City of Aurora

FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday
August 22, 2019
6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Zine called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following Committee members were present: Karen Christensen, Fawn Clark-Peterson, Clara Diaz, Brian Failing, Jeff Palmquist and Charlie Zine. Fernando Castrejon was excused.

OTHERS PRESENT

The following staff members were present: Ed Sieben, Jill Morgan, John Curley, and Sue Jackson.

Others Present: Jen Evans (COA Public Art)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

19-0733 Approval of the Minutes for the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee Meeting on May 22, 2019.

A motion was made by Mrs. Christensen, seconded by Mr. Palmquist, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried by voice vote.

COA REPORT

19-0741 FoxWalk Certificates of Appropriateness Report (COA's Approved by Staff - May 20, 2019 through August 20, 2019.

Mr. Failing said what is the timeline for the kiosks to be installed?

Mr. Sieben said I do not know that.

Mr. Failing said is that the concrete bump outs they are doing over in front of the School for the Performing Arts? Is that for the kiosks?
Mr. Sieben said I’m not really involved with that.

Mrs. Morgan said I don’t think that’s where any of them were. I don’t know if that’s a rain garden in there.

Mr. Failing said because I thought one was going by the Performing Arts and City Hall.

Chairman Zine said the one by City Hall they are digging a trench now for the cable.

Mr. Sieben said right.

Mrs. Morgan said maybe I’m wrong. It does say Art Center, so maybe that is the kiosk.

There were no other questions on the COA report.

This COA Report was discussed and filed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Zine said if you are here for an item that does not have a public hearing and you wish to speak to the Commission, we can give you 3 minutes to do so.

No one came forward.

AGENDA

19-0723 Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for a modification from the Signage Provisions for two new Parking Lot E Identification Signs.

Mr. Sieben said if you recall, about a month ago I forwarded the e-mail to the Design Review Committee just as a FYI of what was being proposed with redoing Parking Lot E really to modernize it, and open it up. The alleyway connection was being opened up. The metal façade from the 70’s was coming down. That contract has been approved by the city so that work will start very shortly. Trevor Dick, with Economic Development, was actually the one that was spearheading this proposal for the parking lot signs. He had a little bit of an emergency with his dad last night so he is actually driving on his way to Canada as we speak. He is from that area near Buffalo. So I’m filling in for him tonight. This is basically requesting approval of a COA for modification of the sign provisions for 2 Parking Lot E identification signs that we have up on the TV. The purpose, or a little bit of background, is as I stated, they are starting a renovation on Lot E and this will improve the parking lot layout, etc., landscaping, building façade, pedestrian sidewalks, and consolidating the dumpsters. As part of that, we want to improve some of the ineffective signage that is there. Part of the bid package that was awarded earlier this month by City Council included a line item to install new parking lot identification signs and the new signs are designed to meet the following goals:

1. To easily identify the parking lot.
2. Celebrate downtown’s history while combining quality, modern elements to support a “retro” look.
City staff, Trevor, really took the lead on this working with other city departments, including the Communications Department, Public Works, Planning and other staff including Jen Evans, who is here, and the Aurora Sign Company to design the signs. Staff also conducted extensive research to find examples of retro signs that exist in other communities, as well as what used to be in downtown Aurora. A tour of the Historical Sign display at that David L. Pierce Art and History Center earlier this summer was also instrumental in the design. If you read the current design guidelines, well first off, technically government signs don’t need a COA. However, we felt that these signs were a little bit new and unique that we wanted to bring it forward to the DRC. It does describe parking lot identification signs that they typically would be no more than 5 feet tall and 10 square feet in area and not more than one sign per parking lot entrance. As proposed, the new signs will be about 14 feet tall and they are a little bit under 14 square feet in area. Based on that, the recommendation per 4.7 Modifications from Sign Provisions would be to recommend approval of these signs. There would be one put on each end of Parking Lot E. There would be one at the new entrance of New York Street and one at the existing entrance on Galena Boulevard.

Ms. Clark-Peterson said so when we are required to have retro design, is there any specific like era we are talking about or is it just anything that happens to be before now?

Ms. Evans said so initially when we started, there was not exactly a style in mind. It was pretty basic what the sign company was offering. So as we did some brainstorming, we discussed a sort of a mid-20th Century sort of aesthetic that would have the appeal and some sort of grounding in that it would look to color combinations and fonts from signs of maybe the 40’s through the 60’s. We did look at other fonts from more of an art deco era and found that they were too similar to the Hollywood Casino signage and longer had the same appeal that maybe a mid-20th Century would.

Mrs. Christensen said I actually was in agreement with what you chose because I think in terms of vintage the heyday of retail here really was the 40’s and 50’s, so I think if you are looking for a cultural context, that was a good vintage to pick.

Chairman Zine said so Ed, I appreciate the city doing the COA process when they didn’t have to. The exception I don’t have a problem with, except I wonder if it is going to come back and be cited in the future for other people who want exceptions. I’m thinking back to when we did the Indiro Café sign when it was World Café.

Mr. Sieben said well again, those are commercial signs. This is just parking lot identification signs. So it really is apples and oranges. I think compared to, I think, Indiro or the casino signs, I think it is kind of a different animal. We are not advertising a business. I think there is a difference there.

Chairman Zine said so we don’t have to worry about this coming back.

Mr. Sieben said correct.

Mrs. Christensen said and also another thought in that regard, I think one of the issues for parking has always been people are coming down here or who are not familiar with the neighborhood, so making sure that they can see it from a distance.

Mrs. Sieben said yes. This is a major gateway down New York.
Mrs. Christensen said actually in my mind it would be interesting to hear from Clara since she owns a business that uses that parking lot. Do you have any concerns or negative feelings about this?

Mrs. Diaz said no. I like it.

Mr. Sieben said I think it is trying a little bit something different.

Ms. Clarke-Peterson said if I could also add, so Parking Lot E this is the design that they came up with and the color combination that is originally stemming from the Mayor's office color scheme, but we had also discussed branding each parking lot as we move forward over the next few years, with a different font and a different shape that was maybe a little more mid-20th Century and a different color scheme that would also help with place making so that visitors to the downtown could kind of remember where they are at and then potentially adding names of parking lots as they come up.

Mrs. Christensen said that's good. I also like it because the architecture throughout the neighborhood isn't consistent in terms of eras so there is no need to be consistent in terms of the signage.

Mr. Sieben said good point.

Chairman Zine said I know this is not on the sign, but do you have an idea what the backs of those stores look like underneath the façade?

Mr. Sieben said they are original, they are masonry, whatever was there. I don't know if they were all masonry.

Mrs. Morgan said I was told they were in decent condition from what they could tell.

Chairman Zine said windows too?

Mrs. Morgan said I don't think we know that yet.

**MOTION TO APPROVE COA WAS MADE BY:** Jeff Palmquist  
**MOTION SECONDED BY:** Karen Christensen  
**AYES:** Karen Christensen, Fawn Clarke-Peterson, Clara Diaz, Brian Failing, Jeff Palmquist, Charlie Zine  
**NAYS:** None

A motion was made by Mr. Palmquist, seconded by Mrs. Christensen, that this agenda item be approved. The motion carried.

**19-0735** Certificate of Appropriateness to install a mural on the wall facing the pedestrian alleyway at 11 N. Broadway

Ms. Evans said for the 11 N. Broadway project, this is fully funded by JH Real Estate. The tenant in the new space is going to be Yeti Station Arcade. This mural project is contributing to the redesign of Parking Lot E and clearing up that space, decorating that area that has been under used. It is abstract design that also references video games, but not so extremely that if and when the arcade moves out. It is fairly abstract. The property owner also understands that the mural has to be properly sealed with anti-graffiti coating. I'm in regular conversation with them. As we research and learn about the best products to use, especially for Sharpie lately, I'll be in communication with them over the next few weeks about specific products to be using.
The artist who is going to be working on this is a well-known Rockford/Chicago artist who has worked all over Illinois and all over the country. It is fun when people who know it is this sort scene, they are excited that this particular artist is coming.

Chairman Zine said is it going on the bricks or is it going on a fabric?

Ms. Evans said it is going on the painted brick surface.

Mrs. Diaz said on both sides?

Ms. Evans said no, just on the side of along the Yeti Arcade.

Chairman Zine said which is to the right in that picture, correct?

Ms. Evans said correct.

Mr. Palmquist said do you have a size and height?

