

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT Executive Department



MEETING DATE:	November 12, 2024
PROJECT:	Approval of Public Art Committee Recommendation to Award the Public Art Commission at Squire Pope Welcome Center to Brandy Scholl (Fiscal Impact of \$30,800)
PROJECT MANAGER:	Chris Forster, MPA, CPFO, CGFM, Assistant Town Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

The Public Art Committee (PAC) voted unanimously to recommend the commission designed by Ms. Brandy Scholl with the additional recommendation that the engraved river on the concrete base be of neutral color.

BACKGROUND:

The Public Art Committee was established in October 2023 to carry out the Council approved public art policy. The committee is responsible for making recommendations to Council on publicly funded public art or art to be placed on public property.

In May the PAC voted to create a Public Artist roster of pre-approved artists that may submit proposals on calls for public art. This Town of Bluffton artist roster consists of over 50 artists, local and national artists that work in a variety of mediums.

In June the committee voted to put out a call for original pieces of works to be installed outside at the Squire Pope Welcome Center. The PAC sought submissions from four artists.

DISCUSSION:

At the PAC meeting on September 24th, 2024 the committee heard from four artists about the inspiration for and the description of their original art. After a discussion the committee voted to recommend the commission by Ms. Brandy Scholl.

Ms. Scholl's piece is a steel spherical structure, of no more than four feet in height, with laser cut drawings reflective of the property, history and natural surroundings. It is placed on a concrete base with the outline of the May River carved into it.

As described by Ms. Scholl, "The sculpture draws inspiration from Bluffton's historical narrative, blending elements from the past with the enduring charm of the present. The stainless steel, highly reflective sphere at its core not only captures the surrounding environment but also

symbolizes the connection between Bluffton's past and its present. The intricate line drawing laser cut into the sphere reflects the area's natural beauty, the legacy of the Wright family, and the rich cultural heritage of the Gullah Geechee people.

This piece was designed to tell a story, both literally and figuratively. The reflective surface mirrors the landscape and the people who engage with it, creating a dynamic interaction that changes with time, light, and perspective. The sculpture invites viewers to see Bluffton through a new lens, where history and modern life coexist in harmony. Through this artwork, I aim to encapsulate the essence of Bluffton—a place where history is preserved, natural beauty is revered, and a strong sense of community endures.”

NEXT STEPS:

Approve, approve with conditions or deny the recommendation to award the commission to Brandy Scholl.

Attachments:

1. Recommended Art Proposal
2. Motion

Squire Pope Carriage House

Public Art Design Concept by Brandy Scholl



Project Narrative:

My approach to the theme of this project was born from Bluffton's Vision Statement:

