

## PRNR Commission Meeting

July 12, 2021

Stewart Park – Small pavilion

Please note: because of NYS Open Meeting law, this is once again an **IN PERSON meeting**. The public is invited to comment during privilege of the floor. It is unlikely that we can hook up via zoom so thanks for attending in person. I will bring snacks!

### Agenda

6:00 PM – Call to order

Chair, Monika Roth

6:05 PM – Additions/Changes to the Agenda

6:10 PM – Privilege of the Floor (3 min per person) – sign up on line in advance starting 9 am on 7/12/21

6:20 PM – Commission member/advisors announcements if any

[Meeting time to be adjusted depending on whether or not there are comments]

6:30 PM - Staff updates (Jeanne and Jim) – Report on Damage to Parks in wind storms, plus any other activities/updates from staff.

6:45 PM - Stewart park 100 Birthday celebration and updates = Rick Manning

<https://www.friendsofstewartpark.org/events/100birthday>

7:00 PM – Minutes of June 14 meeting – review/approve

7:05 PM Old Business –

- 1- Sky Rider Sculpture Update
- 2- Draft Art in Park Policy
- 3- Private Street Tree Ordinance update if any
- 4- Homeless update if any

7:45 PM – New Business

- 1- Eco Steward work in Six Mile Creek Wildflower Preserve
- 2- Other

7:55 PM – Next meeting – August 9, 2021 (Skip this one?) **Meet again Sept. 13**, hopefully we will have some of the questions about vacancies addressed by then!

8:00 PM - Adjourn

**City of Ithaca PRNR Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes – June 14, 2021**

Present: Commission members – Stephanie Figary, Dan Hoffman, Tyler Moeller, Ellen Leventry, Scott Freyburger, Paul Paradine, Monika Roth; Council members: Graham Kerslick, Cynthia Brock  
Staff: Jeanne Grace, Jim Dalterio  
Guests: Tom Knipe – Planning Dept.; Megan Barber – CAP

Meeting called to order by Chair Monika Roth at 6 PM.

This meeting was held specifically to **gather public input on the Sky Rider Sculpture** proposed for Cass Park. The public was invited to provide input on the proposed sculpture location via the City’s website and via media announcements. 47 citizens commented via the online link provided.

Tom Knipe and Megan Barber were invited to give a presentation describing the proposed sculpture and how it came about – powerpoint slides.

Proposal Background: the idea for a “bike sculpture” began in 2018 and a request for proposals was issued by the City (RFQ 2019.09). The artist (Patricia Vader from CA) was selected in December 2019 and contract executed in March 2020. A steering committee was formed in March 2020 to advise on design and location. Then with the pandemic, this project was put on hold till March 2021 when committee began meeting again, selected a site and presented the design to Public Works (approved) and the Planning and Economic Development committee (May 19, 2021). PEDC voted to send the resolution to Council in July 7, 2021 in order to give time for PRNR comment and public comment.

Art proposal process: The Public Art Commission is no longer functioning, but instead, public art proposals were to include Community Life Commission review, however Community Life has not been meeting for the last year and was not involved in the planning or input process. Proposal originated with Ithaca Moves and the Planning Dept. Park Foundation provided the funding for the work. CAP is providing grant administration. Once a site is selected, and the art is installed, the art work is donated to the City and there is a legal agreement between the artist and the City. Question asked about maintenance: CAP will create and manage a maintenance fund.

Goal of the work: a joyful kinetic windmill-like metal sculpture about 20 feet tall, tracking upwards, built to be durable, featuring animals as riders, and recycled bike wheels as parts, to celebrate alternative transportation – specifically biking and walking to a lesser extent. The intention is to make this a community built project.

Location criteria: a site with no other programmed use visible to the public, that encourages congregation for viewing, near active foot and bike traffic. Along the waterfront trail was considered optimal.

Recommended site: Cass Park along the Waterfront trail, near the birding kiosk. *Why chosen:* good visibility, ample amount of space for sculpture, not obstructions, no programmed use of space, near water where it will catch a breeze to create motion.

Other sites in Cass Park: Waterfront Trail/Rt 89 Crosswalk; Black Diamond Trailhead

Non-Park sites: Inlet Island, Pete's Triangle, Brindley Street Bridge, Titus Triangle; also Baker Park (this neighborhood was opposed to the prior sculpture proposed for that park and it is less visible) More detail on the pros and cons of all sites can be found in the project proposal packet submitted to the committee in the agenda packet.

Presentation ended at 6:50 with a few clarifying questions from PRNR members regarding longevity of work, oversight and management, liability, safety, removal, demand on staff time –

Responses:

-It was stated that there is a \$1000 fund for maintenance (managed by CAP) and the work will be inspected regularly (not clear by whom).

