



Agenda Abstract

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Date:	Aug. 14, 2023
Department:	Public Space and Sustainability
Agenda Section:	Consent
Public hearing:	No
Date of public hearing:	N/A

PRESENTER/INFORMATION CONTACT

Stephanie Trueblood, Public Space and Sustainability Manager

ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED

Subject: Selection of Artwork from Uproar Public Art Festival for Town Hall Campus

Attachments:

Photos of artwork with artist information and statement

Summary:

Last December, the town received a donation of \$20,000 from Tom Stevens to purchase artwork to start a sculpture garden/walk at the Town Hall Campus. The town board accepted the donation which has very few limitations other than its use at the Town Hall property. The money is currently placed in a restricted account.

In Summer 2023, Orange County hosted the Uproar Public Art Festival, the first public art festival of its kind in North Carolina. The festival includes 60 pieces of work from southeast artists installed for one month in the downtown areas of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough. It includes cash prizes for artists who are selected through a juried competition and people's choice voting. In conversations with Katie Murray, Director of the Orange County Arts Commission, town staff realized that the festival presented an excellent opportunity to find a piece of art for permanent installation at Town Hall and the town's commitment would be an additional incentive for the Uproar artists.

A team was formed to help with the selection process. The selection team includes Gail Cooley, Hillsborough Arts Council member and arts supporter/enthusiast, Tom Stevens, artist and Arts Council member, Mollie Thomas, Executive Director of the Hillsborough Arts Council, Mayor Jenn Weaver, and Stephanie Trueblood, Public Space and Sustainability Manager.

The selection team met in person in early June to review all 60 pieces of art in the festival and develop a shortlist of possibilities for Town Hall. Town Hall is in the Hillsborough Historic District and therefore a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic District Commission (HDC) is required for any exterior change to the property. The HDC has design standards for art. The selection team reviewed the design standards and developed the shortlist with the standards in mind. Many of the artworks in Uproar are not meant as permanent installations and others are not a great fit for the Town Hall site. Specifically, the team looked for pieces that would have appropriate massing and scale, compatible materials, would respect the historic character of the Town Hall property, and would not pose any type of safety threat to the public or site. Once the festival kicked off in mid-July, each of the selection team members visited the artworks in person and sent their top choices to staff to compile and tally.

The selection team recommends *Perpetual Bond* by TJ Christiansen, a Durham, North Carolina artist. The artwork is 8' wide, 8' long, and 14' tall made of reclaimed steel and depicts a mother and child giraffe.

The artist shared the following information about the piece: *"It is truly amazing the bond that forms between a mother and child right from the start, a relationship of love that lasts forever. I became inspired to create a mother giraffe with a teenage calf standing together and showing that no matter how much time passes by the love between a mother and child will always exist. This piece focuses on the Western African Giraffe, who is now on the endangered species list due to intensive farming that is taking away from these animals' habitats."*

The piece would likely be installed on the south side of Town Hall toward Orange Street, but not directly in front of the building as per HDC standards. The town should consult the artist on final placement. The artwork will serve as the first piece of a sculpture garden/walk on the Town Hall campus, making Town Hall a destination for visitors to enjoy public art as Tom Stevens originally envisioned.

Financial impacts:

\$20,000 in donated funds are available for the purchase and associated installation costs. The cost of the artwork is \$15,000.

Staff recommendation and comments:

No additional comments

Action requested:

Approve use of the donated funds for the purchase of Perpetual Bond by TJ Christiansen to be installed at Town Hall contingent upon Historic District Commission review and approval.