Ms. Evans said it is going to kind of have organized edges, but the maximum size would be about 50 feet wide and about 12 feet high. The stretch that would be appropriate to paint is 61 feet long. You could get up about 15 feet in some places, so it will be about 50’ by 12’.

Mrs. Christensen said is this going to be lit?

Ms. Evans said that’s something that we need to work on that I’m talking to Trevor about. I believe they are looking at a variety of lighting situations for that with or without a mural going in.

Mrs. Christensen said I would highly recommend that because our experience in the past always was that, I’m trying to think about how I’ll say this for a family-friendly audience, there was a lot of debris that was deposited in that area and anti-social behavior that took place and so I think adding lighting in addition to deterring people from vandalizing the mural, I think adding lighting so that people would be comfortable walking through there to actually take some time to observe what’s there would be a good thing.

Ms. Evans said as far as I understand, lighting for safety is already part of the Parking Lot E plan.

Chairman Zine said it’s going to be the same lights I heard that are on the Water Street Mall or similar. I thought I read that somewhere.

Ms. Evans said that is one of the ideas that I’ve heard, but I can’t speak to where they are at right now.

Chairman Zine said is the wall smooth? I mean, sometimes when they tuck point they make it smooth, which is not really the way you want to do tuck pointing unless you are going to do a mural.

Ms. Evans said not exactly. There are some areas that bump out an inch. You can kind of see some of those areas toward the bottom. There is a smooth concrete kind of over or inside of the brick. What’s interesting about this design though, and one of
the reasons I encouraged it, was that there is a lot of geometry to it, so that can be sort of a 3-D element of this Qubert/Tetrus kind of design. So they will use it to the advantage of the design.

Mr. Palmquist said what was the process to basically approve or have that come through the Art Commission and to really deem this as the aesthetic merit worthy of being in public view and where the property owner comes in and funding? Can you explain that a little bit?

Ms. Evans said officially the property owner, or the contractor of the space, finds their way to Public Art and then I have advised parties on what is probably going to pass and probably not going to pass and here is the overall vision of the where the city is going with their Downtown Development Plan. Then we go to the DST and then the Aurora Public Art Commission where it is voted on and then here and the BZE. Casually, I end up having long conversations with the contractor kind of discussing potential artists, what are you looking for, and doing some like consulting, kind of co-networking, what will be a win/win for the city and for the business and contribute to the overall whole that we are working on here.

Chairman Zine said the cost a matter of public record or is that between the…

Ms. Evans said it is being paid for by the owner, so I don’t know that it is.

Chairman Zine said I was just curious. That’s a big mural.

MOTION TO APPROVE COA WAS MADE BY: Karen Christensen
MOTION SECONDED BY: Brain Failing
AYES: Karen Christensen, Fawn Clarke-Peterson, Clara Diaz, Brian Failing, Jeff Palmquist, Charlie Zine
NAYS: None

A motion was made by Mrs. Christensen, seconded by Mr. Failing, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee, on the agenda for 8/28/2019. The motion carried.

19-0737
Certificate of Appropriateness to install a ghost mural on the east elevation at 6 E. Downer Place

Ms. Evans said this is also a privately funded mural on private property. Mike Saltijeral is both the tenant with Charlie’s Ice Cream Shop. He has done a beautiful job taking care of this building. What they are looking to do is recreate, to the best historical accuracy that they can, the Aurora Silverplate Manufacturing sign and to paint it with a special effects that make it look like it’s been there, that it has naturally faded and in the same location where it originally was, so just bringing back some of the historical excitement of that place. That’s why the Blue’s mural came down from that site so that the ghost sign could go back in place.

Chairman Zine said what’s going to happen to the Blue’s mural?

Mrs. Morgan said that’s next.

Chairman Zine said this wall is not painted.

Ms. Evans said correct.
Chairman Zine said do we have a special provision for ghost murals as opposed to regular murals or is this going to come back to haunt us in the future?

Mrs. Morgan said staff did some research on murals on unpainted brick. It seems in other communities there is a mixture. Some of them are like Aurora and prohibit it on unpainted brick. Some of them didn’t specify. Some of them even said they encouraged painted murals as opposed to installing things onto the brick. I spoke to the Development Services Director, who is an architect. The reason you don’t paint brick is that it can cause water to be trapped into the brick. It doesn’t allow it to breathe, so then you get the whole freeze/thaw. It thaws and it cracks. With murals, since you are talking a smaller area, the water still does have a way to work its way out from around the mural, particularly if the bottom is not paint, the water can make its way down and then come out and evaporate. So painting a small portion of a building façade, there is not as huge of a concern with the maintenance issue. It also, depending, and I think going toward setting a precedent, is that we want to make sure what elevations because we want to make sure it is an elevation that does not have major character defining features, so you are not hurting any of the architectural features. This one is a side elevation that has kind of been changed through the years. It is not really hurting any of the fabric, plus this one particularly some of it was already painted at some point because we know historically there were painted murals on that side, or painted signage at that point in time.

Chairman Zine said it sounds to me like somebody can use those same arguments against us in the future.

Mrs. Morgan said I think that’s where we would have to do a case by case basis. What type of elevation is it? How big is the mural? If we felt that that particular brick would have a, if there was a major concern with the size and location of it causing damage, I think we would have to take that on a case by case basis.

Chairman Zine said okay but the size of the mural you are really talking about the size of the lettering.

Mrs. Morgan said the painted portion, yes.

Chairman Zine said so it would be different if that whole thing was going to be painted.

Mrs. Morgan said yes.

Mrs. Christensen said would we be more inclined to approve this because historically there had been something there?

Mrs. Morgan said yes.

MOTION TO APPROVE COA WAS MADE BY: Brian Failing
MOTION SECONDED BY: Jeff Palmquist
AYES: Karen Christensen, Fawn Clarke-Peterson, Clara Diaz, Brian Failing, Jeff Palmquist, Charlie Zine
NAYS: None

A motion was made by Mr. Failing, seconded by Mr. Palmquist, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee, on the agenda for 8/28/2019. The motion carried.
Certificate of Appropriateness to install a mural on the elevation facing the river at 36 W. Downer Place

Ms. Evans said this project is also fully funded by the property owner on private property. It is a local artist, Pierre Losaro, who has designed, at the property owner’s request, a Mexican heritage mural. I’ve already been getting excitement from teachers wanting their kids to visit this mural for its cultural heritage. It is sort of an explosive collage of different points of pride according to the artist. This is/will be on side of the Sergio Furniture Store building facing east toward Treadwell Coffee.

Chairman Zine said is it completed now?

Ms. Evans said no. It is on pause. I spoke with the city and I spoke with the artist and I spoke with the property owner and we were all able to take 30 days to pause the project to seek approval before moving on.

Mrs. Christensen said I would like to speak in favor of this particularly because the building owners, Ernesto and Kit have a wonderful art collection. If you go into their store, they’ve got a wonderful Catrina collection. They go back and forth to Mexico on a regular basis to bring authentic art from vernacular artists in Mexico. I guess what I’m saying is that I feel that they have an educated taste and they are able to curate the quality of the mural. Personally, I think this is a great addition to the downtown and very much in keeping with trying to acknowledge that considerable investment that they’ve made in their property over the last many years.

Mr. Failing said what was the status of the brick originally? Was it painted, unpainted?

Ms. Evans said so half of it was painted and half of it has not been painted. According to the property owners, the city painted that portion something like 20 years ago. The mural sort of clearly extends into the unpainted portion.

Chairman Zine said so they didn’t apply for anything and I sent you a picture on this weeks ago when they started this. It was just a brown circle at the time. I was wondering what was going on. It does bother me that they didn’t do any type of application for it and they are painting on an unpainted surface. I like the mural. I have no problem at all with the design or the property owners, but it’s as if we are taking precedence here.

Mr. Sieben said I guess there are two issues. First off, they started it without going through the proper approval process. I think, hopefully now that they are educated on what the approval process is, I think it started out with, I’m not sure if it was the Zoning Inspector or Abby Schuler stopped by there, and I believe they kept working on it afterwards and then I believe John was able to talk to them and educate them on the process. I would hope that if they were to do anything else in the future that they would go through the process, start with Jen and do that. Like you said, it is a very nice mural, but again, you have the precedent where we don’t allow it on the, in fact when we did the mural regulations, we purposely did it that it wasn’t going to be on untreated surface. However, Jill has brought up, and John is here is now, that it may not harm the stone or the brick as much as maybe we originally thought.

Chairman Zine said but this is not just 4 inch wide letters. This is 12 feet wide. Again, I’m worried about the precedent. I don’t think these guys are going to do that again, but somebody else is going to come and start a mural without permission and they are going to paint on stone or brick that hasn’t been painted on. How do we justify denying
them if we approve this?

Mrs. Christensen said can I ask a question? We’ve talked previously about the need to educate downtown property owners and business owners about what the rules are and what the process is. In the way that we did many, many years ago, we regularly sent out information in both English and Spanish so that folks were at least aware that there was a process no matter what they were doing to the exterior of the building. So my question would be is where are we at in terms of that sort of education?

Mr. Sieben said well they were educated on it when they were first notified to stop painting.

Mrs. Christensen said I’m asking about being pro-active.

Mr. Sieben said well as you know, we don’t have the staff to do that so that really hasn’t been happening.

Ms. Evans said I’d like to add one thing. As far as the artist continuing after the notice, I later learned that they were unable to get ahold of the artist and that they were working separately so that the property owner had not had a chance to contact the artist and tell him to cease. There was a lack of communication there. It was not an intentional decision.

Mr. Curley said just more directly on trying to be pro-active, we are working on better communication tools with all of our customers to include downtown and some of our districts. We are implementing a new software system which should be launched in January of next year and we certainly could also use newsletters that we attempt to do quarterly to promote the same thing and maybe even target some of the historic districts, including downtown for those regulations. Despite the reduction in staff, I think we have some better tools that we have the opportunity to do that we should take advantage of.

Mr. Sieben said unfortunately we lost a downtown Planner just recently.

Ms. Clarke-Peterson said so aside from issues of deterioration because of paint in large areas, is there another reason that the current policy rules against paint on unpainted bricks?

Mrs. Morgan said I think another reason is just to ensure that you are not changing the architectural features and detracting from the historic character of the building. So that’s where placement of the mural is. Even a side elevation can have a lot of architectural decorative elements and if you put a mural, even if it is not over that, it can kind of detract if you have a really nice cornice and some nice molding over windows, it can kind of detract from that historic character of the building unless is was historically on there. I think that’s another reason to kind of just outright limit on unpainted brick besides the maintenance issue.

Ms. Clarke-Peterson said so this one for example, where it is just a wide swath of a flat color, that would be acceptable?

Mrs. Morgan said my thought on that is that there is not a lot of features on this side. There are the windows, but for the most part it is just brick. Sometimes you have also decorative brick, like the way they lay it, the way they bond it.
Ms. Clarke-Peterson said that was beautifully decorative, the texture and difference in the way it was placed.

Chairman Zine said that stone wall originally had ceramic brick on top of it, which fell off 15 years ago.

Mr. Failing said I would just echo what Charlie said. They started the mural without going through the process. I'm not arguing the merits of the art itself, but just that they started the process before and again the top half of the building was not painted, but like you said it had brick on it at one point.

Ms. Clarke-Peterson said so if the character of the brick is not great, it's okay if it's painted on?

Mrs. Morgan said not always. That's not the only element. It's kind of like, in my opinion, where it is a case by case basis. It's the character of the brick, the character of the whole façade, where it is located as opposed to like on a side elevation or an elevation very visible with other historic buildings around it that could detract from that. It wouldn't be like one specific element. It is kind of how all of those add up and kind of looking at all of those specific examples and is this one hurting all those, besides the building itself, the whole streetscape if it is on a street, the maintenance issues, just all those kind of adding up.

Mrs. Christensen said in the approval process, do we have any language that we put in terms of an expectation of about any of these murals to be maintained over time?

Mr. Palmquist said that was going to be my question too Karen. That's where I was going.

Mr. Sieben said they are in the guidelines regarding maintenance. I don't have it specifically on me, but that's part of the approval process is that they be maintained. Some of these do have a life cycle that they would be removed or whatever. If they start to be deteriorated, they should be removed then.

Mrs. Morgan said and that's another issue, the maintenance, of why people limit it on unpainted brick because then you also have to have some type of maintenance.

Ms. Clarke-Peterson said it would still have to be maintained on painted brick though, right?

