

SEQUIM CITY ARTS ADVISORY COMMISSION

A review of the achievements of the Commission 2020 - 2022

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1. Creative Place Making: The Understory

Activities toward achieving goals as set forth in Ord. 2014-008 CAAC Authority and Duties #5 To recommend to the City opportunities/plans to conduct, sponsor or co-sponsor public programs to further the development and public awareness of, and interest in, the fine and performing arts and then carry out any Council approved plans as appropriate.

- So, what is Creative Place Making? It is the use of arts and culture by diverse partners to strategically shape the physical and social character of a place to spur economic development, promote lasting social change and improve the physical environment.
- It encourages the people who will be using the area to basically become the designers of the public site by listening to their input. We had citizens fill out surveys that asked; how do you currently use the site? How would you like to use the site in the future and how do you want to feel while in this location?
- It also moves artists' participation in a site's design from the end of the process to the beginning, engaging creative insight from day one. Marina Shipova, a photographer was tasked to telling our stories visually.
- All of the Creative Placemaking research and data collection can be used for our application for a Creative District Certification from the State of Washington
- https://youtu.be/4noT0XXqyPc

Creative Placemaking Survey Results

From April through August of 2021, the residents of Sequim were asked to fill out a survey concerning the future development of Centennial Place at the corner of Washington Street and Sequim Avenue. The questions focused on current use, future use and how people would like to feel while using the site. The 259 responses were completed either online or through paper questionnaires which included both multiple choice and fill in the blank responses. In order to grasp the larger picture some responses that are similar, but not the exact same wording, are grouped together and noted. Some questions also allowed for more than one answer, so percentages given are for each question rather than the survey total.

Current Use

By far the largest current use of Centennial Plaza (about 60%) was walking through to somewhere else. This may sound like an insignificant activity, but many cities specifically search for such "foot traffic corridors", connecting parts of their city, as the ideal location for small parks that will be used daily.

The second largest group of current users (53%) included shopping as one of their uses of the site. It was not specified if that was shopping at the bakery, nearby stores, or at the Saturday Farmer's Market.

The third largest current use (44%) noted in the survey was attending the Holiday Tree lighting which was also mentioned as a desired future event. This community event was mentioned under several

different categories including the desire to have permanent trees in the design. The tree lighting is not, however simply the flip of a switch, but a "community sharing" event, which also, was mentioned under different headings as an important aspect of the location and to the community.

Eating is another current use of the site that people wanted to continue and be considered in design plans as noted by mentioning seating, tables and chairs and, meeting with friends for food or drink.

The lot is currently recognized as an important location for community gatherings, as a convenient corridor connecting a district of businesses, offices, civic functions, and artistic organizations.

Future Use

Activities

In addition to the Holiday Tree lighting event and "passing through," continuing, the next largest group of desired future use were live music and rotating or permanent art. This is a surprising mandate as neither of these are current uses of the site. Surveys listed a gathering place and a community sharing place as important.

Objects

While different types of seating are obviously important, the number of responses including landscaping, green spaces, live trees, plants and flowers was substantial. A "green pocket park" or a "green buffer" were both listed as ideals to strive towards. Additionally, some type of water feature was repeatedly mentioned which could tie in with the rainwater issue on the lot. These responses can also be tied in with the survey question concerning "what should this place say to future generations?" because an appreciation and concern for the natural environment was considered of major importance. One person said it quite well when they responded it should be… a place that invites thoughtful consideration of the beauty of the land and it's people.

Other objects mentioned were closely tied with desired activities such as a small partially raised area, sheltered from sun and rain, for sitting, eating, gatherings, art exhibits or small performances.

Future Emotional Impact

The responses in this category can be roughly divided into Personal Emotions such as, "I want to feel calm or relaxed", and Social Emotions such as "I want to feel connected or involved with others".

Personal Emotions

CALMING - The largest total in the personal emotion group was 83, or about 1/3rd of all respondents, noted that they wanted to feel relaxed, calm, peaceful, or restful. These answers were combined also with feeling tranquil, having serenely, or being low-key to create a Personal Emotions – Calm category.

INSPIRED – About 31 people mentioned that they would like to feel inspired, interested, enthusiastic, invigorated, pleasant, happy, or proud.

