

# **ERIE COUNTY ARTS IN PUBLIC PLACES**

Public Hearing: Draft 2025 Master Public Art Plan  
Thursday, February 6, 2025

## **Meeting Minutes**

The Arts in Public Places Public Hearing on the Draft 2025 Master Public Art Plan was held on Thursday, February 6th, 2025 in the Burchfield Penney Arts Center, Buffalo State University, 1300 Elmwood Ave, Buffalo, NY, 14222.

### **Attendees:**

Gretchen Schulz  
Michael Desmond  
Susan O'Connor Baird  
Thomas E. Baines  
Jen Swan  
David Bojanowski  
Aaron Ott  
Cassandra Ott  
Donald Siuta  
Edreys Wajed  
Alexa Wajed  
Monica Boutin (Project Coordinator)

The Public Hearing was opened at 5:30PM. Attendees were asked to sign in and invited to review printed copies of the Draft 2025 Master Public Art Plan and view posters of the recommended public art projects. Attendees were invited to ask questions and comment on the plan, directly or through comment cards provided.

Jen Swan began discussion with a question for Chairwoman Wajed as to why five sites were identified in the Call for Artists but only three projects on three sites were recommended in the plan. Chairwoman Wajed detailed the selection process undertaken by the Committee and noted that projects for all five sites were reviewed but ultimately the Committee agreed to support three projects at three sites with the available funding. Jen Swan asked if the remaining two sites would be available in the future for public art installations. Chairwoman Wajed noted that this would be likely, although not discussed yet.

Jen Swan asked about the Small Works Acquisition Plan and whether the artists selected for the three larger projects would be permitted to enter their work for consideration in the Small Works program. Chairwoman Wajed said the Committee had not discussed eligibility

requirements for the Small Works program but noted that generally-speaking the Committee supports greater access to arts funding.

Michael Desmond asked how many buildings are owned by Erie County. Monica Boutin noted that Erie County DPW Buildings & Grounds Division manages over 300 county-owned structures (although not all would not be suitable for public art). Michael Desmond then followed up with a question about whether the Committee considered using non-county owned property as sites for public art. Chairwoman Wajed noted that the Committee considered it but decided that in the Committee's first year, the most direct and least complicated path for success would be to use county-owned sites. Aaron Ott added that Buffalo AKG's Public Art Initiative has had success working with smaller municipalities like Springville.

Conversation turned to a hypothetical map of public art installations throughout the county. Michael Desmond asked Chairwoman Wajed whether such a thing exists, and Chairwoman Wajed answered that there are maps, but they are segmented based on the entity funding their installation. The AKG Public Art Initiative, for instance, has a map of their public art projects, but their map does not include projects funded by other entities. Discussion ensued about the benefits of a universal public art map.

Cassandra Ott asked about the timeline for project approval and installation. Thomas Baines noted that, per Local Law 2024-3, the plan would be submitted to the Legislature by March 1<sup>st</sup> 2025, and presented to Erie County Department of Environment and Planning by May 1<sup>st</sup> 2025. If the Legislature approves the plan, artists could expect to begin work soon after May 1<sup>st</sup> 2025.

Michael Desmond asked about the materials being used in these projects and whether they would be resilient throughout Buffalo winters. Chairwoman Wajed noted that consideration of project maintenance and longevity was important to the Committee and therefore built into the scoring rubric used to determine project recommendations. The Committee also consulted extensively with Buffalo AKG on this topic.

Chairwoman Wajed asked if other public comments were received prior to the meeting. Monica Boutin noted that the [publicart@erie.gov](mailto:publicart@erie.gov) email received a comment from an individual concerned that the finalists did not represent minority or BIPOC communities. The individual commented that the Call for Artists was not well-advertised and the timeframe to submit a proposal (2 months) was not adequate and these factors contributed to the lack of minority representation among the finalists. Discussion ensued regarding local media engagement and promotion of the Call. It was noted that a significant number of proposals were received in response to the Call, including from artists representing minority communities. Chairwoman Wajed noted the Small Works program would be an opportunity for additional participation.

The Public Hearing was adjourned at 6:30PM.