



## CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

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**MEETING DATE:** 03/06/2025

**REQUESTER:** James Briggs, Park Development Manager

**PRESENTERS:** James Briggs, Park Development Manager  
Andy Couch, Executive Director-Firehouse Art Center

**ITEM TITLE:** PRESENTATION OF PROPOSAL TO DISPLAY PUBLIC ART IN LIONS PARK

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### DISCUSSION:

The Firehouse Art Center is located on the southeast corner of Lions Park, at the intersection of Flood Avenue and McNamee Street. It has served the Norman community for decades by offering high-quality, affordable classes, programs, and outreach aimed at all types of artist communities. Part of this work has recently involved re-connecting with a public art program at the University of Oklahoma. The idea came about in 2023 when the Norman Arts Council proposed working with the OU School of Visual Arts and the City of Norman (via the Firehouse) to bring back a project where an OU sculpture class has their students propose public art pieces to a committee of members from the partner organizations, who choose some for fabrication. This is a scaled-down version of how such works of art are selected in public settings outside of academia. The selected pieces are then fabricated by students and placed on display in a public space for a set amount of time. OU has now received funding for the Spring 2025 semester project.

The park area around the Firehouse is already used to display some art pieces, which have been in place for several years. Some pieces have been removed over the years, and the concrete pads where they stood are still in the park. To prepare for the current project, the Firehouse Director, the OU sculpture professors, and the Parks and Recreation staff met at the park to discuss re-using any old concrete pads and adding a few more for the current number of sculptures being produced. The proposed pads are all located in the southern  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the park and are mainly along the rock-lined stream channel that divides the park in that area (see map).

A total of 5 new pads and three re-used pads are proposed. The sculpture pieces will be displayed in late April and last through the end of the academic year. Future classes will be able to use the pads for other temporary displays, and when not being used, the pads will be blank 5'X5' concrete pads in the park in areas not commonly used for sports or events often hosted in Lions Park. The sculptures will also be reviewed to ensure they meet the same standards for public art used when selecting pieces for the various Norman Forward Projects, public murals, bike racks, and other public pieces. All installation dates and removals will be coordinated with

the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure all other park uses and features are not disturbed or damaged during those times.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Park Commission allow the Director to approve the placement of temporary public art at Lions Park provided through the Firehouse, OU, and the Norman Art Council.