Again, we find some cross-over with other questions included in the survey. Studies, such as those done at Texas A & M University, and the University of Michigan have shown that natural environment

features, such as abundant greenery and water sounds, are extremely beneficial to improving cognition and mental health, making one invigorated, inspired or possibly happy. Environments that appear to be "natural" are also seen as having a calming effect. So those citizens who noted natural landscaping, live trees and some type of water feature were basically designing a place for people to be both calm and inspired.

Social Emotions

The people of Sequim used a variety of words to describe how they wanted to feel socially within the space. Twenty-eight surveys noted that people want to feel connected, welcomed, involved, engaged, social, or safe in a friendly location.

There are numerous studies in the fields of anthropology, architecture, urban planning, and geography that show how physical spaces can be made to feel welcoming. Again, the citizens have mentioned many things that are included by planners wanting to encourage park use, such as a variety of seating type and location, lighted cut through paths that follow the natural curve people currently use, and a roofed area for small gatherings, lectures, performances, or demonstrations.

Current Status

The Sequim Understory started as a joint project between the City of Sequim Parks and Arts Departments. The City Arts Advisory Commission and Arts Coordinator took the lead on the Creative Placemaking process by working with artist Marina Shipova to tell the Sequim story and by surveying our community. The results of that work have been shared with the Parks department and they are now working on a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a consultant park designer to utilize the information as a starting point for design concepts. The Arts Commission looks forward to continuing to be involved in the project and providing input as needed.

2 Gallery & Park Art Shows

Activities toward achieving goals as set forth in Ord. 2014-008 CAAC Authority and Duties #4.
To encourage further development and public awareness of the fine and performing arts.

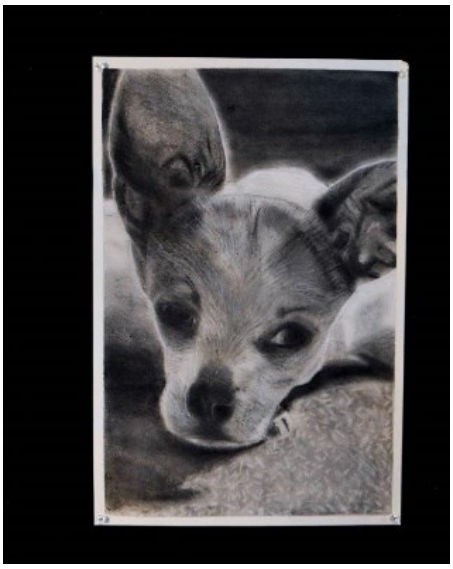
- Traditionally, the Arts Commission would have three or four juried shows in our gallery each year. A theme is provided and a call for artists made through social media and newspapers. Most, but not all shows are open to the public. Throughout the years we have also hosted Audubon Shows, Quilt Club Shows Student Shows, and other limited engagement gallery displays.



- Before Covid the Arts Commission had First Friday Gallery Openings, Art Talks: a lecture series by artists, and often musical entertainment. We attempted two exclusively digital shows, they did not garner the response we had hoped. We found this typical of several local galleries that also tried digital shows. A few people commented that if they wanted to view art on their computer they were far more likely to bring up a world renown gallery. This highlights the importance of our art shows as community social bonding and networking events in addition to just viewing art.
- To "move the art to where the people are" was our primary focus throughout much of 2020 and Art All Over has been a collaborative effort with the Parks Department to hang art works near walkways on park fencing. Citizen response was very positive to the works that were hung in Carrie Blake Park and Pioneer Park. Two of the art pieces were sold from the Art All Over show.
- Starting in April of 2022 we were again able to have First Friday gallery openings and our first show was a hugely successful High School Creative Craft and Arts Show.

2. Art Shows of Student Work - High Schools of the Olympic Peninsula Creative Craft and Art Exhibit

Activities toward achieving goals as set forth in Ord. 2014-008 CAAC Authority and Duties #3
To assist existing organizations in the field of art and to develop cooperation with schools and regional and national arts organizations.



