



Recommendation for Action

File #: 20-3481, **Agenda Item #:** 20.

12/10/2020

Posting Language

Approve the recommendation of the Arts Commission to deaccession “Karst Circle” by W. Gary Smith located at Austin Fire Station 43/EMS Station 31, 11401 Escarpment Blvd, Austin, TX 78739, a public artwork commissioned by the Art in Public Places Program.

Lead Department

Economic Development Department.

Fiscal Note

There is no fiscal impact.

For More Information:

Sylnovia Holt-Rabb, Acting Director, Economic Development Department, 512-974-3131; and Susan Lambe, Art in Public Places Program Manager, 512-974-7852.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

On August 3, 2020, the Art in Public Places Panel appointed members to serve on a Special Jury required to make recommendations for deaccession of Art in Public Places collection artwork, per the Art in Public Places Program’s Acquisitions and Deaccessioning Policy, adopted by the Arts Commission in December 2008.

On August 26, 2020, the Arts Commission initiated the deaccession process for this artwork.

On September 28, 2020, the Arts Commission appointed a Special Jury member.

On November 16, 2020, the Arts Commission approved the deaccession of “Karst Circle” on consent on Vice Chair Polgar’s motion, Commissioner Fonte’s second on a 7-0 vote. Absent: Commissioner Mok, Commissioner Van Dyke, Commissioner Garza (one vacancy).

Additional Backup Information:

The Art in Public Places Program’s Acquisitions and Deaccessioning Policy recommends regular assessments of the public art collection, and establishes criteria, policies and procedures regarding removing an artwork from the collection, or deaccessioning.

The Arts Commission received requests for the deaccession of five (5) artworks at their regular monthly meeting on August 26, 2020, and approved initiation of the deaccession process for these five artworks, including “Moments” by Carl Trominski, 2003, at the Lamar Underpass; Republic Square Fountain” by James Turner, 1988, at Republic Square Park; “LAB” by NextProject, 2009, along the bikeway from MOPAC to Airport Blvd.; “Bicentennial Fountain” by Ken Fowler, 1976, at Auditorium Shores; and “Karst Circle” by W. Gary Smith, 2004, at Austin Fire Station 43/EMS Station 31.

Per the deaccession policy, the Arts Commission and the Art in Public Places Panel appointed a Special Jury of qualified members to assess the question of deaccessioning and make recommendations to the Arts

Commission (jury membership listed below). The Deaccession Special Jury met on November 12, 2020, to review and make the recommendations for each of the five artworks. The Special Jury recommended to deaccession “Karst Circle” and allow the artist to relocate the work of art, or the materials making up the artwork, to another appropriate site if possible. If this is not possible, then the Special Jury determined that the materials may remain on site.

Commissioned in 2004, “Karst Circle” was funded by 2% of the estimated construction budget from the Austin Fire 43/EMS Station 31 Capital Improvement Project, resulting in a \$20,500 budget for the artwork. Since its creation “Karst Circle” has deteriorated beyond repair. Because Austin has been in Conservation Stage Water Restrictions for many years the original native plant life cannot be maintained. After being reviewed and approved by experts, this artwork was proposed for deaccession. This problem is specifically noted in the deaccession policy as a reason to remove the artwork. This is a normal part of the public art process and helps maintain a high quality art collection. The Special Jury recommended unanimously that “Karst Circle” be deaccessioned.

The Arts Commission voted unanimously at their November 16, 2020, meeting to approve the deaccession of “Karst Circle.” In addition, the Austin Fire Department and Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services have stated their support of the deaccession. To finalize the deaccession of “Karst Circle,” in accordance with deaccessioning policy, City Council must now vote on the item.

If City Council votes to accept the recommendation of the Arts Commission to deaccession “Karst Circle,” the item will be removed from the public art collection listing. The artist will be allowed to relocate the work of art, or the materials making up the artwork, to another appropriate site if possible. If it is not possible, then the materials may remain on site.

MEMBERS OF SPECIAL JURY

Elaine Shen, appointed by the Art in Public Places Panel

Jade Walker, appointed by the Arts Commission

Tammie Rubin, Chair, Art in Public Places Panel

Sarah Carr, Art in Public Places Panel member

J. Muzacz, Art in Public Places Panel member

Brett Barnes, Arts Commissioner and liaison to the Art in Public Places Panel

CLL 3 - Strengthen our portfolio of culture and lifelong learning programs, events and facilities by engaging and building trust with the community to ensure equitable access and participation, and that services are aligned with community expectations.

CLL 4 - Maintain a mapped inventory of City and non-City cultural and historical assets to identify and address service gaps while accurately recognizing, preserving and, elevating the profile of place-based and underrepresented histories, narratives, and gathering spaces.

Strategic Outcome(s):

Culture and Lifelong Learning