

City Hall Work Group Report – June 6, 2019

David Esau, Allison Buck and John Kotarski met at City Hall coffee shop on May 23 at 10am. The agenda was

1. Improvements to the Council Chamber art gallery
2. Reimagining the historic photos of mayors and city administrators on 2nd floor

Background

The Mayor asked the Art Commission to explore ways to improve the art exhibits in Council Chambers and to reimagine a way the wall of Mayors and Administrators reflected and honored a more diverse scope of our community. “The near-unanimity of white male representation serves by unintended implication to exclude many who we wish to welcome to our community and embrace in our public space.”, he wrote.

Council Chamber Art Gallery

We discussed more local centric content of shows – local images and/or local artists. We also discussed events associated with the shows that could provide: a social network for local artists, education about the artwork displayed, and promotion of Ann Arbor’s public art collection and the Art Commission’s goals.

Action Steps: Allison Buck will follow-up with the Art Center to identify the best way forward before we make recommendations to the Art Commission.

Photos of Mayors and City Administrators

We discussed two ideas:

Mosaic of Ann Arbor Citizens

4”x4” head-shots of Ann Arbor citizens floated on a public wall like the front of Council dais from the City Attorney to the First Ward CM. These images would be small enough to create a mosaic of Ann Arbor residents that would remind elected/appointed officials and audience members what Ann Arbor looks like. They could also be included in many CTN/media/news shots. New images could be rotated in annually.

Advantages:

Could be included in many CTN/media/news shots.

Remind elected/appointed officials and audience members what Ann Arbor looks like

Public reception honoring the installation of new nominees

Challenges:

Administering it

The cost, display type, and timeline are details still to be explored.

Graphic Representation of Historic Ann Arbor Centering on Leadership of Progressive Ideals

We felt the current display of Mayors and City Administrators is designed as more of a factual historic chronology than displaying a welcoming embrace of diversity. However, a factual chronology of Ann Arbor's history could be reassembled and displayed using themes or eras that exemplify our progressive ideals which have welcomed diversity. These would be collages or timelines with images/text affixed to panels floated on walls. The panels could display themes and eras of leadership of progressive ideals. The panels could also be developed and added to (much like the street exhibit program has done with their glass exhibits) - as money and interest develops.

This could be partnered with the Downtown Historic Street Exhibit Program, the Ann Arbor Historical Foundation, and the Historic District Commission to: promote A2 history, the Street Exhibit Program, Public Art, and potentially a bicentennial project.

Advantages:

Uses existing historical research and graphic representation (Street Exhibits)

Collaborates with other community stakeholders

Inclusion of personal images not already part of Street Exhibits but representing cultural diversity

Pilot project could lead to expansive bicentennial project developing City Hall as cultural exhibit space

Challenges:

Cost

Identifying important themes/eras

The cost, themes, display type/location, and timeline are details still to be explored.

Action Steps: We emailed the Mayor for his feedback. He likes both ideas and wants to discuss more details. Allison Buck, David Esau, and John Kotarski plan to meet with the Mayor June 7 before we make recommendations to the Art Commission.