

Published January 24th, 2018

Popular Art in Public Places program receives praise

By Sora O'Doherty



Pieces displayed throughout Orinda as part of the Art in Public Places program. Photos Sora O'Doherty

Member Darlene Gee said the program is beautiful, a lovely asset. Council Member Eve Phillips described Orinda as fortunate to have such enthusiastic volunteers, but agreed with Orr on the ownership versus loan issue, while Vice Mayor Inga Miller praised the seamlessness of the artwork, and noted that the APPC "make it look simple." Mayor Amy Worth concurred with the thanks to the committee, and said that the city had to make sure that there is a funding source for the program.

In the staff report submitted by City Manager Steve Salomon, he noted that committee members meet monthly and also spend much of their personal time seeking new artists, visiting other venues, and orchestrating the installation and removal of the artwork. Currently the APP program has 39 art installations on public display, 22 of which are on loan and 17 of which are owned by the city. The original costs of the owned pieces exceeded \$177,000, and the total liability for the pieces on loan is \$295,500.

The APP program has been funded by donations to the Orinda Parks and Recreation Foundation. Annual operating expenses have been kept low, typically \$1,500 to \$2,500, by an abundance of volunteer labor. The APPC believes that it would be desirable to update the ArtSpace Orinda website, and expects that the cost will be between \$500 and \$1,000, which will come from the Orinda Parks and Recreation Foundation.



It was pretty much a love fest when the Art in Public Places Committee presented an update to the Orinda city council at its Jan. 16 meeting. All the council members were very enthusiastic about the 10-year-old Art in Public Places program, and highly complementary to the APPC, which donates its time and expertise to the program. The only slight ripple came from Council Member Dean Orr who expressed some concern about the city owning some of the art, instead of displaying it on loan. However, even this was met with enthusiasm. If the city decides not to own the art, the committee will gladly sell it again, according to APPC Chair Rich Thompson.

Orr praised the program as "clearly one of the most recognized programs we have in the city."

"You all do fantastic work," he said, adding that he appreciated the wit, for example, of the wrenches artwork displayed in front of Mechanics Bank. Council

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[back](#)

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