



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Economic Development Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Urbana Public Arts Commission
FROM: Christina McClelland, Public Arts Coordinator
DATE: August 8, 2013
SUBJECT: **Art in the Schools – King School Arts Programming Pilot Program**

Background

The Urbana Public Arts Commission made supporting art in the schools a priority for FY11-12 and allocated \$3,000 in the budget for this type of programming for the first time. Since that time, staff and the Art in the Schools subcommittee have conducted research in this area, meeting with teachers from Urbana School District 116 to understand their needs. Subsequent discussion has followed to identify an appropriate pilot program that would take a school-wide approach and might even involve multiple age groups, such as high school students developing a play and performing it for elementary school students.

Additionally, Illinois artist Preston Jackson has been commissioned by the Public Arts Commission to create a sculpture honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in King Park, located adjacent to King School. The sculpture is to be completed and installed by December 31, 2013.

Discussion

In April, City staff met with then-principal of King School, Dr. Jennifer Ivory-Tatum, about possibilities for Art in the Schools programming related to the King Park Public Art Project to take advantage of the unique educational opportunity of having a major public art piece created so close to the school. Dr. Ivory-Tatum has served on the selection committee for the King Park Public Art project and has been instrumental in the process of identifying project goals and providing feedback to artist Preston Jackson in developing the project concept. Dr. Ivory-Tatum has requested two fine arts teachers, Cara Maurizi and Sarah Tavis, who had expressed interest in the programming, to work with King School in late January and early February, when King School has historically had programming related to Martin Luther King, Jr. and Black History Month.

In July, City staff met with new King School principal Dionne Webster and Dr. Ivory-Tatum, who is now Deputy Superintendent of USD #116 to further plan the Art in the Schools pilot program. The plan that developed was for Cara Maurizi, who teaches dance and music, and Sarah Tavis, who teaches visual arts, to work together at the beginning of the semester to create a

proposal for King School arts programming for possible funding by the Public Arts Commission. This proposal will be presented at the October 8, 2013 Public Arts Commission meeting for implementation in January and February of 2014. Additionally, Preston Jackson is also interested in doing a presentation at the school about his work during their Black History Month/Martin Luther King, Jr. Day annual assembly for an artist fee of \$300. Following the programming, the teachers would be required to submit a project report and do a brief presentation to the Commission on the results of the project, similar to the procedure for Urbana Arts Grants. This pilot program will allow students at King School to meet a working artist, participate in interdisciplinary arts curriculum, and learn about both Dr. King and the history of the civil rights movement.

Recommendation

Staff and the Art in the Schools committee recommend that the Commission approve the following method of disbursing the Art in the Schools funds: King School staff develop an agreeable proposal for Art in Schools funds, present it to the Commission during the October 8, 2013 meeting for approval, and submit a written project report and do a brief oral presentation to the Commission upon the completion of the project. This procedure will be contingent on King School staff presenting an agreeable proposal to the Commission.