

Final decision on metal frames has yet to be made

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Park) bike path. I don't think they should be on Center Street at all, and that's my opinion."

Deputy Mayor Vic Eydt said, "I'm not making any decision on that tonight."

'Lewiston Public Art Project'

The LCA proposed the "Lewiston Public Art Project" with an intent to "create the everyday, casual encounters with art – with beauty, imagination and creativity – that inspire and connect us all," per its Niagara River Greenway Commission submission.

"The goal of the 'Lewiston Public Art Project' is to welcome trail users to Lewiston, encourage a longer stay in the area, and then lead participants – via Artpark or along Center Street – back to the Niagara River and onward towards Four Mile Creek Park, Joseph Davis Park, Youngstown and Fort Niagara."

LCA estimated the total project cost to be \$153,533, with another \$4,000 in annual maintenance fees. It is seeking \$90,000 in Greenway funds to put toward the project's three main components:

√ A mural on the Academy Park comfort station – designed by Maureen Kellick and Buttery.

√ "Lewiston"-branded benches at the Discover Niagara Shuttle



Lee Simonson asks trustees to consider additional public input on the proposed metal art frames.

tour stops (Eighth and Center, Fifth and Center, Water and Center streets) – crafted by Buttery.

√ A "Lewiston Living Art Gallery" – a collection of art displayed in the metal frames, and possibly local artist displays/shows.

At a July Village Board meeting, Buttery spoke at length on his plans for benches, and trustees offered positive feedback on the idea. Renderings were displayed that night, and then shared by the media.

In the August session, Mayor

Anne Welch spoke of the comfort station mural wrap. She introduced Kellick and Buttery, and she did say the overall art proposal included metal frames.

However, the topic was brought up right before residents were to speak on the Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours' proposed docking system, so it was not top of mind.

A conversation on the mural quickly shifted to moving the "Spirit of Victory" monument from River Road into Academy Park.

No further details were provided on the metal frames, nor were any renderings presented.

Trustees voted to accept the art project.

They subsequently said they didn't know the metal frames were included in the motion to approve.

Coppins said, "The problem is, shame on us, when you guys came with that package, we did approve the mural on the bathroom wall; we did approve the benches. We did not approve the art signs. ..."

"I think the whole thing probably should have went through the proper channels like we make everything else. It should've went to HPC, Planning, and then us. And maybe even having a public hearing, too."

'Living Art Gallery'

In the LCA's application, the lesser-known element is defined as part of the "Lewiston Living Art Gallery," a "series of ten large scale, two-sided outdoor frames that will start on the Center Street side of Academy Park and then continue, on both sides of the street, down to Hennepin Park. The frames themselves are artis-

tic creations and their design will be the first of its kind: the frames will be able to rotate to display works that are oriented either vertically or horizontally, and will illuminate the artwork after sunset. This open-air gallery will feature art works curated by theme, by artist or by other commonalities that will change on a determined schedule."

In speaking with trustees, LCA Executive Director Maria Fortuna Dean stressed the frames could be moved off Center Street. She reiterated to this reporter, "the locations are not decided on or in any way set."

Dean shared public letters of support for the project.

In one, she quoted Lewiston-Porter Superintendent of Schools Paul Casseri as stating, "The Lewiston Council for the Arts, through its ongoing commitment to nurturing an environment ripe for art and cultural activities, has consistently demonstrated how the arts can be a catalyst for positive change, enrichment, and community building. ... The 'Lewiston Public Art Project' promises to weave art into the fabric of daily life. By initiating casual encounters with beauty, imagination and creativity, it seeks to foster inspiration, connection, and a renewed appreciation for the world around us. The three-tiered approach – comprising the mural at Academy Park, the 'Lewiston Living Art Gallery' and the artistic benches for the Niagara Shuttle stops – is a thoughtful strategy to usher in a seamless blend of art and functionality."

Buttery said, "I know we have our historic areas, but Center Street, with all the different restaurants and that, it's a conglomerate of artists. The businesses, the restaurants – the cooks are artists. The bartenders are artists."

He said metal frames could showcase work from local artists and even student artists, because "They have no spot to display their work. Unless you're a well-known artist, you're not going to get your name or art into the Albright or Castellani."

Kellick said the "Lewiston Public Art Project" is the result of five years of conversations between elected leaders, the LCA and the citizen art committee.

She noted, "We have a historical group; we have a Garden Club. I think that there needs to be some flexibility and respect that we do have a group of artists, professional people, who have worked together and evaluated our village the way everyone in this room does, and offered up some of our best ideas."

Welch said, "I think it's a good project. I think it's great for the young kids from the schools; I think it's great for our local artists. ... I think it's something people would enjoy seeing as they come through the park."

The LCA appeared before the Town of Lewiston in September, asking for Greenway proposal sponsorship – as is required to obtain funding from the Host Communities Standing Committee. Dean presented the full plan, which was approved by council members.

With the Village Board pulling back one of the "Lewiston Public Art Project" proposal components, Town of Lewiston Supervisor Steve Broderick said his board would revisit its Greenway endorsement at the next council meeting.

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