

Nags Head Committee for Art and Culture Meeting

February 8, 2017 Minutes

Nags Head Town Hall; Conference Room

Committee Members Present: Lauren Evans, Leslie Erickson, Ben Cahoon, Deputy Town Manager Andy Garman and Deputy Planning Director Kelly Wyatt.

Public Present: None.

Deputy Town Manager Andy Garman opened the meeting, thanked everyone for attending and briefly reviewed the purpose, roles and responsibilities of the committee.

Mr. Garman updated the group on the status of Dowdy Park including the Grand Opening scheduled for on May 13, 2017 and the role this committee is anticipated to play in the growth of the park and the selection of future art works to be displayed there and throughout the Town. Andy informed the committee that the first project they would likely undertake would be the selection of a “gateway” feature for Dowdy Park along the US 158/Bonnett Street entry. Committee member Ben Cahoon noted that it would be nice if the piece was reminiscent of the former Dowdy Amusement Park in some way to honor the history of the site and was curious if there was an artifact or something remaining to use as inspiration or even for an artist to incorporate into his/her design. Ben noted that while the gateway feature would likely be best as a permanent installation the area on the plan noted “sculpture garden” might best be used for temporary/rotating works of art. Leslie Erickson inquired if there were other “gateway” opportunities throughout the park and staff pointed out two other “gateways” at the Elementary School and at the Bonnett Street/Wrightsville intersection. Andy noted that it would be nice to somehow “tie” these three gateways together if possible.

Staff provided the committee a draft “Call for Entries” for their review. The committee members discussed with the staff the timeline for getting the call for entries out, selection of an artwork, funding of an artwork and the installation. It was agreed that with the tight timeline it would be unreasonable to have this gateway feature in place prior to the Grand Opening but that we could work towards at least having made a selection at the time of the Grand Opening to show the community. The committee noted that keeping the park evolving, alive and growing will be key and that once the art selection is installed it could serve as another means of community engagement and celebration. Ben noted that once the Call for Entries is out that six (6) weeks would be an acceptable submittal deadline. Lauren Evans noted that installation art can take a significant amount of time and to be prepared for that, she also inquired about the range of the call for entries and that artists from outside of the Outer Banks and North Carolina might be interested. Ben felt like having a local artist or at least an artist with some familiarity with the Outer Banks would be ideal. Andy noted that we could include a request for a written statement from the artist in the call for entry to allow them an opportunity to speak to their

knowledge and connection to the Outer Banks. An email from Peggy Saporito was shared with Committee members in her absence regarding artists David Turner and Mike Davis.

Lauren inquired about the use of the term “gateway structure” and if we were looking for a literal gateway/archway or would we be open to considering a mosaic or statement provided on the ground as you enter the park. Other than defining a general area the committee felt it best to leave the request open and see what type of entries we receive.

Ben Cahoon inquired about the budget for the installation as many artists will want to know the price range before submitting a proposal. Lauren Evans noted that welders will require a significant amount of money. Andy Garman noted that we are not certain of an exact amount but felt as though with potential grant opportunities and possibly incorporating this installation into Phase II it might come to \$10,000 or so. Ben Cahoon noted that the artist will likely not assume that the budgeted money includes the construction of a base (if needed) for the art to attach to and that maybe the Town could consider constructing that. Andy noted that once we have an idea of the costs associated with the Art Mast project should there be any monies left over we could shift it to the gateway entry. Leslie Erikson commented that she would mention this project to Bob Muller as the Don and Catherine Bryan Cultural Foundation might have grant money available for such a project. Leslie also inquired if the artists themselves could apply for a separate grant. Ben noted that often times those grants may encumber the artist (or art piece) to some other obligation but if not, it might be a possibility.

The committee members felt once the call for entries went out it would be beneficial to have an online presence with an FAQ about the art request, a map of the Bonnett Street area, history and old photos of the Dowdy Amusement Park to provide ideas and possibly inspiration interested artists. Noting that the very draft Call for Entries created by staff needed some work it was agreed that once the changes were made the Call would be sent out to all Committee members for input and finalization.

Leslie Erikson noted that she had an interest in helping the committee and the Town establish a list of performers showcasing all ages and levels in hopes that there could be musical arts and events not only at Dowdy Park but throughout the Town with a similar concept as Manteo’s First Fridays. Committee members felt that having a consistent and regulated schedule of events people will begin to know what to expect and it creates visibility of this segment of the arts in the community.

Noting that there were other opportunities for art throughout the Town Ben Cahoon stated that one potential project could be to bolt down paintable benches at several locations such as Dowdy Park, at the Elementary School and at Peak Resources and let the visitors to Dowdy, children of NHES and residents of Peak paint these benches and then un-bolt them and rotate them.

Jumping ahead on the agenda staff updated the committee on the status of the construction of a dog park at Satterfield Landing Park and potential for some art projects there down the road. Ben noted that many places are incorporating public art, such as murals, into the infrastructure. Lauren commented that it would be a fun place or an art wall/graffiti wall and that spaces like that tend to become great places for photo-ops for locals and visitors on Facebook, Instagram, etc. It was noted that the Bonnett Street Beach Access could similarly become a photo-op place for many visitors.

Lauren commented that her grandfather had a lot of old photographs and she had access to post cards with images of Nags Head from the past and she would look through them and maybe compile some in hopes of helping form an image of Nags Head's past to help inspire artists.

Staff informed that committee that they are working on drafting the Dowdy Park Use Policies. Thus far it had been determined by the Board of Commissioners during their last retreat that there would be no alcohol sales at Dowdy Park however if someone brought their own during an approved event it would not be regulated. Staffs also updated the committee on discussions around "no charge, free and open to the public" exercise classes and a desire to not have the same group compromising the space but at the same time not having tremendous staff involvement in scheduling.

Lauren Evans noted that she was very interested in exploring a Farmers Market at Dowdy Park when the opportunity was available. She shared a lot of helpful and informative information and noted that she has been approached by many within the community about a Market at this site. She volunteered to obtain information from the Town of Manteo on how they operate, vendor fees, regulations, etc. and share with the committee.

With no other items discuss staff thanked the attendees for their participation and noted that once the Call for Entries was drafted we would schedule another meeting to discuss.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00am.