

Art Element for Xing Hua Development in Town Center

Update for Arts Council – 12.09.20

Background:

In February 2020, preliminary plans for a mixed-used development at 2750 77th Avenue SE and 2885 78th Avenue SE (“Xing Hua Development”) were submitted to the City for design review. Renderings for the plaza areas showed two sculpture installations, prompting staff to reach out to the developers to learn more about plans for art on the site and discuss the art evaluation process for private development. (Exhibit 1) On Thursday, April 30, 2020, staff met virtually with Stephanie Brucart of SiteWorkshop, Lu Zhang of Johnston Architects, and Nicole Gaudette (formerly with COMI Community Planning & Development department) to discuss these art elements and provided the following suggestions for incorporating art into the public plazas:

1. Independently commission an artist to create new or acquire completed works of art to install at the site.
2. Purchase a work of art from the Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery to install at the site.
3. Re-site an existing work of public art at the site.

Staff explained that any of these options would require different levels of engagement with the Mercer Island Arts Council.

On July 27, Lu Zhang updated staff that the property owner was interested in suggestions 2 and 3 and requested pricing information for *Scheherazade* by Pasha Stinson and *Asteroid Sling* by John Geise, currently for sale in the Outdoor Sculpture Gallery. The owner was also interested in the opportunity to re-site *Chaise* and/or *Bench* by John Hoge. Staff responded on August 25 with cost information and on September 15 with details about the process for bringing requests to the Arts Council for approval.

Zhang contacted staff on November 24 to inquire about the possibility of re-siting two other works in the permanent collection: *Hope* by Mark Heisel (installed at the picnic shelter in Aubrey Davis Park) or *Gift of Reflection* by David Govedare (installed at the East Mercer Way Boat Launch). At that time, Zhang also indicated that, due to budget constraints, the owner was not interested in pursuing a purchase from the Outdoor Sculpture Gallery anymore.

Recommended Action:

- Direct staff to do one of the following:
 - Deny the request to re-site a work from the public art collection at the future Xing Hua Development and propose an alternative option (to be identified in consultation with the Arts Council)
 - Conduct additional work (contacting artists/donors, identifying costs, etc.) to facilitate one or more of the re-siting requests