

**RFQ #12-08
CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NH**

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
CALL FOR ARTISTS**

AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND

INVITATION

The City of Portsmouth, NH with this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is soliciting Statements of Qualifications from qualified artists interested in working collaboratively as part of a design team to expand the vision for an overall design that commemorates Portsmouth's African Burial Ground as a sacred public space; and to design, fabricate, & install visual art component(s) for the African Burial Ground. This RFQ can be accessed on the City's website by visiting <http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/finance/purchasing.htm>. Sealed Statements of Qualifications, plainly marked "RFQ #12-08, City of Portsmouth, Call for Artists, African Burial Ground," on the outside of the mailing envelope, addressed to the Finance/Purchasing Department, City Hall, 1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801 will be accepted until 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 4, 2007.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

In October 2003, a series of coffins were discovered on Chestnut Street between State Street and Court Street in downtown Portsmouth, NH while the City was carrying out infrastructure upgrades in that area (**please see "Project location", Additional Background Materials section at the end of this RFQ**). By working closely with the community, the State Archaeologist and consulting archaeologists, the City made every effort to insure that those buried there were treated with reverence and dignity and that all archaeological and scientific protocols were followed. A total of thirteen coffins were found, however, only eight were removed from the site (**please see "Archaeological Report Introduction", Additional Background Materials section at the end of this RFQ**).

While it was known that this general area was the location of what was shown on a 1705 City map as the "Negro Burying Ground", researchers were subsequently able to document with certainty, through analysis of historic records, artifacts, skeletal remains and DNA samples, that those buried there were of African descent. As a result, in 2004, the Portsmouth Mayor and City Council appointed the African Burial Ground Committee to determine how best to honor those buried there.

The African Burial Ground Committee, in consultation with the community and the State Archaeologist recommended to the Portsmouth City Council that human remains that were disturbed be re-interred on site; that part of the Chestnut Street roadway between State Street and Court Street be closed to travel and turned into public space; that all on-street parking on this block be removed and that the south end of Chestnut Street at Court Street be closed to thru traffic. These recommendations were approved by the City Council and are depicted on a *Project Area* plan for the African Burial Ground Memorial and Commemorative Park (please see "Project Area", **Additional Background Materials section at the end of this RFQ**).

Using these recommendations as a starting place, the City of Portsmouth, under the guidance of the African Burial Ground Committee, issued a Request for Proposals in late 2006 seeking design and engineering services for a memorial and commemorative park at the African Burial Ground, and subsequently entered into a contract with a design team led by Woodburn & Company (please see "**Woodburn & Company Team Description**" **Additional Background Materials section at the end of this RFQ**). The Woodburn & Company design team consists of:

- Roberta Woodburn, ASLA Woodburn & Company Principal and Project Manager
- JerriAnne Boggis, M.A.
- Deborah L. Mack, Ph.D.
- Reuben F. Hull Jr., P.E., Civil Design Engineering Consultants
- Jonathan S. Ring, P.E., Jones & Beach Engineers, Inc.

Tasks 1 through 8 of the Scope of Work from the City's contract with Woodburn & Company have been completed (please see "**Woodburn & Company Scope of Work**", **Additional Background Materials section at the end of this RFQ**). In summary, Woodburn & Company has completed the following work to date:

- performed survey work that was used as the basis to develop an existing conditions plan;

- in conjunction with City staff and the African Burial Ground Committee, led a public forum to solicit input from the community on the desired vision for this public space, which included small discussion groups (**please see “Public Forum #1”, Additional Background Materials section at the end of this RFQ**);
- held a series of meetings with City staff and the African Burial Ground Committee;
- developed 5 conceptual plan alternatives (**please see “Concept Plans”, Additional Materials section at the end of this RFQ**); and
- in conjunction with the City staff and the African Burial Ground Committee, led a second public forum to obtain feedback on the 5 conceptual plans (**please see “Public Forum #2”, Additional Materials section at the end of this RFQ**).