Mrs. Morgan said right, but maintaining the paint is different than like an unpainted brick where you are just for the most part tuck pointing or making sure it is clean as opposed to paint fading or that type of issue.

Mrs. Christensen said it is my understanding if there is graffiti, if buildings are tagged with graffiti, who is responsible for the cleanup? Is it the city or is it the property owner?

Mr. Curley said it is ultimately the property owner. It is the property owner's responsibility. Sometimes the city steps in to cure it and fine the owner because of a concern for not doing it quick enough. If it is gang affiliated or something we want it down immediately. The city does step in, but ultimately it is the property owner's
Mrs. Christensen said Jen have we had issues to date regarding any tagging on any of the public art that’s been installed like on the utility boxes?

Ms. Evans said yes, two. One of the boxes was tagged and the city painted over that. It is up the artist to come to decide if she wants to repaint that area. So the anti-graffiti coding that was on there didn’t protect sufficiently from the sharpie. Then the same person with the same tag in a few different places on the Bunny Reece mural under the New York Bridge next to Indiro. What I found was that the city tried to remove that, but it didn’t come off all the way and I went down and checked it out and some of the sealant kind of rubbed off. Some of that may be because of moisture down there. Also there was graffiti on the Sam Cervantes mural as well at some point and that did come off pretty well.

Mrs. Christensen said so we need to be good about continuing to improve whatever technology we are using. In my mind, unfortunately, tagging is inevitable. This is an invitation. I’m supportive of murals, but I’m a little concerned that it is an invitation for tagging, but I hope that we would be on top of that and make sure that the protective sealant allows for the murals to be maintained.

Ms. Evans said that is something I see as becoming a bigger and bigger fraction of the budget for these projects. Also those sealants work to protect the mural itself. In my opinion, I think that painting on these previously unpainted brick with the sealant is a good idea and something that maybe we can look toward over time, but those sealants definitely protect with the UV sealants and just sealing the pigments.

Chairman Zine said I was in Detroit a couple of weekends ago and they had tons of murals there and they paint on bare brick. I’m wondering do we need to rethink that prohibition because some of the arguments that you said there are other elements that need to be considered when approving any mural like the pattern of the brick or the architectural elements. Wouldn’t that be sufficient as giving us enough leeway to approve painting on raw brick or not approve painting on raw brick? Again, I’m worried by precedent here. Somebody can come by and just start a mural and then say well these guys did it. What is our defense on that? Are we considering changing the unpainted brick prohibition?

Mrs. Morgan said I would think we could look into that, maybe do some additional research and maybe bring something like that to the DRC with regulations or maybe if the DRC feels that painting on brick is not something that you want staff to just outright be able to approve. Maybe that is something that, even if we have some guidelines, that’s something that we want to come before the DRC and not just make it a staff approval since there is more to consider. That is something we can look into and do some more research on.

Ms. Clarke-Peterson said I think it would be because if it is not a structural concern you can look at the other elements on the building on an individual basis because that’s obviously every individual situation. It kind of seems if it is not a deterioration issue to be kind of an overreach for private property owners to tell them that they can’t.

Mrs. Morgan said that’s true. I would think we would probably need to limit the size so not to get away from having too much where it might become more of a maintenance issue because the bigger you have it the further the water would have to be able to go...
to eventually evaporate.

Ms. Clarke-Peterson said we need some formula of how many square inches are connected. If it is open like letter, that's a different story.

Mrs. Morgan said I would agree. I would need to do some more research on the structural aspect.

Mr. Sieben said and like she said, like you are not covering architectural elements or impeding those. Like in this case, it is just a raw wall. We can take a look at it.

Ms. Clarke-Peterson said I think it is also worth noting why are we doing these murals. One reason is for the community and community place making and a sense of place for the people who are actually living here. Another is economic development, especially in the downtown. Murals and very, very popular right now and we are behind the curve on those, so not only would I chalk some of this up to growing pains in our second or third year of doing this at all, but we don’t have to totally reinvent the wheel. There are so many cities doing incredible murals and we can learn a lot from them. In this case, I encourage this mural to be completed. I think that it needs to be considered that there is miscommunication, growing pains of the first couple of years, people are trying to figure things out and what are the consequences of saying no to it? Again, is that worth a fear of setting precedent? I think things will sort of evolve as we go because it is the first few years. I think that it is a very positive statement about cultural heritage that we need to consider.