-There is no agreement as to how long the piece will stay in place. City will own this work so it is their responsibility.

-Safety: Scott asked about footers, stability of the piece given challenging soils – Response: piece will be placed on a solid footer – getting engineering input, and there will be 3 poles and the moving parts are 8 ft above the ground where it is not easily reached for climbing.

-Staff time: the intention is to have minimal staff involvement; however, a question remains open as to who will monitor the durability of the piece.

**Public Hearing opened at 7 PM** - one person registered but did not join the meeting. PRNR continued with questions and discussion.

Monika provided a **summary of the public comments**. In total there were 24 city residents and 23 non-residents that commented. **20 respondents commented favorably** in support of moving forward with the sculpture – liking the work of the artist, the whimsical colorful nature of the proposed work, positive message for biking, and waterfront trail location. **27 Comments in opposition** – these comments were more strongly worded with specific opposition to the location and that the sculpture would detract from the waterfront location and natural beauty of Cass park. Only a few objected to the art itself. Some concern about the longevity of the piece and upkeep, others felt it was an inappropriate use of funds when money could be spent on promoting better biking conditions and natural habitat improvement. Some suggested a more urban setting, not in the park.

Question about public input: Dan asked if neighbors were informed about the proposed sculpture. Tom mentioned normally they would be if within 250 feet but in the case of the location in Cass Park, there are no properties within 250 ft. Dan suggested that there are many people that use Cass park every day and a more direct proactive approach to gather input could have been taken (such as user interviews, QR code on a sign, etc).

PRNR engagement in the process when art is proposed for parks: The PRNR commission was only made aware of this proposal for art in Cass Park on May 16, three days before the PDEC meeting. Monika Roth spoke at the May 19 PEDC meeting to state concern about lack of PRNR and public engagement by the project steering committee.

While PRNR has been working on an Art in Park Policy (draft included in agenda packet), it is not yet finalized for Council review and approval (perhaps by Fall 2021).

This proposal comes ahead of a policy and therefore, unfortunately there are no set criteria set in policy to follow. However, this meeting provides the opportunity to state our opinions.

Cynthia mentioned that PRNR should be informed from the beginning if art is proposed for parks – during the RFQ process. Public input and PRNR input, if proposed location is a park, should be sought before seeking BPW and PEDC approval.

PRNR Members were asked to state their opinions in order to arrive at recommendations.

Scott – installation will require significant footers, safety concern

Dan – minimal effort to gather public input; concern about safety and maintenance; park purpose is a place of respite from the built environment – ability to connect to outdoors and water; sculpture does not quite fit in

Tyler – no in favor of location in Park

Ellen – question about whether this is the landmark we want at City entrance

Stephanie – proposal evaluation – were there any local artists that applied?

Monika – not in favor of metal sculpture next to bird education kiosk; there should be an established art in park policy/review process

Cynthia – concern about process for art in parks, supports a policy

Jim – visibility from the road, creating a distraction for drivers can pose risks

Based on public input and PRNR consensus – our recommendation is NOT to recommend the location of the Sky Rider sculpture for the proposed Cass Park location and that other locations should be considered. Some other locations were discussed: Black Diamond Trailhead (also in Cass Park) or Pete's Triangle as options for the Project Steering committee to review.

### **Recommendation from PRNR Commission to Common Council regarding the SKY Rider Sculpture location.**

Whereas public input on the proposed Sky Rider sculpture for location in Cass Park near the Waterfront trail has after 5 days of promotion received 47 written comments (24 city residents, 23-other); and Whereas, 20 respondents spoke in favor of the art; and 27 spoke more strongly in opposition to the location in Cass Park citing concerns that park remain natural; and

Whereas, the PRNR Commission hosted a public meeting on June 14, 2021 at which city staff presented background information on the proposed sculpture, and discussed the proposal with staff; and

Whereas, based on public comment to date, PRNR concludes the proposal would not be favorably endorsed by the public; and

Whereas, the PRNR commission is drafting a policy for ART IN PARKS to be brought forth to Council in fall, and given such, we suggest a moratorium on art in parks until such policy and review process is in place; and

Therefore, we recommend that Common Council not approve the location of the SKY RIDER sculpture in Cass Park, near the Birding Kiosk, and that another more highly visible and trafficked location be found.

Special Meeting Concluded at 7:55 PM.

Regular PRNR Commission Meeting opened for updates –

Dan mentioned the Homeless encampment at Southwest Park has not been averted and that there continue to be problems with fires, waste, noise, etc.

Jeanne mentioned that she has met with new City Planner, Nikki Cerra, who will take up the work on the City Private Tree Removal ordinance.

Next meeting – July 12, location TBA, perhaps in a park.

Adjourned 8:10 PM