While there was much positive discussion about the conceptual plan alternatives presented at the second public forum, following this forum, the African Burial Ground Committee determined there was a need to:

1. Articulate specific design criteria to guide the project (please see DESIGN CRITERIA section of this RFQ).
2. Bring an artist into the design process to:
 - work collaboratively with Woodburn & Company, the City, the African Burial Ground Committee, and the public on the overall design for this sacred public space; and
 - ultimately, design specific artistic elements to be part of the overall design.

ROLE OF ARTIST

It is anticipated that the artist will:

1. Collaborate throughout the project as part of the design team -- from an initial meeting through construction/installation -- with the African Burial Committee, Woodburn & Company and City staff to expand the design vision for this sacred public space commemorating the African Burial Ground.
2. Facilitate an initial meeting with the African Burial Ground Committee, City staff and Woodburn & Company to discuss:

- What is the best collaborative approach to work with all parties to expand the vision for this public space and generate a range of options?
 - What is the best collaborative approach to further involve the public in this process?
 - What elements to keep from concept plans developed to date? What elements to change?
3. Design, fabricate, & install visual art component(s) for this sacred public space commemorating the African Burial Ground; specific artistic forms/media have not yet been determined.

DESIGN CRITERIA

The African Burial Ground Committee has agreed that the criteria specified below should guide the overall design for this sacred public space and any specific visual art components that are integral to it.

1. The following design criteria should guide the vision and overall design for this public space as well as its artistic components:
 - be immediately recognizable as African;
 - inspire a sense of strength & pride;
 - recognize the history/stories/lives of those buried there;
 - give rise to a sense of awe;
 - evoke a powerful message from the forgotten souls buried here that reaches up/out to touch the hearts & minds of those living today;
 - honor & recognize a sacred space & a sense of peace through simplicity, perhaps even starkness;
 - reflect the unique history, stories and social fabric of Portsmouth's African community;
 - potentially include an informative element; and
 - be inviting to the public during the evening hours.
2. Any specific visual art components will be integral to the overall design concept of the space, however, the specific artistic media have not yet been determined.

3. All proposed elements as well as the overall design of the space will be durable, weather resistant, vandal resistant and low maintenance so that this area will endure through time.
4. All elements as well as the overall design of the space will be feasible to implement within regulatory and site constraints.
5. All elements, as well as the overall design of the space should cause no further disturbance of additional human remains.
6. All elements as well as the overall design of the space must recognize the residential and commercial setting of the project area and that this will be a public space.

SELECTION PROCESS

The City of Portsmouth will use a two-stage process for the final selection of a qualified artist. The first stage will consist of this Request for Qualifications (please see Submittal Requirements section of this RFQ) in which interested, qualified artists will submit their qualifications.

The City and the African Burial Ground Committee will short-list up to five (5) artists based on the materials submitted and the selection criteria specified in this RFQ. Short-listed artists will be asked to participate in the second stage, which will consist of a design competition and interviews. Short-listed artists will receive a modest honorarium/cash stipend (amount to be determined).

One finalist will then be selected in the design competition phase and the City will initiate negotiations with the selected artist to develop a scope of work for this project. The City will enter into a contract with the artist that is selected in the design competition phase. When the contract is executed by both parties, the artist will be instructed to commence providing the work outlined in the contract. If contract negotiations are unsuccessful, the City will enter into this process with another short-listed artist.

SELECTION CRITERIA

At a minimum artists making submissions under the RFQ process must have the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated capability to design, fabricate, deliver, insure & install outdoor visual public art that endures through time and is of similar complexity, scale and scope.

Submittals from artists that do not meet this minimum qualification will be disqualified from further consideration. Submittals from artists who meet the above specified minimum qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria specified below.