Mr. Sieben said and keep in mind that the Aurora Public Art Commission did approve this mural prior to you guys, but Charlie brings up a real good point. I think we would need to look at that provision of the murals.

Chairman Zine said and I think also, if we are going to be, if staff is going to look into that, we should just consider whether or not some walls should be painted period, even if they are just white. I’m thinking of the side of the Venue that faces Mundy Park. It’s got limestone, it’s got a couple of different kinds of bricks. There are several buildings that have different types of bricks and different colors of bricks that I think would be better off just painted.

Mr. Sieben said there used to be a building against it.

Chairman Zine said I understand that, so maybe you put a coat on that. I’m not advocating that, but I’m saying it should all be considered in the same topic here.

Mrs. Christensen said no.

Chairman Zine said you are saying no just to the Venue or just no to the idea?

Mrs. Christensen said the idea because I think part of this is maintaining our architectural heritage, the fact that you have changes over time, the fact that we can say the reason, and to take the Venue as an example, the reason that there’s this variation is because of what existed before there was a fire. That’s all part of telling the story of the neighborhood and I think maintaining that context and being able to tell the story, so it depends on staff expertise to maybe there’s at some point a call for some kind of a presentation about this, you know, how we are choosing things and why we are choosing them. I think it is really, really important to maintain the architectural
integrity of the neighborhood to the extent that we can because it is what makes this neighborhood interesting and distinctive. As soon as you take a paint brush, you are making everything uniform, which I think detracts from the character.

Chairman Zine said but again, that could be a decision that is approved by staff or disapproved by staff if it is a case by case basis. I'm looking for some consistency so that we don't get in this trick bag all the time.

Mrs. Christensen said and I'm going to argue against consistency because I think the case by case basis is a good way to consider this.

Chairman Zine said that gives us consistency if it requires a special approval. That's what I'm saying. I'm not saying that you can't do it and can do unfeathered. I'm saying if you want to do it, should we require a permit? And you need to get permission, whether it is a mural or just to paint the whole wall. But to have all these loopholes, the mural at LaQuinta was painted without any approval. I don't think we had an ordinance then for murals, but nonetheless, there are at least a couple of them now that are being painted without permission.

Mr. Failing said and to Karen's point, our building, 53 N. Broadway, originally, or for most of its history, there was a building next to it. They painted that wall and then when we restored the building back to its 1894 appearance they scrubbed that brick to get all the paint off. Again, that's another example of one that maybe we wouldn't want to paint.

Ms. Clarke-Peterson said I think the patina that's left over time is very important, like this scape that we are looking at where this mural might be, is one of my favorite stretches in the city, specifically because you have the white, you have all the colors and you have the ruff stone of all different sorts, almost like the Byzantine brickwork. It is gorgeous, bricks turned this way and that way making patterns. This one happens to be a little bit more random, but that's richness that I think it would be ashamed to require anything specific other than what it is. To tell someone they have to paint it because the bricks are different than other bricks in the scape or to say they can't touch it because it's not painted already, each piece has its own character that is rich and I think the individual approach is much better for the city overall.

Mr. Curley said I just wanted to suggest one things. Charlie mentioned as part of your deliberations, I think, a very important point that might help your group with the struggle of precedence of setting nature of this decision. For a good portion of the history of this building, it was clad with another wythe of brick, so we are literally looking at the interior wythe that was not exposed for portions of this building. This building has had a lot of history. I'm sure some of this wall was originally an exterior wall, but a really good portion of this history was this was an inner wythe, which was never exposed for a good portion of this history and the likelihood of us running into this exact situation again is, I would suggest, slim.

MOTION TO APPROVE COA WAS MADE BY: Fawn Clarke-Peterson
MOTION SECONDED BY: Clara Diaz
AYES: Karen Christensen, Fawn Clarke-Peterson, Clara Diaz, Brian Failing, Jeff Palmquist, Charlie Zine
NAYS: None

A motion was made by Ms. Clarke-Peterson, seconded by Mrs. Diaz, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Building, Zoning, and Economic
Development Committee, on the agenda for 8/28/2019. The motion carried.