“

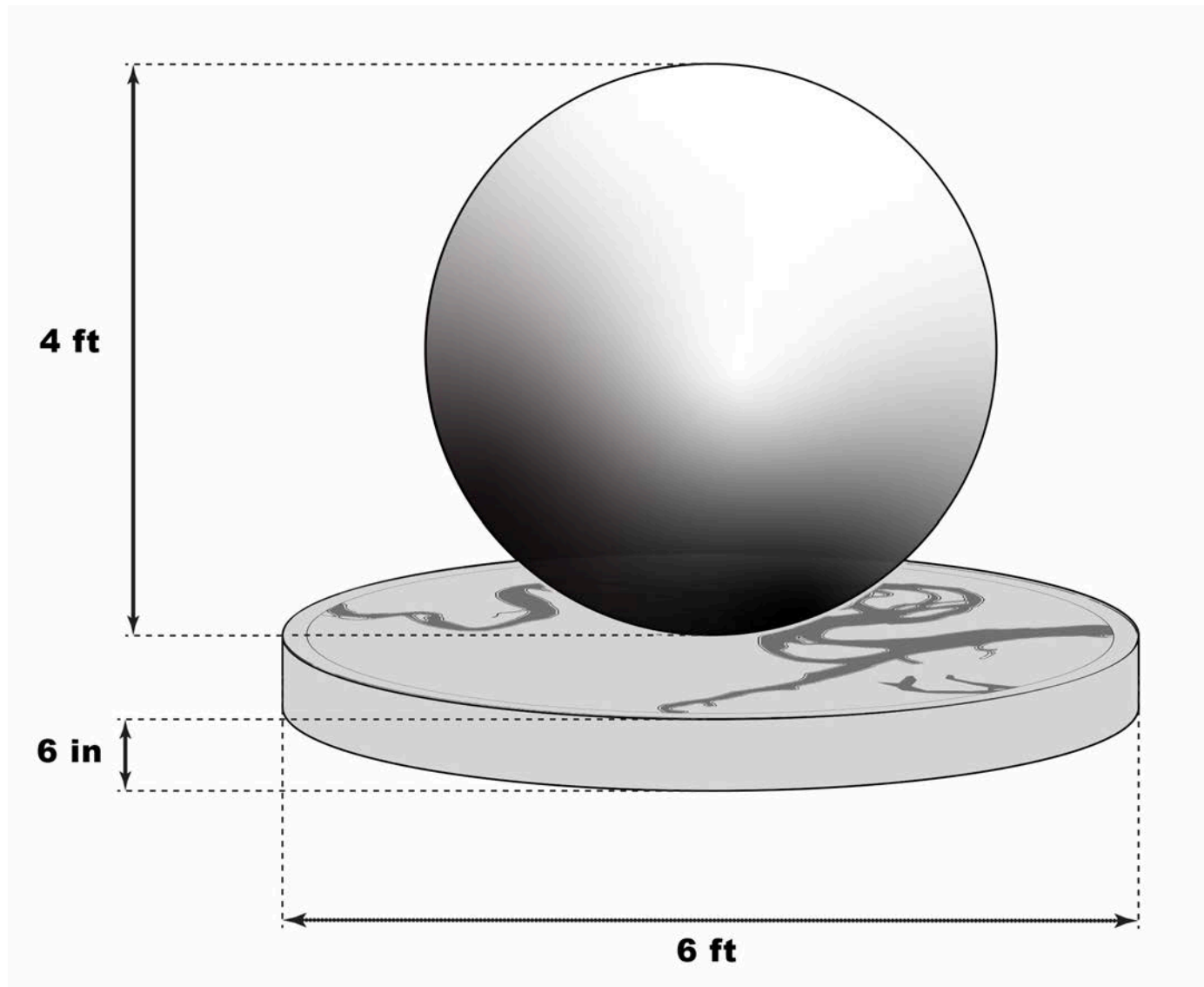
The Heart of the Lowcountry, a Town that appreciates the past, focuses on today and is planning together for a greater future.

Bluffton has a rich history, serving as a sanctuary where time seems to slow down, allowing one to fully appreciate its abundant natural beauty. Nestled beside the tranquil May River, the Squire Pope House was originally constructed as a summer retreat—a refuge for the Pope family and their descendants seeking peace and protection. This location perfectly embodies the timeless qualities that have made Bluffton a cherished home for generations.

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Two-Part Design:



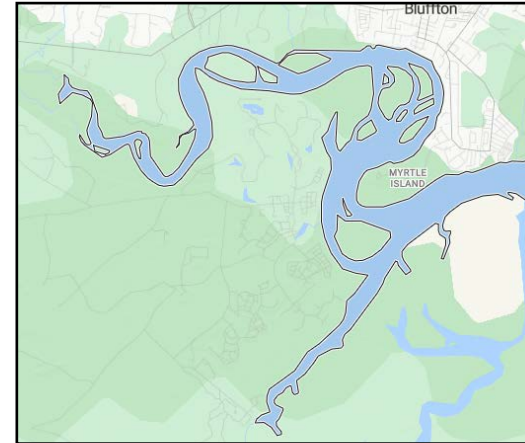
Part 1:

Concrete Slab of May River

- ✿ The concrete slab will be the base of the sculpture.
 - ✿ I chose this for the foundation of the design because, historically, the May River was the source of much of Bluffton's trade, travel, and food.
- ✿ The river design will be carved into the concrete, roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ " - $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep.
- ✿ A hole will be in the center for the Steel Sphere support structure.
- ✿ Possible internal rebar structure for support

Community Engagement:

- ✿ The outer edge of the disc will have writing that represents a phrase or slogan that best represents Bluffton
- ✿ This can be the Towns Vision Statement
- ✿ *OR* gather suggestions from Town citizens, and have them vote on their favorite one.





Color Option:

A secondary option is to use muted dark blue colored concrete to highlight the river.

Technique Example Image (on right):
My previous public art project *Wheels in Motion* using the same carving technique. This is a 3ft x 3ft wide disc. One of ten discs. Completed in 2017.



