



CHATTANOOGA PUBLIC ART COMMISSION

Thursday, August 28, 2025, 1:00 - 3:00 PM

City Council Building | J.B. Collins Conference Room

PRESENT: Courtney Cochran, Nandini Makrandi, Dixon Stetler, Matthew Stovall, Jack Wood, Rebecca Brooks, Ian-Alijah Bey

GUESTS: None

STAFF: Carmen Davis, Austin Center, Katelyn Kirnie, Monica Kinsey, Harolda Bryson, Legal Intern

The meeting was called to order at 1:07PM.

I. Call to Order:

1. Approval of June 26, 2025 minutes

The meeting was called to order and a motion was made to approve minutes from June 26. An adjustment was noted to include a staff designation that had been omitted. The motion to approve the minutes passed with agreement and no opposition.

II. CPAC Business

1. **Welcome New Public Art Manager, Katelyn Kirnie:** Kate has returned to Chattanooga after a family gap year, previously serving as Public Art Director (2016-2020), acknowledging departmental challenges but noting improvements in public art maintenance (led by Austin) and streamlined artist call processes. The 2020 strategic plan's goals were unmet due to limited staffing/funding; a reassessment of paused programs and exploration of faster, smaller projects will occur, with major capital projects proceeding as is necessary.
2. **Farewell to Tim Goldsmith:** The commission thanked former CPAC Chair Tim Goldsmith for his service. With an authorized size of 13 commission members, and 9 considered suboptimal, applications remain open. Kate will review queued applications, and a social media campaign is planned to attract community applicants.
3. **Graffiti Zone Ordinance Update (Intern Presentation):** Intern Mya Houston analyzed the current anti-graffiti ordinance. She proposed designating Cooper's Alley as a formal "free zone" for graffiti, possibly with curated art, to address unsustainable maintenance demands impacting Austin and the Downtown Partnership Alliance. Key considerations include securing support from business owners and City Council, enforcing boundaries, and a public awareness campaign. Mya consulted Public Works and the Police Department but struggled to reach business owners.

III. Projects

1. Veterans Bridge Phase 2

For Veterans Bridge Phase 2, Eric Finley (Artist 7) was selected to design an adhesive vinyl mural for the retaining wall on the ramp connecting the bridge's south end to Riverside Drive/Riverfront Parkway. The City will handle installation, and the project aims to encourage

bridge use while the Walnut Street Bridge is closed. Finley was chosen from 65 submissions (27 local) after an open call. He will conduct public engagement, develop a concept by early October, and present it to the Commission for approval at the October meeting.

VOTE: Commissioners Dixon Stetler and Jack Wood moved to approve awarding the Veterans Bridge Phase 2 art installation contract to artist Eric Finley (The Artist SEVEN), as recommended by staff. Motion carried.

2. **MLK Underpass**

Ongoing delays and costs with Norfolk Southern have put project funding at risk if not completed by year-end. Challenges include extensive engineering reviews, flagging service requirements, and stalled approvals for lighting and murals on pylons. The proposed revised approach eliminates all work under the trestle, focusing only on painting the trestle side panels, which are within city jurisdiction. The mural will be relocated to an alternate site in the corridor (Brown Academy or Urban League facade) to retain its visual impact. Next steps involve submitting the simplified plan to Norfolk Southern, comparing relocation sites, and revising the artist's contract. The revised plan includes both trestle side panels and mural relocation, removing everything under the trestle from scope. Past submissions have received additional requirements requests, with email subject line compliance noted as a recent issue.

VOTE: Commissioner Courtney Cochran moved to approve Public Art Chattanooga staff identifying and confirming a new MLK Boulevard location for Cecilia Lueza's Art in Neighborhoods installation. Commissioner Matthew Stoval seconded the motion, which carried.

3. **One Westside (Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant)**

A HUD Grant has secured funding for multiple art interventions in the One Westside development: a new mural at the James A. Henry building, artistic lighting for the Highway 27 underpass (with potential for murals), and integrated 3D art in the James A. Henry Hub park space. Timelines will be revised based on construction. The underpass is 95 feet long with varying wall heights (10-18 feet); next steps include coordinating with TDOT. Volunteer selection panels are needed, likely a unified panel for all Westside projects. TDOT has been receptive in previous discussions and has an "art in transportation" program, which may simplify approvals.

4. **Riverfront parks planning:** There is potential for multiple public art opportunities; construction documents are currently on hold, which allows time to develop concepts and phasing that align with capital planning and budgets. A riverfront selection panel is needed.

