



The following are minutes for the meeting of the **City of Las Cruces Quality of Life/Arts Board Committee** held at 4:30 p.m. on July 14, 2022, at City Hall, 700 N. Main St., Las Cruces, NM, Conference Room 1158.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Katrina Chandler  
Melanie Grey Brown  
Christina Ballew  
Greg Smith

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Abby Howard  
Adam Amador  
Chantelle Yazzie-Martin

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Yvonne Flores, Councilor  
Ikani Tamoepeau, Assistant City Managers  
Hilary Dutcher, Visit Las Cruces  
Glenn Schwaiger, Earth Cosmos  
Rochelle Miller-Hernandez, Visit Las Cruces

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Christina Ballew called the meeting to order.

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

Those present introduced themselves.

**III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was accepted as presented.

**IV. APPROVAL of June 9, 2022 MINUTES**

The recorder did not record the last meeting. The minutes were done from notes and memory. Ceci Vasconcellos stated that if they know of anything that was missing to let them know. The minutes were accepted as presented.

## **VI. STAFF UPDATE AND ACTION**

- Ceci Vasconcellos, Art Project Coordinator
  - QR Code Project
  - Fire State #3
  - ASCMV
  - Budget
  - Lift Up Neighborhood Event

Ceci Vasconcellos gave the presentation. She has been focused on another project that needs completion and so has been focused on that rather than the QR Code Project; she still needs to finish creating the signs for the MP3 pages. The goal is to have all of it completed for a fall launch. In regard to Fire Station #3, she has touched base with the artist who has been working on tweaking the design so that it makes sense fiscally and is ready for fabrication. He is almost ready to hand it over to his architect and will send the latest versions of the designs fairly soon. There is no update for the ASCMV project; still in the contract stage and is pending.

The budget was approved for the same operating budget as last year. Ms. Vasconcellos requested a maintenance budget to begin looking at the pieces to see what can be cleaned up and restored or provide maintenance; it was not given. Most of what is done typically comes out of the operating budget unless it's a specific art project. Ms. Vasconcellos looked into the Board being able to raise funds. The legal department stated that the Board is not allowed to fundraise. They will need to look at partnering with people and having funds being filtered through them or brainstorm another idea. The majority of what is spent with the Board is purchase services which is \$13,600, not the full amount of the operation budget. There can't be any more given to the purchase services toward public art. The remainder budget is for supplies, small equipment purchases, etcetera. Greg Smith stated that the Doña Ana Arts Council could potentially help with the fundraising by doing programs and suggesting people direct funding to the City Art Board. He can ask the DAAC board president if he'd like to explore that option. Ms. Vasconcellos stated that the repairs they've been supporting have also come from purchase services.

The Lift Up initiative is done by the City Manager's office. It will go into neighborhoods and show what resources the City has available to them by having an event. The first will be on July 30th on Ash Avenue. Quality of Life, Museums, Library, Senior Programs, and Public Art will be in attendance. The event will be from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Ms. Vasconcellos will hand out coloring pages, coloring pencils, and some bags.

## **VII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

- Earth & Cosmos Tile Mosaic Repair
- Visit Las Cruces – Postcard Mural Project
- Board Roles and Commitment
- Committee updates

- Communications and Public Outreach
- Research and Development

Glenn Schwaiger presented on the Earth & Cosmos tile mosaic. The project was installed in 2011 near the downtown mall. In the winter of 2020 a water main broke and roughly 100 square feet of the mosaic had to be removed. The first thing done was to map the mosaic to identify every tile by its location and manufacturer. Mr. Schwaiger showed a picture of part of the scope that needs to be done. Everything has been digitally documented. They currently have taken roughly 12 square feet out; he brought one to show. There are chunks of tile turned face down and a diamond blade passed over them as many times as it takes the blade to clean them up. There are still grooves after and then a diamond cup grinder is used to clean the tiles. Mr. Schwaiger tracked how long it took to do the 12 foot section, cut off, clean off, and seam up the edges; this allows the tiles to be reinstalled where needed. The total amount of time was 18.25 hours; 1.52 hours per square foot which is fairly efficient. It will be an estimated time of 152 hours to finish the entire project.