- A limited number of works were displayed in our gallery March – April 2022 and we will again have the Call for Student Artists and the gallery show in April of 2023.
- Not only will this show be open to all High School students on the Peninsula, but for 2023 we will also be inviting Middle School students to enter.
- Sponsors supplied award money for first, second and third place totally $450.00
- Over 60 Submittals were received in 2022 and the pieces far surpassed the quality we were expecting. Most of these pieces could have easily competed in an adult show.

3. Art Shows of Student Work – Fourth Grade Holiday Tree

Activities toward achieving goals as set forth in Ord. 2014-008 CAAC Authority and Duties #3
To assist existing organizations in the field of art and to develop cooperation with schools and regional and national arts organizations.



The annual Holiday Tree program involves:

Fourth grade students and is open to public, private and homeschooled children.

Over 150 handmade or decorated ornaments hanging on the city's tree December 2021.

For 2022 the theme is "What brings you joy?" The tree lighting will be done by the mayor who will also read some of the messages written by the students.

4. Music in the Park

Activities toward achieving goals as set forth in Ord. 2014-008 CAAC Authority and Duties #4.
To encourage further development and public awareness of the fine and performing arts.



- Certainly, one of the citizen's most beloved activities, free music concerts, every Tuesday evening from June through August have been part of our programing since the Commission's establishment. In 2019, we started partnering with KSQM Radio to produce this summer program. Due to the pandemic the format was changed in 2020 to Music Where You Park to avoid large gatherings. In August of 2021 we held five live concerts outdoors that were all well attended and lauded for the content and quality.
- By June of 2022 we were able once again to haver a full summer of concerts. We hosted 12 bands and saw attendance at a rate that sold 1400 raffle tickets during one show, We made announcements about our Calls for Artists, Open Jams and other First Friday events.
- Arts Commission members serve on the jury for bands and are the City representatives on site during each performance.

5. First Fridays & Open Music Jams

Activities toward achieving goals as set forth in Ord. 2014-008 CAAC Authority and Duties #4. To encourage further development and public awareness of the fine and performing arts.



For almost two years our First Friday Gallery Shows were not allowed due to Covid and social distancing, however, The Open Jams continued through most of the 2020-2021 shut down. We were called Hard Core because we continued playing outside, under tents and heaters throughout the winter months. We are a gathering of musicians who get together to play Folk, American, Rock, Blues or Sing-a-long songs.

We were able to hold outdoor open jams in 2021- 2022, and we participated in the Hometown Holiday event sponsored by the pARTner's Group, as well as The Sunshine Festival. This is a musical jam open to the public. Anyone can come sing or play. This event has always brought people into our gallery that might otherwise never enter.

The Arts Commission has been supportive of the Sequim First Friday events since the inception. First Friday is a coordinated effort of downtown business owners and non-profit or service organizations that encourage citizens to buy from local merchants.

6. Sequim "pARTner's" Group

Activities toward achieving goals as set forth in Ord. 2014-008 CAAC Authority and Duties #3 To assist existing organizations in the field of art and to develop cooperation with schools and regional and national arts organizations.

This group was formed in 2018 after the commission had held several "Art Conversations" with the general public. It was decided that it would be advantageous for all the non-profit arts associations, the for-profit art businesses, and arts leaders in education to meet once a month to coordinate activities, become aware of and help support the other organizations performances or shows, and generally try to work together.

This group has continued meeting and is heavily involved in all the First Friday events. We have had representatives from Peninsula College, Olympic Theater Arts, Olympic Peninsula Art Association, the City of Sequim, the Blue Hole Gallery, the Fiber Arts Festival, and the Sunshine Festival to name a few.



7. Innovative Arts

Activities toward achieving goals as set forth in Ord. 2014-008 CAAC Authority and Duties #4.
To encourage further development and public awareness of the fine and performing arts.

The year 2022 was our first time participation in the Innovative Arts Fair which happened during the Irrigation Festival.

We had a Community Art Project made using recycled materials. An old vanity mirror from Serenity House was the base element. Junk jewelry was donated from numerous sources and the bling was then glued onto the mirror frame until we ran out of frame when people started gluing to the mirror. A delightful" Magic Mirror", as the kids called it, was composed solely by the people of Sequim. Our oldest participant was in his 80's while the youngest was about three, but everyone had a great time.