


Agenda Report Reviewed by:
City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGEND ITEM

Meeting Date: April 20, 2021
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Public Arts Committee
Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director
Subject: Ned Kahn Revised Art Proposal
Recommendation : Receive Presentation, Approve Revised Proposal, and Authorize Staff to Amend Contract
Funding: Currently Budgeted: Yes No N/A
Net General Fund Cost: N/A
Art-In Lieu Fund (203) Amount: \$50,000 (\$45,000 for Ned Kahn, \$5,000 for City costs)

Account Code 203-00-00-4210 Costs authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable) AK (verified by Administrative Services Department)

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:

The item tonight is to request Receive Presentation, Approve Revised Proposal, and Authorize Staff to Amend Contract

BACKGROUND:

At its February 2, 2021 meeting, the City Council reviewed the revised art sculpture concept the “Sebastopol Spire”, by Ned Kahn, which was proposed to be located at the Morris Street/Johnson Street intersection on the east side of the City’s Public Works Corporation Yard site. The Council unanimously support the new sculpture, but requested staff, PAC, and the artist review more prominent locations for the sculpture.

DISCUSSION:

The new proposed site is to the northwest of the Highway 12 bridge, on City-owned property where the new trail connection from the community Center and Americorp Trail will connect through to Sebastopol Avenue.

This site is the most similar to the original approved location (at the northeast of the Highway 12 Bridge) but is on City-owned property, and will not entail coordination with CalTrans, which proved to be a barrier to the original site. While this site will have a conservation easement with Sonoma County Ag + Open Space, they have indicated that this can be included in the final easement documents, which are currently being finalized. [The alternative site originally reviewed with Ag + Open Space and Councilmember Hinton was southwest of the bridge at Tomodachi Park, already has a conservation easement, which does not allow artwork, and would likely not be approved by Ag + Open Space.].

The Artist is proposing that the location be set back a bit into the City park area rather than directly adjacent to the right-of-way, so that artwork can be enjoyed as a 'place' as well as a landmark.

The sculpture will still be visible from the east side of the bridge to vehicles (see images below) and the height will be taller than the office buildings to the west so will stand apart. The proposed location will also be conducive to pedestrians walking along the trail as a place to rest, reflect, and engage with the piece in a more peaceful setting than if it were directly adjacent to the roadway.

The Artist's statement regarding the piece and the proposed location is below:

Sebastopol Spire

Ned Kahn, April 2021

I am very excited about the new proposed site for the Sebastopol Spire. Of all the sites we have considered over the last few years, this site is by far the best. Located in the meadow adjacent to the northwest corner of the bridge, this site is very visible from Hwy 12 but feels like a place that will encourage people to visit. A planned new trail into the Laguna will connect the meadow to other trails and will encourage pedestrian visitors. I propose to install a series of benches to encourage people to sit and observe the artwork interacting with the wind.

I have provided a series of renderings to show the visibility of the artwork from Hwy 12. Heading west towards town, a first glimpse of the top of the artwork will appear above the trees as one begins to cross the concrete bridge. Halfway across the bridge, the top half of the artwork will come into view. A little farther, the entire structure will reveal itself. This sequential reveal will add to the drama of seeing the artwork. Frederick Law Olstead, the designer of Central Park in New York and Golden Gate Park in SF often wrote about the importance of successive views and the sequential experience of landscape. His advice was to not show all your cards at once, create a sense of mystery. I believe the proposed site gives us the opportunity to create a sequential reveal that will allow the artwork to function as a gateway into the town but also create a wonderful place where people can relax and connect with nature.

Prior Review

The Public Art Committee (PAC) Chair and Vice-Chair met with the artist and Planning Director at the site to review the new location in person. The Public Art Committee then reviewed the new location at its April 7, 2021, regular meeting, and unanimously voted in favor not only of this site, but also of the proposed location set back from the roadway. They felt the ability of pedestrians to comfortably engage with the sculpture from being further from the roadway noise, while still being visible from east of the bridge to those coming into town, was preferred to having it closer to the roadway, where both the traffic noise and PG&E utility lines would be more disruptive visually and acoustically to enjoyment of the sculpture. The PAC had previously voted unanimously (February 3, 2021) to explore the location at the east entry to town near the bridge.

Aerial Rendering and Key to where views of column in below images are taken



View of Column from Highway 12/Sebastopol Avenue coming into the City



View of Sculpture looking north from Sebastopol Avenue (Trail will be along west side of meadow area)





Similar Materials at Hotel Sebastopol Site installation



Detail of Column

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

This project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) under Section 15303(e), which exempts minor accessory structures.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to scheduled meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This project is funded by Sebastopol's 'percent for art' fee, where major projects either provide on-site public art, or pay an in-lieu fee which the City uses for public art projects in the community. These monies cannot be used for other purposes.

The project would cost the same as the original budget (\$45,000 for Ned Kahn's work, and \$5,000 for any site modifications). This is currently in the adopted budget, and the current executed contract with the Artist.

Additionally, the artist has expressed an interest in additional fundraising for benches to be included near the site of the artwork to further enhance the site. This would require coordination with City staff but no additional funding.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the presentation and approve by minute order the new concept and site, and authorize staff to execute a contract amendment with Ned Kahn to reflect the revised location, concept, and timeline (no change to the contract amount).

Attachments:

None