The goal is to rescue every tile possible to save, put them back where they were, then fill in the sections that were irreparably damaged. Roughly 80% of the tiles came out whole or in large pieces. The tools needed for the project are also specialty equipment. Those blades are roughly \$300 a set. The budget he prepared included all of these items. With everything that has been going on and how long this may take, Mr. Schwaiger believes it would be sensible to add 10% more to the budget he originally submitted. The remaining slabs are enormous, all kind of stuck together in an enormous slab. The logistics of finding a place to move them to and work on will involve heavy duty equipment. A sheet was given to the Board showing the history of previous repairs, what has been spent already, and what they can expect to spend for the next phase. There was also a map of the water lines below the mosaic. All pieces will be saved if they can be; some are too irreparable, in which case they will need to try and find replacement tiles that can be put in to restore the character. They will do their best to honor the mosaic to their best ability and preserve as much as possible.

Christina Ballew discussed the previous amounts spent; \$73,000 for originally placing the art piece in 2010 and 2014 had a repair for some damage. Mr. Schwaiger stated that he did not receive compensation for the repair in 2014; Sandoval Construction was paid. The repairs were due to an issue with expansion joints that needed to be put in. That caused a section of the mosaic to be disrupted. The construction company was supposed to consult Mr. Schwaiger in regard to the mosaic but they didn't and rather just cut where they wanted to. The City then wanted the construction company to come in and repair the mosaic and Mr. Schwaiger offered to consult, which meant he did the work pro bono. Christina Ballew apologized for him having to go through all of that. Mr. Schwaiger stated that now is the best time to restore the mosaic because it will only get more expensive to do so in the future. He suggested that City Utilities be responsible for

some of the restoration cost since it was a ruptured city water line that caused the damage.

Melanie Brown pointed out that the water main is still underneath the mosaic which means it can happen again. She asked if there was a plan in case it does. Ms. Vasconcellos stated she invited someone to come from Utilities but they were unable to come at the last minute. She did talk with someone after it happened to have the lines redirected however, it's a 14 inch water main which is the main line that runs to the water tanks; no way to move them. Christina asked if there was a plan for replacing/upgrading the pipes and if there is they could hold off fixing the mosaic until it was finished; that is unknown. Greg Smith asked what advice Mr. Schwaiger has for the City for when other pieces need to be removed in the future for other water main issues, in a way without so much destruction. Mr. Schwaiger stated that he believes the piece was taken out with reasonable care considering the emergency. If another break happens it would be something similar but worse. Utilities would need to answer these questions; possible sleeves or something to protect a rupture in the section of the mosaic. The man who took out the piece of mosaic did the best he could within the emergency and apologized to Mr. Schwaiger for not doing better.

Mr. Schwaiger stated that if they wait to fix this then it will become even more difficult to gather all of the pieces and people may lose focus and initiative. He recommends cutting and cleaning the tiles off to be ready for installation. If the City decides to do more utility work then at least there will be the map and tiles so someone can put it back together. The longer it waits the more expensive it will be. He expects it to take him nine months to clean the tiles. It has already been roughly two years so far; one of the reasons for the delay is the new restrooms. The final phase will include the map being laid on the ground with a fiberglass mesh and then the tiles will be cut up selectively into sections that can be picked up and set down which will then be set on the site. Some tiles will probably need to be purchased to fill in the side parts that are missing as well as infill. It will be meticulous and may incur some additional cost. Ms. Vasconcellos recommended taking this to Council for approval as she doesn't have that kind of budget; they will need to approve additional money. She prefers to present this phase and talk about the next phase so they won't have to go back again; will need an estimate for the final phase.

