

## **SPECIAL HISTORIC VERMILION DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Meeting Minutes of October 7, 2019 @ 10:00 am ~ City Hall

Roll Call: Judy Kernell, Judy Williams, Robbie Brown

Not Present: Phil Laurien, Marilou Suszko, Susan Cairns

Guests: Mayor Forthofer, Laura Gongos

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Chairperson Judy Kernell called the Wednesday, October 7, 2019 special meeting to order.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Public Art Vermilion (Main Street Vermilion)**

Laura Gongos, Co-Chair of Public Art Vermilion explained this is a brand-new program out of Main Street Vermilion and their goal is to beautify Vermilion with public art. They started with a group of artists from the Art Guild and they developed a vision and mission to what makes Vermilion unique. Through this process they developed a Public Art Plan, and this is the first project they are doing. They put out a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to artists earlier this year and they had three finalists - two from Cleveland and one from Lorain, and the two men from Lorain were selected by their committee. The project entails a series of 12 postcards that are going to be hand-painted from vintage postcards of Vermilion and some of the treasures of Vermilion like Crystal Beach and old Linwood postcards. Their first postcard will be the iconic 'Welcome to Vermilion' postcard. These postcards will be painted on 5' x 8' marine grade plywood and they will be placed on buildings and sites around town. They will come back to the Historic Board for each site located in Harbour Town for approval. The first postcard will be placed on the wall around the side of the building at Tiffany's, so you see it when you come over the railroad tracks. The idea is that visitors coming into town can stand underneath the postcard for photos. She showed the board a video of the first postcard being painted, which is almost done. She asked for board approval for the placement of the first postcard.

J. Williams said she very much approves of this concept, but thought it was a duplication of what Dan Roth did on his property. However, she thought this was a wonderful project. L. Gongos said Dan Roth's postcard compliments what they are doing because they are going to have a series of 12 postcards going up around town, and the idea is to develop a walking tour map that they hand out to people. The sponsors will also get 100 postcards made of their billboards that they can pass out to customers or mailed out to promote business. She said when they put the first billboard up it will be a tool to sell their sponsorships. These postcards will not all be in the downtown area. They are looking at nostalgic places in Vermilion, so they're hoping they can get one for Linwood, VOL Clubhouse, the Lagoons, and the owners of the Key Bank Building for Crystal Beach. There will be some in town as well. They don't have the locations yet as it depends on who wants to sponsor it.

Mayor Forthofer asked how the postcards are affixed to the building. L. Gongos explained it's affixed with six masonry bolts; one in each corner and two in the middle. They will be up for a period of four years and at the end of the four years when they are taken down there is a masonry plug for the hole. G. Fisher asked why the postcards will only be up for four years and not permanent. L. Gongos said because they don't believe they will require a lot of maintenance for those four years. There will be anti-graffiti paint on them, and the artists have guaranteed they will be maintained for four years, but beyond that they aren't sure. They are allowing the

primary sponsors to keep the billboards up beyond the four years, but it will be up to them to maintain them. J. Williams said it's only \$2,000 to sponsor a board which isn't that much money. L. Gongos said this is what they're paying the artists. G. Fisher asked if this includes labor and materials and L. Gongos said yes. J. Williams asked if the sponsor will have recognition on the billboard and L. Gongos said there will be subtle sponsorship recognition on the billboard, but it's not going to be like a sign. R. Brown asked if these artists did the wall in Amherst and L. Gongos said yes.

Mayor Forthofer asked who was responsible if the postcard was damaged in strong winds. L. Gongos said Public Art Vermilion would be responsible and as part of public art they are raising \$200 per postcard as a maintenance budget – which is 10% of the project.

J. Williams asked if the postcards will be for sale if somebody wants to collect them all. L. Gongos said they are talking about putting them into a booklet with a walking map and selling them at Main Street.

G. Fisher asked if their group ever thought about doing a mural on the wall by the Fulper's Lot. L. Gongos said they have talked about it and it depends on what will happen with the property. She said along the wall there will be a walkway going back to the parking lot, so they're looking at another public art project. They were thinking maybe a canopy of umbrella's or something with lights and making the whole walkway an experience and space of its own.

J. Williams was very happy to hear they were going out of the parameters of Harbour Town. She asked who will give the approval for the ones out of Harbour Town. L. Gongos said the property owners will.

Mayor Forthofer asked if signage permits come into play. G. Fisher said they would have to check the code. She also questioned if these signs would need a variance from the BZA.

L. Gongos asked if Vermilion has an ordinance regarding murals because they have been working with the Toledo Commission of Art and they recommended that if Vermilion doesn't have a graffiti ordinance than they should because it will prevent business owners from painting giant murals that are nothing more than a billboard commercially on their buildings. As they start putting up art this will prompt business owners to start. G. Fisher wasn't sure if murals were addressed in the city codes, but it's something they can investigate.

L. Gongos said they would like to have the first postcard up the first week of November. G. Fisher said if they need a variance, they can get on the agenda today as it's the cutoff for the October 22 BZA meeting. Note: Upon checking with the building department at the conclusion of the meeting these postcards wouldn't need to go to BZA for approval as they aren't an advertisement.

**R. Brown MOVED;** J. Kernell seconded to authorize Public Art Vermilion to put up a 5' x 8' postcard on the wall around the building of Tiffany's (Hammerschmidt building). Vote 3 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

J. Kernell asked the board if they wanted to give Public Art Vermilion a blanket approval on upcoming postcards that will be placed in the Harbour Town District. R. Brown disagreed with allowing this as there could be controversy.

L. Gongos asked if there was a map of the historic district and G. Fisher said M. Suszko should have a copy, but she can send one to Main Street.

J. Williams said in the late 60's or early 70's the Lorain County Regional Planning Commission had a plan for Harbour Town and many of these books are available at the Ritter Public Library in the basement. She wasn't sure the board was aware of all the information they recommended. It had to do with Main Street Beach and parks. She would like the board to have access to these books, so this is something they need to get their hands on so they can review the recommendations.

J. Williams asked if there were any repercussions or penalties if people make changes to their homes without coming before the Historic Board. G. Fisher said technically they are an advisory board for residential property and residents don't have to follow their advice. J. Kernell noted that many residents do take their advice and suggestions into consideration. G. Fisher conveyed that approval is required for commercial property. She wasn't sure there were any penalties in place for not coming to the board prior to making improvements to their home. She said she would check into this. J. Williams thought there should be something in place as the board was established for this reason. R. Brown asked if they could schedule a work session in the future to talk about architectural issues, aesthetics, etc. for the Historic District.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

J. Kernell adjourned the meeting upon no further action.

**Next Meeting:**

Wednesday, November 6, 2019 @ **6pm**; Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street

*Transcribed by: Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk*