

**Cuyahoga Falls City Council  
Minutes of the Community Development Committee**

**July 19, 2021**

**Members:** Meika Penta, Chair  
Rachel Loza  
Adam Miller

Mrs. Penta called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes of the June 7, 2021, Community Development Committee minutes were approved as written.

**Legislation Discussed:**

Temp. Ord. B-61

**Discussion:**

**Temp. Ord. B-61**

An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a grant agreement with the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Program for community arts engagement and art installations along the Cuyahoga River in Cuyahoga Falls, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Diana Colavecchio, Community Development Director, presented Temporary Ordinance B-61 to Council. The City of Cuyahoga Falls applied for a grant through the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Program for community arts engagement and art installations along the Cuyahoga River in Cuyahoga Falls on August 17, 2020. On April 8, 2021, the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Program awarded the City of Cuyahoga Falls a grant in the amount of \$50,000.00, to be used for community arts engagement and art installations along the Cuyahoga River in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

The Mayor will be authorized to enter into a grant agreement with the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Program for community arts engagement and art installations along the Cuyahoga River in Cuyahoga Falls. The Mayor, Director of Finance, Director of Community Development, Director of Law, and any other public officials, individually or collectively as may be appropriate, are authorized to prepare and execute such other documents, including contracts necessary to implement the Grant, and do all other things as necessary or incidental to carrying out the intent and/or requirements of the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Program.

Ms. Colavecchio stated that it is with great delight that she can present this ordinance to City Council. Cuyahoga Falls has received a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts. This has only happened on four such occasions in Summit County in the history of these types of grants being awarded. This grant is designed to assist the City in the cost for designing, creating and then installing public art along the Cuyahoga River, the purpose of which is to celebrate the history of the river and bring the community together as part and parcel of that goal. They applied for this grant about a year ago and just found out in April that the City received it. Tonight's ordinance

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gives the City the authority to accept the grant. With the grant is a match plus. The grant is for \$50,000. The City has to match it \$65,000. Those funds have already been earmarked in the budget. Most of these funds will be used to cover the costs of the various artists and their travel arrangements to Cuyahoga Falls.

They asked their partner, Nicole Mullet, who is the Executive Director of Arts Now, to assist in hiring a project manager. Nicole spent enumerable hours behind the scenes trying to help them choose who would be the best qualified project manager for a project of this magnitude. They are looking to hire two artists. They are approximately 90 percent of the way in securing Stacy Levy, an environmental artist based in Philadelphia, and they are in indirect communications about hiring Peter Jones, who is a Native American artist out of the Syracuse, New York area, to create the art that will appear along the Cuyahoga River.

Ms. Mullet, along with a few volunteers from Collide, interviewed over a half of dozen groups and hired Akron-based Curated Storefront to serve as the project manager. Curated Storefront will be hosting two public meetings to solicit feedback from residents on what type of art they would like to see adjacent to the river. The organization will work with the artists who are hired, as well as volunteers on a task force. Rick Rogers, Executive Director of Curated Storefront, stated that his organization was honored to be selected to manage the project.

Mrs. Penta stated that any time, they can bring artwork into any portion of the city, it branches out to other portions of the city. It starts little lightning bolts everywhere and sparks creativity in a domino effect.

Mr. Gorbach stated that the City is in rare air receiving the grant in Cuyahoga Falls and in Summit County, and it's important that they put their best foot forward. He has the utmost confidence that they have done that by securing the services of Curated Storefront and the others that have decided to join the task force to help. The Front Street transformation has been incredible, and it's been feeding on itself since then. He looks forward to what Curated Storefront is bringing to the table and to the artists that they are bringing on and what can be done in downtown. Mr. Rogers stated that commercial development can follow a strong art community. What happened in Miami blossomed out of the vibrant arts scene. Their organization has had some success in developing empty storefronts into commercial developments.

Mr. Balthis stated that public art is directly connected to economic development. People want to be where public art is and where people are, business usually follows. Engaging the public and what the river means to them and what kind of art they want to see is an important and critical part.

Mr. Miller moved to bring out Temp. Ordinance B-61 with a favorable recommendation, second by Ms. Loza. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.