5. **Stadium Project Artist-Integrated Fencing Panels**

The stadium's rapid construction, targeting an April opening, meant the public art team was engaged late. Artist-designed perforated corten fence panels at key locations are the current focus, integrating into broader fencing fabrication to leverage capital budgets. An RFP for the fabricator has been issued, and involvement in contractor selection will ensure design compatibility. This approach commissions artists for design only, removing barriers by using capital construction for fabrication/installation. A budget exists for art, part of which will fund these panels, with other opportunities explored as feasible. Previously discussed opportunities like the ticket office are no longer viable.

6. **Call for Selection Panelists**

Commission members expressed interest in serving on selection panels for Westside, Stadium, and Riverfront Projects.

IV. Collection Management

1. Collection Annual Maintenance Report

The annual maintenance report for 2025-2026 will prioritize outdoor sculptures due to their greater maintenance needs. While an indoor collection exists, it is not the focus of this maintenance cycle. Each sculpture undergoes inspection, with all maintenance records, photos, quotes, invoices, and associated costs meticulously documented in an artwork management system.

2. Current Repair Projects Status

- **Ed Johnson Memorial:** The plaza has been pressure-washed by Parks Maintenance. Work on the Walnut Street Bridge spans near the memorial is scheduled for January and February, but it is not expected to affect the sculpture. Some plants were removed and will be reinstalled. A monument restoration contractor will clean plaques and wax/clean the bronze sculpture before the bridge opens in February.
- **“Star Light, Star Bright”:** Refurbishment and repainting will begin next week.
- **“Scatter”:** The large spheres, which were not part of the original installation, are currently in storage and require repair. Discussions and approvals with the contractor are ongoing.
- **“Geometry in a Box”:** A purchase order for repainting and cleanup is pending.
- **Other Works:** Two additional pieces were cleaned this past year. Ongoing graffiti removal efforts include work on the Wilcox tunnel mural.

3. Historical Maintenance and Repair Report

Expense tracking: The maintenance system shows total inputs over \$303,000, detailed in a historic report. Completed projects are around \$80,000 (e.g., City Thread repainting at \$18,000). In-process/quoted projects total \$203,000 (e.g., Stickball Players, \$80,000 quote with more pending). Last year's budget was \$250,000; this year's is expected to be similar, with reports used for spending verification and allocation planning.

4. Future planning and prioritization:

The "Resurgence 1 and 2" sculptures at Blue Goose Hollow have undergone recent cleaning and will likely need repainting within 3-5 years or more. Given their powder-coated finish, repainting will be a high-cost endeavor, potentially reaching several hundred thousand dollars. Funding should be allocated over time to address this future expense. Prioritization for refurbishment will be based on insurance and historical value. This may lead to the deaccessioning of some artworks if sufficient funds are not available to support the maintenance of lower-priority pieces. Commission members are urged to report any issues, such as graffiti, promptly due to the extensive number of outdoor artworks.

5. “Black and White” Relocation Recommendation

The sculpture, initially located at Miller Plaza, was later discovered in a public works parking lot. It has since been refurbished in-studio and is prepared for reinstallation. The intended placement site on First Street, situated between Bluffview Museum Apartments and 129 Walnut Street Apartments, has been vacant for an extended period, leading to concerns about safety and its aesthetic impact.

VOTE: Commissioner Matthew Stoval moved to APPROVE that Public Art Chattanooga staff move “Black and White” by artist Samuel Burns from the repair studio to be placed at First Street Garden. Motion seconded by Commissioner, Jack Wood. Motion carried.

6. “Big Bird” Refurbish and Location Recommendation

The commission previously accepted a donation from the Murray-Bentley family: a piece referred to as "Big Bird." The proposed location for its installation is Phillips Park (700 Georgia Avenue), near the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Auditorium, at the corner of Macaulay Avenue and Georgia Avenue. The artist has been identified as Dan Jackson, a local artist whose works are held by the museum. A prior reference to "Don Jackson" was a typo. The donor family has

agreed to contribute funds to refurbish "Big Bird" before its installation.

VOTE: Commissioner Tim Goldsmith moved to APPROVE that Public Art Chattanooga staff place "Big Bird" by artist Dan Jackson at Philips Park.. Motion seconded by Commissioner, Dixon Stetler. Motion carried.

V. Public Comment

A. No public comments were made.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 23, 2025 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Meeting concluded at 2:11 PM