MEETING MINUTES OF THE PORTSMOUTH
PUBLIC ARTS REVIEW COMMITTEE (PARC)
September 23, 2026-5:15-6:45PM
Conference Room A

Members Present: Chris Dwyer, Ernie Greenslade, Jen Meister, Lennie Mullaney, Robin Lurie-Meyerkopf, Mara Witzling

Absent: Beth Hartnett, Nancy Pearson

City Council/Staff: Sean Clancy, Councilor Kate Cook

AGENDA

1. Agenda review

2. Vote to accept minutes of August 26 meeting
   Motion to approve by Robin Lurie-Meyerkopf. Seconded by Ernie Greenslade.

3. Updates:
   --New City Hall exhibit and reception
   Reception with the artists on Monday, September 28, 6 to 7:30 pm, before the City Council meeting. Titled "Light Falls: A Focus on Light, Shadow and the Slow Dimming of the Year," exhibit features the work of four photographers: Audrey Level, Ron St. Jean, Michael Rodriguez Torrent, and Se Choi.

   --Committee Appointments
   John Bohenko, former city manager, has submitted an application to join PARC and he attended the September meeting. Chris reported that one other Portsmouth resident is interested.

   --NEBI
   Over $100,000 has been raised and fundraising continues with a goal of $125,000 and possibly more, depending on final installation costs
   DPW met with Engineer Alex Ross and artist Anthony Alemany at the site to discuss installation
   Anthony Alemany will provide a 30-inch 3D model of "Nebi" which can be used to build awareness and attract funds. Discussed having this at the library with a QR code for donations.
   "Nebi" web page on the PARC website will be created recognizing donors to date and detailing the project

   --Chamber meeting re: Vito DiBari Food Concept

Ben Van Camp, president of the Portsmouth Chamber Collaborative, is hosting a meeting on September 29 to discuss DiBari's concept.

--Santarcangelo technical updates
DPW's technical questions about the project have been answered.
Artwork will take two weeks to fabricate and will be shipped by boat.
Hope to have it installed in summer or fall of 2027, when the Vaughan Mall renovation is completed.
The artist and a group of students are planning to come to Portsmouth the end of October.

--CIP next application+Bohenko Gateway Park picnic tables
Chris Dwyer has submitted CIP requests for two projects: the addition of 2-4 ADA-compliant picnic tables to Bohenko Gateway Park and $25,000 for general public art funding.

--Mechanic St. pump station
This upcoming project will cost an estimated $20M, providing one percent or $200,000 for public art. Details on the project are available on the city's website.

–Inventory
The list of remaining public art pieces was circulated and individuals signed up to complete descriptions.

4. Hanover Garage: questions/site walk, review process, weighing criteria, schedule
Five artists attended the September site walk through and they generated questions which are now posted with answers on the RFP site.
Review Team will include PARC plus Mike Casad and Joe Almeida from the city, Hope Puzzo, Chamber Collaborative; and Lauren Wolf, owner of Portsmouth Soap.
Individual review of proposals, Oct. 13-19. Group will meet Tuesday, Oct. 20 from 9 to 11 am to discuss followed by interviews with finalists, as needed.. Decision will be made at Oct. 28 meeting.
Discussion regarding weighing four criteria: site compatibility (30 points), aesthetic quality (30 points), feasibility and cost (10 points), and artist experience (30 points).

5. Recommendation for relocation of Lower State Street Pocket Park sculptural head
Robin Lurie-Meyerkopf has reached out to artist and Corin Hallowell, DPW. In discussion, members favored adding art to areas outside of downtown, e.g., the traffic "triangles" at Harding/McKinley or Wilson/Coolidge, Hislop Park.

6. Framing the call(s) for City Hall Exhibits
Mara Witzling would like to focus on three exhibits a year and Lennie Mullaney would like to increase collaboration with already established arts organizations.

Chris Dwyer shared idea of exhibit celebrating Pontine's 50th anniversary in the spring of 2027, which was well received.
Mara and Lennie will consider ideas discussed (e.g., art form such as textiles, the work of art teachers, retrospectives, art focused on locale such as parks) and report back at October meeting.

7. PNH400 next call for grants

Ernie Greenslade is working on a press release announcing 2026/27 recipient and on content for the PARC website announcing next round of grant applications.

8. Public comment

Carl Weber, deputy city manager, shared the idea of commissioning one of artist Thomas Dambo's trolls for Portsmouth. Thomas, a Danish artist, is married to a Portsmouth High School graduate. His trolls, made from reclaimed materials, are very popular and can be viewed at Boothbay Botanical Gardens and in RI. Here's a link to his website:
https://www.thomasdambo.com/

Chris Dwyer noted that corporate anchors would be needed to fund the project.
Kate Cook suggested the park across from city hall as a possible location.

Motion to adjourn was made by Mara Witzling; Seconded by Lennie Mullaney. Motion approved.

Next Meeting: October 28, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,
Ernie Greenslade