19-0739 Certificate of Appropriateness to install a mural on the retaining wall located on the south end of Parking Lot B at 75 Water Street (COA Public Art Commission - 19-0739 / AU22/3-19.128-FCOA - JM - Ward 2)

Ms. Evans said we will no longer be doing this project this year. The artist has decided that he doesn’t want to do it because we did not have time for a RFP process. It was going to be privately funded at some point, so then I did put it through the DST and then those private funds are not happening. What I would like to do with this space next year is to have different artists paint 10 feet at a time. The concrete blocks are poured in 10 foot sections that are 4½ to 6 feet high, at least on the south retaining wall. It is my intent this winter to put out a RFP for minor stipends. There are a couple of ideas running around. One is that they would be some sort of cultural heritage in theme. When this went to the DST, the artist was going to do this design and now it has very recently been pulled.

Mrs. Christensen said I’m wondering when you do the RFP, because of the proximity to the river, is there some way to incorporate something about the flora and fauna of the river or the natural history of the river?

Ms. Evans said I wasn’t looking in that direction in this area because we were looking at doing those kinds of murals along the Riverwalk between New York and Galena. The river was definitely something we were thinking about. It doesn’t have to be that way. We’re just looking for some minor structure sort of for these different themes that are coming up.

Mrs. Christensen said well the only objection, and Jeff and Charlie I’m kind of looking to you for this, I had a thought with that design because I don’t know if it really honors the individual who was the Fox, who was a real person and the idea of turning it into this kind of cartoon character I actually thought was somewhat disrespectful of his memory. Maybe I’m being too philosophical about this, but I was concerned about turning it into a cartoon character when it was a real person.

Ms. Evans said I recognize that there was a lot of distance between the artist and the kind of now historical figure and a dearth of research done by the artist.

Mr. Palmquist said Karen thanks for the help. I didn’t put it together that this was that. I thought of this mural really as whimsy, not as something that related, so I now see and agree with your caution of where that’s going.

Chairman Zine said so this one will be withdrawn then.

This COA was Withdrawn.

19-0740 Certificate of Appropriateness to move the “Blues Mural” from 6 E. Downer Place to the north elevation of 33 S. Broadway

Ms. Evans said I’m proposing that we move the Blue’s mural to face the Venue over Mundy Park. This would be on the north facing wall of the second story of 33 S. Broadway. I’m suggesting we install this on the second story because I’m concerned about vandalism and because it is a coated canvas it would be easy to cut. It can be seen from the street. It can be seen from the park, especially if you are closer to the Venue building.
Chairman Zine said it was located pretty high on the Silverplate building too wasn’t it?

Ms. Evans said it was.

MOTION TO APPROVE COA WAS MADE BY: Karen Christensen
MOTION SECONDED BY: Fawn Clarke-Peterson
AYES: Karen Christensen, Fawn Clarke-Peterson, Clara Diaz, Brian Bailing, Jeff Palmquist, Charlie Zine
NAYS: None

A motion was made by Mrs. Christensen, seconded by Ms. Clarke-Peterson, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Building, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee, on the agenda for 8/28/2019. The motion carried.

PENDING

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Sieben said your earlier question on the kiosks, I believe they are going up next week.

Chairman Zine said I had one simple thing. I run downtown all the time. On the side of the YWCA building, the Aurora Business Center, they have a big garbage can right there, a big dumpster.

Mr. Sieben said are you talking about on the west side of the building?

Chairman Zine said on the west side of the building right where you enter the ramp to go down to the river and right across the street the enclosure at Waubonsee that looks huge.

Mr. Sieben said we’ll bring it up to Trevor. Trevor is our downtown dumpster guy. I see that.

Mr. Failing said so the building next to the DST, on the brick there is a relief mural of some children. What’s the story on that?

Chairman Zine said it was the Savings and Loan.

Mr. Curley said it was the logo for the old Savings and Loan. The property line is actually behind that veneer and that relief that you are looking at so that actually is city property where that decorative element is. Obviously we intended to retain it.

A motion was made by Fawn Clarke-Peterson, seconded by Brian Failing, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote. Chairman Zine adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT
A motion was made by Ms. Clarke-Peterson, seconded by Mr. Failing, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote. Chairman Zine adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

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