

October 27, 2020

To: Debbie Tarry, City Manager

CC: Shoreline City Council

From: John Hoey, Chair, Parks, Recreation, Cultural Services/Tree Board
Bruce Amundson, Chair, Arts and Cultural Services Subcommittee,
PRCS/Tree Board

RE: Public Art Coordinator Position

The Parks, Recreation, Cultural Services/Tree Board (PRCS/Tree Board) has identified Arts and Cultural Services as one of its three strategic priorities for 2020. At its September 24, 2020 meeting, the Board passed a motion with three priority program recommendations for Arts and Cultural Services. We would like to draw your attention to one of those three recommendations at this time. The recommendation as passed by the Board is below:

1. Staffing: An increase in the Public Art Coordinator position to 1.0 FTE has been supported by the PRCS Board, the retired Department Director, and the City Manager, with earlier plans for that to occur in the 2021 budget. This will likely be deferred given the City's financial struggle. This is a priority if we expect to have even the minimal capacity to carry out the program reflected in our plan. The Board needs to make clear to the City Council that we expect this increase to occur as soon as feasible.

You will recall that in 2019, the PRCS/Tree Board unanimously voted to recommend that the Public Art Coordinator position be increased from 0.5 to 1.0 FTE, an action also supported by the (now retired) Department Director. We recall that this recommendation was not supported by the City Manager's office, but was to be considered for 2020. The City's current financial situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic has further delayed this recommendation from consideration. We are not aware of significant discussions to effect this change in the ongoing 2021-2022 budgeting process.

It is our observation that this position at 1/2 time is complicating program progress for some aspects of the Arts and Cultural Services program. For example, PRCS/Tree Board members have identified two Shoreline residents who have committed to each donate a monumental piece of sculpture, each by a local artist, to the "Aurora as an Avenue of Art" project. (Two other Shoreline residents have agreed to give serious consideration to such gifts.) This represents a remarkable development in the evolution of our public art program.

With two public art installations currently underway, as well as the ongoing demands of the Public Art Coordinator's position, he has been unable to allocate time to identify sites for the two promised pieces. Optimally the artists, and donors, need to view the sites before commencing design and creation of the art.

The Board is observing the long-argued consequences of the understaffing of our Arts and Cultural Services program. The "Aurora as an Avenue of Art" vision is being impacted by the lack of arts staff, and could potentially jeopardize major arts gifts from community members, which has repeatedly been articulated as one of the City Council's goals.

We would like to schedule a Zoom meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this budget item, given the shortened period for further consideration of the 2021-2022 budget.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this memo.