



## CITY OF MILPITAS AGENDA REPORT (AR)

<b>Item Title:</b>	Per recommendation of the Milpitas Arts Commission, move to approve James Dinh's Circle of Time Public Art Design for Higuera Adobe Park
<b>Category:</b>	Consent Calendar-Community Services and Sustainable Infrastructure
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	11/5/2019
<b>Staff Contact:</b>	Renee Lorentzen, 408-586-3409
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Per recommendation of the Milpitas Arts Commission, move to approve James Dinh's Circle of Time Public Art Design for Higuera Adobe Park.

### **Background:**

In 2018, the City of Milpitas Arts Commission issued an open call Request for Proposals for a free-standing public art sculpture to be located in Higuera Adobe Park and placed in honor of longtime Milpitas Arts Commissioner Larry Voellger.

Mr. Voellger was the founding president of the Milpitas Alliance for the Arts, integral in establishing the Art in Your Park program in Milpitas and advocating for high quality multicultural performing and visual arts in Milpitas. At the time of his death in 2015, his family requested donations to the Milpitas Public Art Fund for an art piece in his name, in lieu of flowers. A total of \$2,375 was donated by Mr. Voellger's family and friends for an art piece.

At its August 16, 2016 regular meeting, as part of its approval of the Arts Commission Work Plan, the City Council approved a public art project, at a location to be determined, to be funded for \$30,000, plus the donations received in memory of Mr. Voellger.

At its September 26, 2016 meeting, the Arts Commission chose Higuera Adobe Park as the location for the artwork in Mr. Voellger's memory.

Following the open call, the City received nine proposals.

At its November 26 regular meeting, the Arts Commission reviewed the proposals and voted (6-1) for two artists, Carla Moss and Colin Selig, to submit maquettes (scale models of the proposed artwork). The maquettes were received and presented to the Commission at the January meeting. It was decided that the Voellger family would be a stakeholder in the project, in addition to the general public.

At its March 25, 2019 regular meeting, the Arts Commission was informed that the Voellger family had viewed the maquettes and formally requested that a third artist from the initial nine, James Dinh, also be invited to submit a maquette. As the RFP allows flexibility with regard to artist selection, the Commission voted unanimously to honor the family's request and asked to include Mr. Dinh's maquette in public voting.

All three maquettes were subsequently displayed at various City events and facilities in May and June 2019, including at Higuera Adobe on May 23, 2019. Comment cards were made available for members of the public to cast votes for their preferred design. The designs were also posted on the City website, with an opportunity for residents to vote online. A total of 191 votes were received, including 36 from residents who live in the immediate vicinity of Higuera Adobe Park.

Mr. Dinh's "Circle of Time" was the overwhelming favorite of the Higuera Adobe neighbors, winning 29 of 36 votes, or 81% of the votes of those most likely to pass the artwork on a regular basis. "Circle of Time" was also

the overall winner, with about 40 percent of the public votes. Mr. Voellger's family also viewed the three maquettes and indicated their strong preference for Mr. Dinh's design, which they felt best honored Mr. Voellger's vision of public art in the parks.

**Analysis:**

Sculptor James Dinh's "Circle of Time" is a functional artwork that can serve as additional park seating and a gathering point in the park.

The main element is a granite millstone of the type that would have been used on a California rancho. The center of the millstone wheel is a window with lasercut bronze tule reeds in the opening. The piece is mounted on a circular concrete pedestal which has a tule reed pattern imprinted into the concrete.

The tule motif is particularly appropriate to the place, as the adobe and park land were originally part of José Higuera's Rancho Los Tularcitos, which translates to "place of the little tules." Tule reeds were an important resource for the Muwekma Ohlone Indians, who used them as building material for their homes and small boats.

Mr. Dinh is a sculptor and printmaker, with a background in landscape architecture. His public art commissions include works for San Antonio, Texas; Santa Rosa, Los Angeles County, Garden Grove, Hacienda Heights, La Verne and Westminster, California.

At its August 26, 2019 special meeting, the Arts Commission unanimously selected "Circle of Time" to be recommended to City Council.

On September 9, 2019, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Commission also voted unanimously to recommend Mr. Dinh's design.

**Policy Alternatives:**

**Alternative 1:** Do not approve James Dinh's "Circle of Time" as public artwork for Higuera Adobe Park.

Pros: None.

Cons: Not approving the recommended design would significantly delay the installation of an artwork honoring Larry Voellger.

Reason not recommended: Not approving the recommended design would be contrary to the recommendations by the Arts Commission and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Commission, and to the clear public preference for this piece and to the express wishes of Mr. Voellger's family.

**Fiscal Impact:**

The art budget is \$30,000, funded through the Public Art Fund and \$2,375 in memorial donations made to the Public Art Fund to honor Mr. Voellger.

**Recommendation:**

Per recommendation of the Milpitas Arts Commission, move to approve James Dinh's "Circle of Time" as public artwork for Higuera Adobe Park.

**Attachments:**

1. James Dinh Design Proposal for Higuera Adobe Park
2. 08-26-2019 Arts Commission meeting minutes