Part 2: Hollow Steel Sphere

- ✿ Stainless Steel
- ✿ #316 alloy steel - used for coastal areas. Highly resistant to corrosion.
- ✿ 2.5mm thick walls
- ✿ Mirror Polished surface
- ✿ Will beautifully reflect the surrounding area
- ✿ Laser cut drawing that wraps around the entire sphere to create a 360° image.



Laser Cut - Line Drawing Rough Sketch



Image Includes:

- ✿ Natural landscapes of May River and surrounding areas
- ✿ Large Oak tree with Spanish moss
- ✿ Native animals:
 - ✿ Heron, pelicans, dolphins, crabs, seagulls, oysters beds, etc.
- ✿ Iconic shrimp boat
- ✿ Spartina grass, salt water marsh
- ✿ Dock and crab trap buoys

Important Imagery:

- ✿ Gullah Geechee man throwing a traditionally made cast net
- ✿ Mary Morris Wright and her Granddaughter, Louisa Harrison.



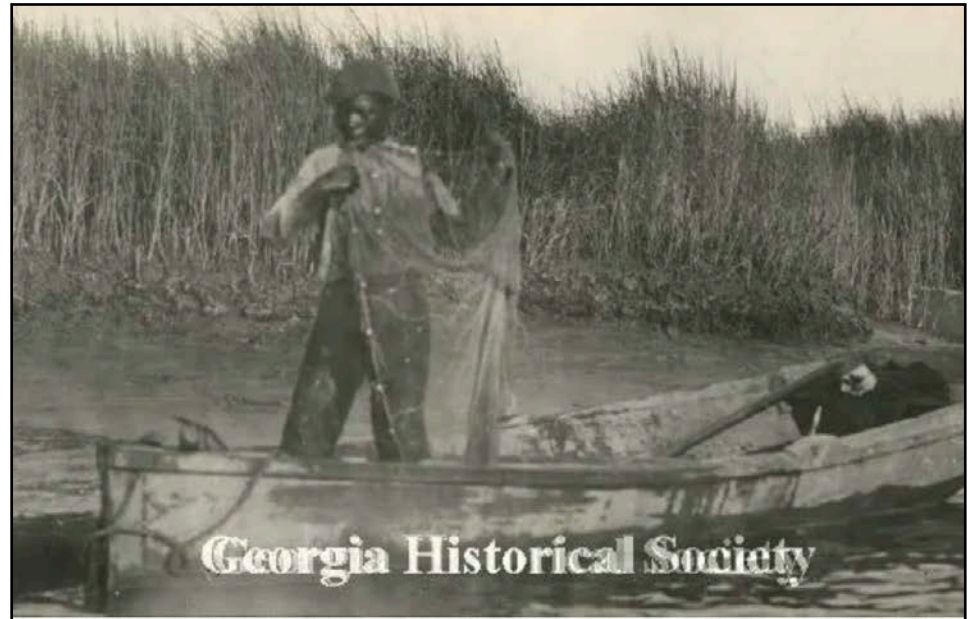
Included family members of the Wright Family:

- ☼ Mary Morris Wright
- ☼ Louisa Harrison

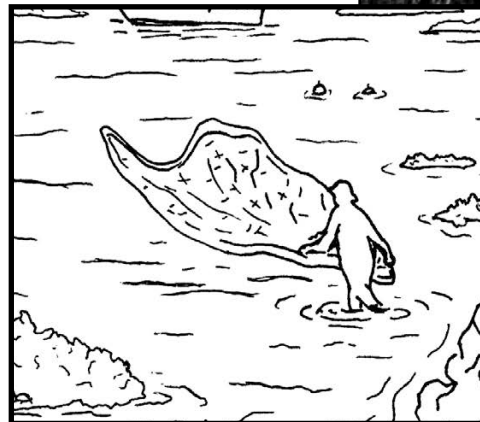


Gullah Geechee Representation:

- ✿ The Gullah Geechee people brought and established a rich heritage of African cultural traditions to the Lowcountry, including crafts taught for many generations.
- ✿ Cast nets, basket weaving, and textile arts.
- ✿ The included imagery of a man throwing a cast net is to represent the Gullah people and their contribution to this land and its vibrant culture.



On left: A boy holds a cast net in Savannah, Georgia, date unknown. Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.