Melanie Brown asked if something could be done such that if this happens again the pieces could be lifted out more easily; no, as they will be sealed to the ground. The mesh is needed to put the tiles back together. Greg Smith asked if this could come out of the Utility budget given that it was a Utility situation in the first place, possibly a partnership with their budget. Mr. Schwaiger stated that what's happening today is an integral part of the public art process; talking and recognizing the importance or not, rallying resources of energy to make things happen in a transparent and public way. Phase four will be installation of the tiles on the site coupled with a new concrete slab. Ms. Vasconcellos suggested

documenting how the Board and Mr. Schwaiger is doing this process in order to keep on record to review next time it needs to be restored. They will keep some of the materials to show the remainder of the Board.

Hillary Dutcher gave the presentation on the Visit Las Cruces Postcard project. Visit Las Cruces wishes to put postcard art pieces around Las Cruces in order to inspire tourism. There is a big interest in traveling to places with authentic experiences, not chains. There is also an increased interest in mural tours, both self-guided and guided. There is a beautification aspect where there are photogenic opportunities and have people promote themselves on social media. The two sites currently chosen are the Las Cruces Visitors Center and the Las Cruces Convention Center. These locations already have a high volume of out of town traffic as well as high visibility from the street. The Visitor's Center has a couple items to contend with: a drainage pipe and a palm tree. The palm tree can be moved to another area in the City. The Convention Center has an opportunity to have something wrap around a corner to face University which would be very interesting visually.

The goals for this project are to draw more interest to these buildings, encourage people to take photos and share them on social media, promote tourism and support the local travel and hospitality industries. Artists are a big draw to any place and Visit Las Cruces wishes to continue supporting them. Examples were shown of other murals. They wish to keep the image simple to convey the artist's message. A little bit of something should be written in the call for proposal on what the artist is trying to get across and how that matches with the images that they're sharing. They also need the artist to stay within the budget, space available, and schedule. The art needs to be aesthetically pleasing; how it fits in with the building, with the landscape, design, etcetera. The artist will be responsible for the design, fabrication, all materials and supplies, varnish, etcetera. The selection will be an open call limited to Doña Ana County residents; artists should be asked what they think makes Las Cruces special to see a wide variety of ideas and designs. The first elimination will take out incomplete proposals, those outside the logistical parameters, etcetera.

There are 11 staff at Visit Las Cruces who will narrow the selection down further and then a final committee will come up with the final two; Ms. Hernandez, the director of Visit Las Cruces, would handle that. Other members of that committee could potentially be the manager of the Convention Center, Ms. Vasconcellos, someone from Visit Las Cruces Advisory Board, and the City Art Board. The schedule is ambitious but there is some additional room. The call for proposal will be by August and then there will be 30 days until the selection. Work will be expected to begin by October depending on the contract. The budget is \$85 per square foot which is the going rate on the high end; the Visit Las Cruces building would be 100 square feet. Originally it was 10 by 10 on both but that would be lost on the Convention Center so it has been increased to 20 by 20. There will be

roughly \$3,000 for marketing and all costs will be covered by Las Cruces ARPA allocations.

The selection phase will be released through CaFE with press releases, social media, radio and print ads. Most of the budget will come from the community engagement section. They wish to document the creation of the murals with a video; two or three minutes to share on social media. Some discussion items include placement of murals, call for proposal, and selection process. Greg Smith stated that there are two murals downtown and yet people only seem to get pictures in front of one. They should question why so that way they can make sure the future art works. He also discourages pulling out the palm tree; work with the landscaping that either works with it or around it. Visit Las Cruces building has a ledge which means you can't stand on the sidewalk to get a good photo, which is why there may need to be a platform or move the tree. Another suggestion is to make the artwork so people can take a picture from the sidewalk. Christina Ballew disagrees with Mr. Smith as she believes the area should be kept easily accessible and free from difficulty.

