



## Arts Commission

### A Story Place Donation

**Agenda Date:** 4/8/2021  
**Agenda Item Number:**  
**File Number:** 21-0344

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**Type:** recommendation   **Version:** 1   **Status:** Filed

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#### Title

A Story Place Donation

#### Recommended Action

Move to recommend **A Story Place**, by Nancy Thorne Chambers to the City Manager as a donation to the City Public Art Collection.

#### Report

##### Issue:

To review the Gift of Art Proposal using the criteria included in the Gift of Art Policy (attached.) and determine whether to recommend donation of **A Story Place** to the City Manager for inclusion in the City's Public Art Collection. Per the Gift Policy: "If the gift will have substantial community impact, the City Manager, at his discretion, may forward the proposed gift to the Olympia City Council for review and approval."

#### Staff Contact:

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

#### Presenter(s):

N/A

#### Background and Analysis:

In January of 2021, artist Nancy Thorne Chambers delivered a proposal of **A Story Place** to the Arts Commission for consideration as a gift of art (see attached). **A Story Place** is a tableau of an assortment of ceramic animals 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 two sculptures through the Percival Plinth Project. The original gift proposal provided five sculptures to add to the two the City currently owns to create a small tableau.

The proposal also came with the proposal that the sculpture be installed in the open gathering area or play area by the Percival Landing boardwalk in downtown Olympia. While the artist's intent was to have the sculpture sited in an area with a lot of children nearby, she also notes that adjacency to salt water is hard on the surface patina. Following discussion with the artist and City Parks staff, and a tour of several possible locations, the artist has both changed their location proposal and added two additional sculptures to the proposal.

The amended proposal (see attachments) includes the sculptures, *Rabbit Bear*, *Toad*, *Fox*, *Fawn* and *Skunk*, and a stack of *storybooks*, all in bronze to add to the *Girl* and *Pig* the City currently owns. In addition, *Mole* 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.

Arts staff has made preliminary inquiries into the potential for installation of the proposal by the Parks Department. Site constrictions include a number of tree roots and an existing concrete pad formerly used for a (now gone) picnic table. Not only are there no red flags from Parks staff, but there is also general agreement that the proposed artwork tableau will be a better use of the space and an appealing addition to the park. Regarding materials, bronze is a known and stable material. The patinas are not color stable, but annual application of wax will slow the change to green. The artist is not expecting the patinas to remain in foundry condition.

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, for inclusion in the City public art collection.

**Options:**

- 1) Recommend the gift of **A Story Place** to the City Manager for inclusion in the Public Art Collection.
- 2) Review gift proposal of **A Story Place** and provide feedback for Ms. Thorne-Chambers, to amend and return proposal.
- 3) Do not recommend the gift of **A Story Place**.

**Financial Impact:**

City installation, materials, sitting rocks and dedication plaque estimated at less than \$4,000.

**Attachments:**

A Story Place gift proposal

A Story Place additional proposal

Sketch of proposed installation at LBA Park

Gift of Art Policy