



City Council

Special Recognition - Donation of Seven Sculptures for the Installation “A Story Place” as a Gift of Art from Artist Nancy Thorne- Chambers

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Title

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Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Move to recognize the gift of A Story Place as offered by artist Nancy Thorne-Chambers.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve the donation ordinance for A Story Place and agreement as submitted under Consent Calendar.

Report

Issue:

To recognize the gift of seven bronze sculptures by artist Nancy Thorne-Chambers to complete A Story Place installation at LBA Park.

Staff Contact:

Stephanie Johnson, Arts Program Manager, Parks, Arts & Recreation, 360.709.2678

Presenter(s):

Stephanie Johnson, Arts Program Manager
Frederick Dobler, Chair, Olympia Arts Commission
Nancy Thorne-Chambers, Artist

Background and Analysis:

On April 8, 2021, the Arts Commission recommended the acceptance of the gift of A Story Place by artist Nancy Thorne Chambers. A Story Place is a tableau of an assortment of ceramic animals (currently on extended view at the Capital Mall) arranged in a circle listening to the reading of a story by a young girl. The artist has been casting the sculptures in a limited-edition bronze series, and the City currently owns three sculptures through the Percival Plinth Project. The

gift provides seven additional limited edition bronze sculptures to create a small tableau in a City park.

The full proposal includes the sculptures, *Rabbit, Bear, Toad, Fox, Fawn and Skunk*, and a stack of *Storybooks*, all in bronze to add to the *Girl Reading in a Story Place* and *Pig Listening in a Story Place* the City currently owns. In addition, *Mole Listening in a Story Place* is an independent sculpture included with the purchase of *Girl*, which brings the total amount of individual sculptures to ten.

The tableau would be installed at LBA Park, in a grove of trees situated between the play structure (at the west end of the park) and the maintenance building and bathrooms. The location is such that children can discover A Story Place themselves from the play structure, while still under the watchful eye of their guardian. The addition of sitting rocks within the circle is intended to invite children to become part of the tableau and read or pretend to be in an enchanted woodland.

Gifts of art proposed to the City go through a review process by the Arts Commission before recommendation to the City Manager and City Council. The evaluation considers, among other things: installation requirements and cost, long-term maintenance, aesthetic merit and compatibility with greater City public art collection as a whole, and any other specific considerations required of the donor. Nancy Thorne-Chambers in her proposal specified a location accessible to children. Arts staff convened a meeting of Parks maintenance staff and developed a slate of three potential sites: Friendly Grove, Bigelow and LBA Parks. While all had their merits, the tree grove and the significant presence of children on the day of the tour, and subsequent visits by the artist proved the best possible match.

Parks Maintenance staff are able to install the sculptures at LBA park and have noted that the proposed artwork tableau will be a better use of the site location and an appealing addition to the park. Installation would be completed August/September of 2021.

The artist has estimated the value of the proposed donation of seven sculptures to be at \$160,000.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Pig Listening in a Story Place and *Girl Reading in a Story Place (with Mole)*, were each selected by public vote as winners in the Percival Plinth Project, in 2018 and 2020 for inclusion in the City public art collection.

Options:

1. Recognize donation of seven sculptures for the Installation "A Story Place" as a gift of art from Artist Nancy Thorne-Chambers.
2. Do not Recognize donation of seven sculptures for the Installation "A Story Place" as a gift of art from Artist Nancy Thorne-Chambers.
3. Recognize donation of seven sculptures for the Installation "A Story Place" as a gift of art from Artist Nancy Thorne-Chambers at another time.

Financial Impact:

City materials costs, sitting rocks and dedication plaque estimated at less than \$4,000, from the Municipal Art Fund.

Attachments:

Policy - Gifts of Artwork to the City

A Story Place Gift Proposal

A Story Place Additional Proposal

Sketch of Proposed Installation at LBA Park