Christina Ballew stated that in regard to the Coloring Cruces mural it was strategic in terms of the design; the entire intention was for people to take photos. She recommended that the call for art should include wording that art is meant to be for promotion and people rather than the artist's own wishes. Greg Smith added that there have been places where they put in fake or art flowers instead of plants and that hasn't always been good. He would rather the artist find a way to work with the existing plantings due to the struggle of having plants. There was a question if they could prevent the palm tree from getting taller; perhaps receiving proposals with and without the plant. The palm tree could be relocated to the other side of the building. There was discussion on whether it should be postcard art or not; that has been let go as they want artists to let their imagination go farther. Greg Smith added that if they could add Las Cruces somewhere on the art piece or something iconic of Las Cruces it would benefit the goals.

Ms. Vasconcellos asked if the Board believes having them use the Board's account would be a detriment to Doña Ana County artists applying for this, not as familiar with CaFE. It is unsure. They will also advertise in local places to send them to CaFE. There was discussion on a previous call for art and how much work it was. Ikani Tamoepeau shared his gratitude for everyone's work and ideas. He reminded them that at the core of this is tourism dollars. He believes it would be good to create a visual impact as well as be creative and use Las Cruces in the mural. They are also thinking of doing some 3D work down the line and are excited to see what else comes out of the Art Board. The Board likes the idea of not just being a postcard; conceptual or something that broadens tourism. This could also be a form of souvenirs where it's on your phone; perhaps having something where the person can put themselves in the artwork. There was discussion of who from the Board can be on the Committee; to be decided when the time comes but it can't

be Christina Ballew due to conflicting interests. Ms. Vasconcellos can help them with the language on the art selection and call for proposals .

Christina Ballew recommended tabling Board Roles and Commitment for the next meeting due to lack of Members present; the Board agreed. Melanie Brown gave an update on the Research and Development Committee. She would like to table the Public Art Honoree Award until the next meeting to receive more input; it is a more complicated subject. They discussed at the executive meeting to go in a different direction; a proclamation rather than an award based on the currently proposed criteria. They also discussed teaming up with the DAAC for a sponsorship. Greg Smith stated it would be natural for the DAAC to do that as they already have done it. They don't use the Arts Awards as a fundraiser and may not break even. The collaboration between the two entities would also be strong. The question is where it makes sense to plug in; need to relook at the criteria to not duplicate what DAAC is already doing.

Christina Ballew commented that if the Board sponsored an award then they should be involved in the selection. The majority of sponsors give money which is not allowed from the Board. Greg Smith suggested helping to get the word out and have the individual receiving the award be recognized at City Council. The Arts Fair is usually the first weekend of March and the Community Arts Awards doesn't have a specific date. Greg Smith is trying to convince them to stay in September for the better weather. There was discussion on other possible dates, possibly in February, during Love of Art month. Christina Ballew would like to have something ready by September; may not be possible without scrambling. A call for nominations was put out in February or March for DAAC's award; there haven't been too many this year. Melanie has been invited to the DAAC meetings as well as anyone else on the Board who wishes to attend; the meetings are the fourth Thursday of each month. Greg Smith will see if the nominations are closed. The award could be a proclamation or a day for the artist; the Board will need to decide. The Board would like to table the remainder of the discussion until the next meeting.

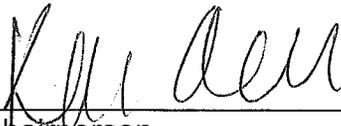
Melanie Brown stated that she's supposed to work on the various graphs for Klein Park but wasn't able to coordinate with Ceci and Susan. She's working with Ms. Vasconcellos and Susan Frary. She will put together a couple of ideas to bring to the Board.

## **VIII. BOARD COMMENTS**

Melanie Brown welcomed Greg Smith to the Board and felt it was a good meeting with many interesting discussions. Greg Smith is happy to be on the Board and thanked everyone for their thoughts on these projects. He believes the mosaic work is difficult but follows through with the plan of the Board. He thanked Melanie for taking on the Klein Park project; it is very important. Katrina Chandler thanked

IX. NEXT MEETING – August 11, 2022

X. ADJOURNMENT

  
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Chairperson