



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

FROM: MICHAEL OGILVIE

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: July 29, 2020

Council District: 6

SUBJECT: Artwork Concept proposal through Design Development by Sam Tubiolo for design and fabrication of public art for the new Fire Station 37.

RECOMMENDATION: Review and take action on the recommendation to approve the concept, schematic and design development proposal by artist Sam Tubiolo for integrated public art elements at Fire Station 37.

DATE OF ARTIST SELECTION: June, 2019

ARTWORK BUDGET: \$75,000

LOCATION: The project site is at the new Fire Station 37 that will be built at 2191 Lincoln Avenue in the Willow Glen neighborhood.

NOTE: Review and approval of the artist's concept, schematic and design development proposal were delayed due to the City's order to cancel all public meetings effective in March and ongoing into July, 2020. In order for timely delivery of this public art project it is necessary that the PAC review and take action on the artist's concept, schematic and design development proposal as one item.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Background

The passage of the Measure T Public Safety Bond in the November 2018 election reactivated the City's plan to build Fire Station 37 in the Willow Glen neighborhood.

This project was originally initiated in 2010 as the last of the fire station construction projects undertaken with the previous bond project funding and was to include public art by artist Collette Crutcher, an artist especially known for artisan ceramic tile work. While the Public Art Committee approved Ms Crutcher's concept and schematic design proposals in July and October 2010 respectively, there were issues raised as to the viability of the proposed artwork in terms of the proposed form its design as well as its content, and overall it was not well-received by the Fire Department. The construction of Fire Station 37 was put on indefinite hold and the contract for the public art project expired and was not renewed.

Current Status

The reactivated Fire Station 37 is on a fast track and is being held to a tight schedule. The base project design work had to be completed by January 2020 making it necessary to bring a skilled, experienced public artist on board as soon as possible; this precluded using the typical Request for Qualifications method of artist recruitment. Public art staff therefore felt it was in the best interest of the project to exercise the option of

direct select for this artist selection. Artist Sam Tubiolo, a highly accomplished tile artist who has just completed a major tile artwork for the City's new Alviso Storm Pump Station, was chosen. Tubiolo had been selected for the Alviso project by a panel of community members and other key stakeholders, and engaged in a very extensive community engagement process for that project, garnering much community support for his project. Tubiolo's significant accomplishments as a tile artist aligned well to the original selection of a tile artist for the earlier Fire Station project, and Tubiolo's demonstrated success and effective work on the Alviso project and with the Alviso community underscored the efficacy of his selection for the Fire Station 37 project.

The City's Department of Public Works (DPW) is complying with direction to keep the Fire Station 37 project on a fast track schedule; a building contractor has been selected and construction on the project will begin in September 2020 with anticipated completion by January 2022.

Artist's Design Proposal

Since its inception as a public art project, this project has been on a fast track. At the time the artist began work on this project, design of the fire station facility was functionally complete, so viable opportunities for public art were limited; this was a significant challenge. The station is on a very compact lot and the minimal landscaped areas are committed to use for bioswale to capture water run-off, so there were no opportunities for public art on the ground surfaces around the station; opportunities on most of the vertical exterior surfaces were also very limited. So the artist worked closely with the Fire Department and the Public Works Design Team on this and, after thoughtful consideration, all agreed that the north-facing wall and the tower element presented the best opportunity for the type of tile work that is artist Sam Tubiolo's primary medium.

Sam Tubiolo developed a design for a mixed media "mural" that will start on the north-facing wall of the building and wrap around to the building's front façade and up the glass windows on the building's tower on its front and south-facing side.

The artwork on the north elevation of the building will consist of a horizontal, 3' high frieze of handcrafted tilework that begins midway along the north side of the 2-story wall and wraps around onto the front of the building's northeast corner. This section depicts two firefighters, one at the bottom and one at the top along the frieze, directing a firehose; a stream of water (in tile) leads from the nozzle of the hose toward the front of the building. Two children and a dog are also depicted in the lower left area of this north wall, captivated as they watch the work of the firefighters.

On the front façade of the facility, the tower windows add a vertical element to the artwork. In addition to the wrap around segment of the tile frieze from the north-facing wall, the artwork element extends onto the tower windows and will be made of translucent, architectural-grade plastic film installed on the inside of the tower windows on the front and on the south-facing side of the station.

Including imagery on the tower windows extends the design and imagery from the exterior walls so that the windows and wall function together as one overall image honoring firefighters and also accentuates the vertical sweep of the tower. At night, these windows will be softly illuminated with LED light strips along the edge of the window panels. This light art display over the evening hours through the tower window is also intended to draw attention to the themes of firefighters and community.

The juxtaposition of the traditional tile work with the new translucent film technology, of lighting and textures, horizontal and vertical elements, daytime presence through night, is intended to subtly reference the history and future directions of first response, around the clock.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

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On May 22, 2019 DPW held a community meeting at the Willow Glen Community Center to share proposed designs for the new station. Sam Tubiolo was asked by DPW to attend and present at that meeting and fully participate. He was very well-received by representatives with San Jose Fire Department including the Chief Robert Sapien Jr., and by the community members including Councilmember Davis and her staff. At that meeting he solicited input from attendees about themes that might be included in the public art.

As previously noted, the artist was commissioned for this project by direct-selection so there was not a core stakeholder committee for him to work with. In developing the concept for the artwork, he conferred with the San Jose Fire Department leadership for their input on themes, qualities and ideas that could help shape the public art. As some of them live in the Willow Glen neighborhood, this process helped inform the artwork design from both the SJFD and the community perspective.

Councilmember Davis had offered to host a meeting with Willow Glen community members for community engagement with Sam Tubiolo but that did not proceed due to COVID-19. DPW also planned to convene a community meeting on Thursday, April 16, 2020 to update the community on the fire station design and for Sam Tubiolo to share the public art concept as part of that meeting. That meeting could not be held due to COVID-19. SJFD was the primary source of input to the artist. The artist's focus on themes and imagery related to the work of SJFD is very consistent with the public art at San José's other fire stations.

Public Art Committee Liaison: None assigned.

/s/

MICHAEL OGILVIE
Public Art Director