

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN PUBLIC ART POLICY

Purpose

Public art adds to the character and quality of life of a community while creating a sense of place. Public art plays an important role in establishing civic identity, community pride, and creating a cultural economy. The installation of public art can energize an otherwise ordinary space and make it a special place distinct from anywhere else. The intent of this administrative public art policy is to provide additional opportunities for creating attractive public spaces to be used and enjoyed by Township residents, workers, and visitors.

Goals

Meridian Township is committed to providing public art of exceptional quality which adds to the vibrancy and identity of the community. The Township strives to:

- Use public art to help express the Township's historic and cultural heritage.
- Foster understanding and enjoyment of public art.
- Instill and foster community pride and spirit.
- Enrich the quality of life for the community and the region by creating unique and vibrant public spaces.
- Integrate public art into new Township facilities.
- Enhance the Township's image locally, regionally, and nationally.
- Recognize the contribution of public art in economic development.

Public Art Definition

Public art, as defined by this policy, encompasses all types of visual art and artistic disciplines. Public art governed by this policy shall be visually and physically accessible to the public. Funding for public art will come from grants, donations, or Township funds.

Public Art Committee

As needed, the Township Board shall appoint an ad-hoc public art committee. The Committee's responsibilities shall include obtaining funding, securing locations for installation of artwork, releasing RFPs for artwork, selection of artists, contracting with artists, supervising fabrication, coordinating the placement, and dedication of artwork. The Committee shall be made up of five to nine members. The Committee members should be a diverse group representing residents, businesses, associations, and artists, among others. All members must be free of conflict of interest or potential for financial gain. Whenever appropriate, the Committee is encouraged to have an outreach program to receive input from residents, businesses, and other interested parties.

Art Selection Process

The process outlined below is suggested for carrying out a commissioned public art project. The phases are intended to be guidelines, as it is recognized each commissioned piece is unique and adjustments will need to be tailored to each individual project.

Creation of Request for Proposals (RFP).

Prior to sending out the RFP, the Public Art Committee will meet to assess the specific needs, requirements, and expectations of the public art installation. It is recommended the Committee establish scoring criteria for inclusion in any RFP.

With agreement on the public art project and support from the Township Board, the Committee should prepare and send out a RFP to artists. The call shall include project specifics regarding the location, style or nature of the placement, type and theme of project, and a budget. The RFP could be distributed to artists locally, throughout Michigan, or nationally so the best possible pool of candidates can be assembled. Applicants may be asked to provide the following:

- Small scale model or rough draft of a three-dimensional work (when appropriate) or complete drawings of a two-dimensional work.
- Drawings or photographs that demonstrate the relationship of the artwork to the site.
- Material samples for the artwork and any relevant construction materials.
- Installation details.
- Description of routine maintenance and estimate of maintenance costs.
- Artist's resume.
- Statement of interest in the project.
- Budget.

Artist Selection and Contracts.

Public Art will be reviewed by the Public Art Committee with a recommendation to the Township Board for final action. The following criteria will be used in any recommendation:

- Use of local artists.
- Quality and condition of the artwork.
- Context in the Township's collection. Does artwork enhance the existing collection or add diversity? How does the piece engage the public? Are the materials appropriate?
- Availability of an appropriate site.
- Durability of the artwork.
- Ability to maintain the artwork.
- Aesthetic merit.

Contracts will be completed under the supervision of the Township Manager and Township Attorney when needed. Ownership of the artwork shall be transferred to the Township at the time of installation, with no rights remaining with the artist(s). The contract should protect the Township from the artist(s) duplicating the exact work for sale to others.

During design and installation, the Public Art Committee shall work with the artist to ensure all objectives are being met. Once the art is installed, the Committee will hold a dedication ceremony to formally introduce the art and the artist will be identified with an appropriate plaque on the site.

General Guidelines

- Donated or loaned artwork will be reviewed by the Public Art Committee with a recommendation to the Township Board for final action.
- All donated works will become part of the Township's art collection and as such may be relocated or decommissioned.
- Donated or loaned artwork will include identifying plaques.
- Monetary donations to help fund public art will be accepted at any time and the Township shall set the donated money aside in a separate account to be used for new art purchases or maintenance of existing artwork.
- Proposed commissioned memorial art shall not ordinarily honor a living person, unless that person has made a significant and outstanding contribution to the arts or service to the Township. A waiting period of at least one year should elapse before any nomination occurs.
- Relocation or decommissioning of artwork, while at the sole discretion of the Township Board, may be considered using one or more of the following reasons:
 - The condition or security of the artwork cannot be reasonably guaranteed.
 - The artwork presents a public safety risk.
 - The artwork is damaged and repair is not feasible.
 - Significant changes in the use, character, or actual design of the site require a re-evaluation of the artwork's relationship to the site.
 - The artwork requires excessive maintenance or has failures of design or workmanship.

Documentation/Evaluation

Periodically, the Committee will review the Public Art policy to determine how it may be improved to better meet the needs and interests of the community and the goals of the public art program, especially immediately following a selection.

Funding

The Township whenever possible will financially support the installation and maintenance of public art within the constraints of the yearly budget.