the one we had the last time only we had like 2 or 3 of those in a row. Then Juan’s predecessor wished to have the City event in the alley so that they wouldn’t have any responsibility. The Planning Commission turned that down. He tried to put it through again, and all the property owners objected, said you can’t make us take ownership to that alley. He still brought it before the Commission and the Commission unanimously said you can’t do that to Jaime. So it is still an alley as far as the City is concerned.

Jagger stated there’s supposed to be an alley back there, it’s unbelievable, but it does go in mid-air, where the old houses are there off of Foch. I guess a long time ago there was a road back in through there. The Museum has pictures showing 10 or 12 houses on that hillside back there that have been torn down over the years.

Sid added “or fell down”.

Juan brought the conversation back to the surveys.

Sazi said that the goal for this rendering is to get public input, to be able to present something that we can wrap our heads around and sink our teeth into because we are going to need public input. With what Will was producing, it’s just not possible.

Juan asked if it’s because the size is too small.

Sazi answered, no. He wanted to make it into a ruin piece. Everything that is existing, the piles of dirt and everything, he just wanted to leave it to save money. The pros and cons, he wasn’t able to give us an idea of like grading it to make it a fresh lot. He literally gave us what is existing in different colors, so the existing cement he put in red and the other stuff he put in gray and then he put a shade structure. The sculpture, one version had it as originally proposed and the other had it kind of scattered around. That’s an accurate description of what we were given. That’s really hard. Unless you’re able to give people an actual rendering, I don’t think that we can expect everybody to be on the same page with this and then that’s where we get in trouble because everybody has a different idea, especially when you’re dealing with a red square and a bunch of gray squares. We need something that looks like something so that people can express their opinions and then we can give them an idea and track where we came up with that design and once we spend money on this we need something to track to go, here’s the
rendering, here's where we came up with this and I don't think Will was able, obviously, we tried 4 times and this was the final.

Sid stated that at the last meeting Juan said he would talk to Don Armijo and bring back information to this meeting as to grading.

Juan answered that if we have a plan of what needs to be done, the City has the equipment to go in and remove dirt. That's not a big issue. The only big concern really is the timeframe. It looks to me like a great project, but it's going to be, like you said, the planning phase, then it's going to be public input, then it's going to be the budget, the fundraising of it. I see it going into a year or more.

Jeff asked about the reed rockets.

Juan replied that at some point we may discuss finding an alternate location for the reed rockets.

Sazi asked if we are able to purchase the reed rockets knowing that they are going to go up, is that a possibility. Can we compensate Jeff for the reed rockets?

Juan stated that the question is, do we just let them sit there for a year or, it's up to Jeff.

Jeff replied that he would like to have them installed, but he would also like to have the money. If the City wants to finish off the contract and give him the balance of what the payment is on the thing, then he can continue to store it in his place. It's not in his way.

Juan commented that it's up to the rest of the Board members as well.

Sazi commented that she's concerned about rushing things with this because she feels that this could really be a signature park for us. We wanted to do the fundraiser with the portraits and the tiles and all of that which she feels would give ownership and will make people really embrace it. She feels it could be a catalyst for other projects throughout the City which she thinks is the ultimate goal for MainStreet, to keep this momentum going with really amazing projects. She feels this is one that easily could make a huge impact.

After a brief discussion, it was the consensus to have the Reed Rockets there.

Jagger asked if we are bound to work with Will. Is he not going to be a little off centered with us.

Sazi answered, no. He will be relieved because he has expressed the difficulty of this project for him. She has talked to him about Sabina in the past. It is not blindsiding him and he is really honestly stressed.

Linda stated that she doesn't think it's his area of expertise. He is better at building adobes, doing amazing restorations or preservations and all that.
Sazi added that Will has been all over Europe preserving castles in Ukraine. He’s a building guy. From a landscaping point of view, because it is multi-dimensional, it’s really exciting and it’s small enough to do something really great.

Jagger asked where has this lady worked in El Paso, at the Public Library?

Sazi answered that she did that art piece in front of the El Paso Public Library.

Linda replied that her name is P. Sabina Muñoz. She does murals, mosaics.