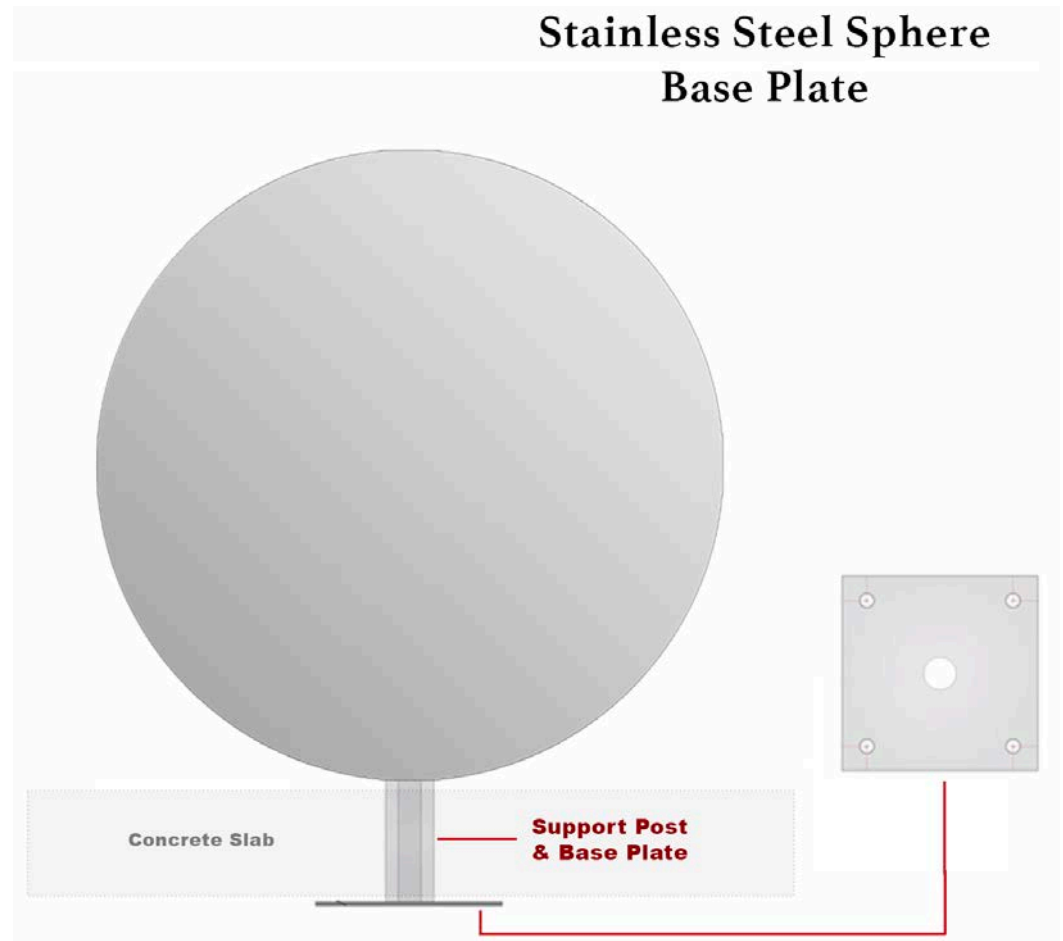
Installation:

- ✿ Support post:
 - ✿ Male/Female tube structures
 - ✿ Part 1 welded to sphere base
 - ✿ Part 2 welded to base plate
 - ✿ 6" x 6" Dia.
 - ✿ 3mm thick
- ✿ Base plate
 - ✿ 12" Dia.
 - ✿ 10mm thick

There will need to be a solid foundation underneath the concrete slab.

Maintenance:

- ✿ Sphere cleaned with a polishing cloth 1-2x month
- ✿ Concrete slab pressure washed 1x year



Public Engagement:



- ✿ Mirrored surface reflects its surrounding, creating an elegant, non-obstructive public art design.
- ✿ Encourages people to interact with the sphere, taking photos, touching, etc.
- ✿ Children will enjoy finding all the little animals and hidden details within the laser cut design.
- ✿ The phrase and/or slogan on the outer edge of the concrete disc motivates people to circle the piece and experience all sides.
- ✿ Structurally safe.
- ✿ Encourages education and conversations about Bluffton and its history.

Recommended Motion

Approval of Public Art Committee Recommendation to Award the Public Art Commission at Squire Pope Welcome Center to Brandy Scholl (Fiscal Impact of \$30,800)— Chris Forster, Assistant Town Manager

“I make a motion to Approve the Public Art Committee Recommendation to Award the Public Art Commission at Squire Pope Welcome Center to Brandy Scholl.”