



ARTS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Item 4
April 20, 2022
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	Public Art Conservation: <i>Fire Flower</i> by Gizel Berman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive staff report.	

STAFF:	Sarah Bluvas, Economic Development Coordinator	
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Salim Nice	
EXHIBITS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Images of <i>Fire Flower</i> Damage – 11.24.20 2. Xing Hua Development – <i>Fire Flower</i> Mock-up 	

SUMMARY

On November 24, 2020, the City learned that the sculpture *Fire Flower* by Gizel Berman had been vandalized (Exhibit 1). The bronze was previously installed at Mercer Park (former Farmers World Insurance Building), and it is believed that the piece was targeted in an attempted theft for its metal. The City contracted with ArtSite, an independent conservator, to remove the damaged piece from Mercer Park and store it at the City Shop facility in December 2020, where the piece remains.

PLANS FOR RESTORATION

The City will contract with ArtSite to restore the bronze before the end of 2022. ArtSite has already evaluated the piece and plans to deliver the sculpture to their fabricator in June for restoration. After the bronze repair is complete, staff will coordinate with ArtSite to either return the piece to City storage until it can be reinstalled or to re-site the piece at a new location. Upon reinstallation, ArtSite will also build a new base for the sculpture, as the original base was destroyed during the attempted theft.

UPDATE ON RE-SITING *FIRE FLOWER* TO XING HUA DEVELOPMENT

At the February 23, 2021, Special Meeting of the Arts Council, the board endorsed moving forward with re-siting *Fire Flower* to the site of the future development planned for [2750 77th Ave SE and 2885 78th Ave SE](#) (“Xing Hua development”). The piece was incorporated into the project’s design proposal (Exhibit 2), which was reviewed and approved by the Mercer Island Design Commission in 2021. However, the Xing Hua development has not broken ground as of April 2022, so staff updated the developer team on the status of repairs and plans to follow up again with the developer team once the restoration is complete. If the developer team determines they no longer want to install the sculpture on the future mixed-use site, staff will return to the Arts Council to explore other options for permanently reinstalling *Fire Flower*.

FUNDING FOR RESTORATION + RE-SITING WORK

Fire Flower is insured by the City, and the City Attorney’s Office opened a claim with the Washington Cities Insurance Authority (WCIA) in 2020 to seek reimbursement for the total restoration and re-siting costs. The City has a \$5,000 deductible, and the total insured value for *Fire Flower* is \$26,530.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will return in July with an update on the repairs as well as any new information regarding installing the piece at the forthcoming Xing Hua development.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive staff report.