Sazi added that she does a lot of mosaics, but not herself. She loves to work with local artists. She wants artistic merit. Her primary goal is to not only showcase local art and local assets, but also give a story behind it. The whole Buckhorn Bar being there is also something she will be able to incorporate in somehow which is important.

Jagger asked if then we need to go out to public comment so people can comment on that.

Sazi answered, yes, to come in and see what we’re thinking and have their input to guide us in the right direction for what the public wants. That way we’re covered, that we’re following the processes because we’re building the park for the public after all.

Jeff asked if they want to leave the story poles there since you’re changing everything.

Jagger stated he thought it’s a good idea that way people can see what the height is. Linda agreed.

Sid stated that on the Healing Waters Plaza, the design group actually answered the questions from the public. Can you get her to do that too after she makes the rendering, everybody approves it, then when they have the public input, she can answer questions, then it can help too.

Sazi agreed. Having the input and having that process protects us.

Linda added that coming off the Healing Waters Plaza project, it’s really funny how many people after the fact have public input.

Jagger stated that they’ve had 2 public input sessions already on the Art Park.

Sazi added that those meetings are open to the public and we put it out there and only 4 people show up, believe it or not.

Linda stated that they’ve had times where we’ve walked over there and looked at the thing and wrote down everybody’s suggestions.

Juan asked if we have any standards for the MainStreet District.
Sazi replied that we need to adopt something. It would really serve us well. It would help solve the hour problem with businesses downtown. In Mesilla, in order to be downtown, you have to sign with your lease that we promise to be open 6 days a week. We can change that, but that’s what Mesilla does. We need to start changing the culture of downtown to being something desirable as opposed to desperate. This is the place to be, you have to follow rules.

Juan added that they also have a plan that you can’t paint a window a certain color. You will never see a window boarded up over there.

Sid stated that for himself, it’s something that can lead to someone deciding what colors are okay. We don’t have that here, which he thinks is refreshing. People should still be allowed to have diversity.

Linda replied that no one is saying that you have to go by this color pallet, but that if your window breaks, you can’t just board it up. You have this amount of time to fix it. If someone graffiti’s on your building, you have this amount of time to get that off. If these kinds of things happen, you have to correct them.

Sazi added that you can’t put portable buildings, chain-link fencing. It would be to protect the integrity of the Historic District.

Jagger commented that the Chamber and Economic Development Boards in years past tried to get our business people to open on Saturday and Sunday. Does that make any sense when our tourists and our people here want to look around in your shops and you’re closed on Sunday? It doesn’t make any sense. Close on Monday and Tuesday.

Sazi stated that they’ve heard this over and over again, but if you start to include it in leases, that’s an action. So new businesses that are coming in, they sign in a lease that in order to be downtown, your hours need to be ____, and then it starts changing. We can preach and talk until we are blue in the face, but if we start to include it in leases then we’re able to say, you agreed to do this.

Linda added that what happens then is people sign these leases and then the expectation is there, we have to be open on these days. So guess what, all of a sudden there are places for people to go on the weekends. It makes it a more desirable place. So in the beginning, it may be a little stressful because like as a landlord you’re telling people that you have to be open on such and such a day. In the end, ultimately, people will want your response because with these many people open, you become the desirable area.

Sid stated that you can’t tell the landowner that they have to be open.

Sazi and Linda replied that in a district you can.

Sid asked if there’s a grandfather clause for stuff like that.

Linda replied that there are plenty of other communities that have done it.
Sid, going back to the agenda, asked for comments from the Board.

Jeff asked if we're thinking of giving him his final payment on the Reed Rockets.

Juan replied that he will talk to MainStreet and get back to him.

Jagger stated that the Arts Council has several hundred dollars in their public arts fund that needs to go towards Reed Rockets, that they can help with.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ARTS ADVISORY BOARD:
No other comments were made other than those made above.

TIME, PLACE AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING:
After a brief discussion, it was decided to meet on April 17th to give MainStreet time to come back with something solid.

ADJOURN:
There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 P.M. Juan Fuentes moved to adjourn, and it carried.

ATTEST:
Minutes were approved on April 17, 2017 on a motion made by Jagger Gustin and seconded by Juan Fuentes, and it carried.

[Signature]
Linda Sparks
Secretary