1. Artist's understanding of Portsmouth's African Burial Ground Project.
2. Artist's demonstrated ability to design and produce public art that meets the design criteria specified in the Design Criteria section of this RFQ.
3. Artist's qualifications and experience in relation to project design criteria and setting as demonstrated by relevant past work.
4. Quality and type of previous relevant work of similar complexity, scale and scope.
5. Demonstrated capability to design, fabricate, deliver, install and insure the visual art component(s) of the project.
6. Demonstrated capability to work effectively as part of a collaborative team comprised of committee members, government officials and other design professionals.
7. Successful track record of timely, successful project completion.
8. Overall quality of qualifications package submitted.
9. Responsiveness to submission requirements.

The City of Portsmouth reserves the right to reject any or all qualification packages submitted, to waive technical or legal deficiencies, and to accept any qualification packages that it may deem to be in the best interest of the City. By submitting a qualification package, the submitter hereby authorizes the City to contact references and make such further investigations as may be in the best interest of the City.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Qualifications packages should include the items listed below organized in the order listed. Eleven (11) bound qualifications packages and one (1) unbound qualifications package capable of being copied should be submitted.

1. Resume(s), including education, experience, honors and awards, and exhibits and installations; exhibition catalogues; and area(s) of specialization.
2. Color images of recently completed representative outdoor public art work with relevant information (artist; medium; dimensions; title, date, location and description of the work including its current condition; cost; current reference contact name and phone number).
3. A statement of no more than three (3) pages describing the following:
 - The artist's understanding of Portsmouth's African Burial Ground project and why the artist would be best able to produce public art that meets the African Burial Ground Committee's design criteria.
 - The artist's technical and professional capabilities with regard to designing, fabricating, delivering, insuring and installing the visual art component(s) for the African Burial Ground project.
 - The artist's previous experience working in a collaborative design fashion as part of a team comprised of Committee members, other design professionals, and government entities.
 - The artist's knowledge of/experience with African and/or African American history, or experience with subject matter involving the African or African American experience in America.
4. References (see item #2 above). A minimum of three references should be provided.
5. Any additional information the artist believes will assist the Committee and City in evaluating the artist's qualifications for this work.

Sealed Statements of Qualifications, plainly marked RFQ #12-08, "City of Portsmouth, Call for Artists, African Burial Ground," on the outside of the mailing envelope, addressed to the Finance/Purchasing Department, City Hall, 1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801 **will be accepted until 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 4, 2007.**

REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Requests for additional information should be directed in writing to David Moore, Assistant Community Development Director at dmoore@ch.cityofportsmouth.com or fax (603 427-1593) on or before Monday, September 17, 2007 at 4:30 p.m. An addendum responding to those questions will be posted at <http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/finance/purchasing.htm> by Thursday, September 20, 2007 at 4:30 p.m.

Please do not direct questions to African Burial Ground Committee members or members of the Woodburn & Company design team. Doing so may result in disqualification.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND MATERIALS

The following information is available for review at the City's website for this RFQ: www.cityofportsmouth.com/abg

- **Project location-** African Burial Ground Burial location
- **Archaeological Report Introduction** - An excerpt from "Archaeological Excavations at the Portsmouth African Burial Ground (27-RK-384), Chestnut and Court Streets, Portsmouth (Rockingham County), New Hampshire October 2003". Independent Archaeological Consultants, LLC Preliminary Report, December 2, 2005
- **Project Area-** City Council approved project area plan
- **Woodburn & Company Team Description-** Design team firm descriptions and consultants information
- **Woodburn & Company Scope of Work-** Scope of work from Woodburn contract
- **Public Forum #1** - Comments from the African Burial Ground Design Public Forum on May 5, 2007
- **Concept Plans-** Woodburn & Company Design Concepts developed in May 2007
- **Public Forum #2** - Comments from the African Burial Ground Design Public Forum on June 19, 2007

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- African Burial Ground Committee meeting minutes (September 2004 to Present) can be accessed via the City's website at:
<http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/calendar/2007/index.htm>
- Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail, <http://www.pbhtrail.org/>