

From: AAPAC

To: Parks Advisory Commission Meeting 10.18.11

Evaluation of Two Park Sites for Possible Public Art Projects

Sites: Gallup Canoe Livery and Argo Canoe By-pass

Long Term Plan: River Art Walk in conjunction with RiverUp!

AAPAC contacts: Margaret Parker, Malverne Winborne, Aaron Seagraves

As part of the Annual Public Art Plan for 2011, Malverne Winborne and Margaret Parker have the task to evaluate the two park improvement sites for possible public art projects. In August, Margaret met with Amy Kuras, Colin Smith, and Cheryl Saam at the Gallup Park Canoe Livery to discuss the two sites up for improvement along the Huron River and to get their input. Our findings were taken to AAPAC in September, and the Public Art Commission recommended that the proposal should go to PAC, the Parks Commission, for your input and recommendation.

1. Gallup Canoe Livery improvements

This project has been planned and Parks is applying for a state grant of up to \$300,000, which the city would match up to the amount received. Depending on funds they will proceed faster or slower on all these projects. Only city funds would generate art funds specifically for this project. But other public art funds, such as water or parks funds, could be applied to this project.

The basic plan is to enlarge the facility to accommodate expanded public use. The pedestrian entrance plan will be separated from the truck entrance in back, more docks will be added, the outdoor cafe area will be enlarged with improved access for disabled, and the conference/rental space will be opened up to the outdoors. These changes offer opportunities for unique artist designed projects in several areas, including a possible memorial wall, sculpture, placements on the island across from the livery, or in the walkway leading from the new docks to the livery.

Gallup Park is one of the most popular parks in the city, and with the Percent for Art Program, public art can now add an element that has not been possible in the past.

2. Argo Mill Race/ Canoe By-pass

The old Mill Race was a channel that historically diverted water to be used for industry, flour and lumber mills that will now be turned into a series of stepped pools that canoes can go down with an entrance before the Argo Dam and an exit to the river near the Broadway Bridge. The earthen berm between the race way and the river will be rebuilt with natural landscaping. The foot path along the berm is already part of the

"Border to Border Trail" that follows the river through the county. Two white water rapids that will be canoe-able will be built in the river at a later date. There may be a pedestrian bridge at each end. These improvements will draw many more people to this area of the river, both by land and by water. Possible sites for public art are at the Broadway end of the canoe bypass, a way-finding system along the berm's walking path, or a way-finding system that works as a water trail, and at the Argo Dam end where canoers and pedestrians cross paths.

Parks staff recommends that Parks maintenance staff should be consulted as part of the selection process before art work is selected to assess maintainability for any piece. It should be taken into consideration that graffiti is an ongoing problem especially in remote areas of parks. Parks staff also recommends that potential locations be reviewed with park planning staff and facility supervisors to best understand how potential locations are currently used.

AAPAC recommends that artists should be included at the earliest stage of planning so that art projects can be integrated into built structures in the most imaginative ways.

3. Long Term Plan: River Art Walk in conjunction with RiverUp!

The larger prospect that AAPAC has discussed was connecting public art with the four county wide RiverUp! Project now being developed by the Huron River Watershed Council. Other communities up and down the length of the river are expressing interest in cleaning up the river to make it walkable for its whole length. Ann Arbor already has the "Border to Border Trail" running from Ypsilanti through Ann Arbor to Bandemere Park.

The two current parks improvement projects could be considered pilot projects for a longer River Art Walk that would follow the Huron through the city. Then as park improvements are planned along the river, public art can be sited as well. If this larger project becomes a goal, these first two projects in Ann Arbor could be a starting point a river-long renewal effort.

The Percent for Art Program supports only projects within the city of Ann Arbor, but with our support and a simple plan, the Watershed Council could then take the lead in other communities.

4. Next Steps

If PAC would like to investigate either the short term or long term proposals, AAPAC would work with Parks to set up a task force to take up the specifics.