

**Novelo, Lilia**

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**Subject:** FW: Playhouse Plaza public art - appeal  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg

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**From:** Jomsky, Mark  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 14, 2012 7:47 AM  
**To:** Bogaard, Bill; Bogaard, Bill; Gene Masuda; Gordo, Victor; Holden, Chris; Holden, Chris; Madison, Steve; Madison, Steve; Masuda, Gene; McAustin, Margaret; McAustin, Margaret; Robinson, Jacque; Robinson, Jacque; Tornek, Terry  
**Cc:** Beck, Michael; Bagneris, Michele; Mermell, Steve; Gutierrez, Julie; Berton, Vince; Branch, Rochelle; DeWolfe, Stephanie; Flores, Silvia; Novelo, Lilia; Vandervort, Kathy  
**Subject:** FW: Playhouse Plaza public art - appeal

Good morning,

The email below provides correspondence related to the Appeal on the Playhouse Plaza Public Art (a public hearing) scheduled for Monday, July 16, 2012. Hard copies will be provided at the meeting and a copy will be posted on the City's agenda webpage as correspondence. Please let me know if you have any questions. Have a nice weekend.

Regards,

Mark Jomsky  
City Clerk  
City of Pasadena  
(626) 744-4709 (Direct)  
(626) 372-6769

On Jul 13, 2012, at 5:00 PM, "Bogaard, Bill" <[bbogaard@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:bbogaard@cityofpasadena.net)> wrote:

Mark: This should be part of the public record, and copies might be sent to any persons u know who are interested in the matter. Many thanks, BILL

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**From:** David Saeta [[dsaeta@idsrealestate.com](mailto:dsaeta@idsrealestate.com)]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 13, 2012 2:56 PM  
**To:** Bogaard, Bill; [holden88@msn.com](mailto:holden88@msn.com); Tornek, Terry; Madison, Steve; Robinson, Jacque; Gordo, Victor; [mmcaustin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mmcaustin@sbcglobal.net); [genomas@aol.com](mailto:genomas@aol.com)  
**Subject:** FW: Playhouse Plaza public art - appeal

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers,

I am forwarding an email I sent to Councilman Holden on June 20<sup>th</sup> when I believed a Call Up was required. It contains the background information why we feel an appeal is necessary.

Having just seen the staff report for the Monday, July 16<sup>th</sup> appeal hearing, I'd just like to indicate that we respectfully disagree with Staff's interpretation of the facts and their recommendations.

We are happy to participate in the City's Public Art Program and feel as though we've done everything that's been asked of us. The City Approved art consultant and artist have done a wonderful job of coming up with a brilliant, emblematic and unifying theme for the public art that will enhance Playhouse Plaza, the Pasadena Playhouse and the entire Playhouse District. Stefanos Polyzoides has been engaged throughout the process to make sure the art integrates well with the project, is sited to connect with

and honor the Pasadena Playhouse and is contextual. Pasadena Heritage and Pasadenans for a Livable City have been integrally involved and are supportive of the art. The Playhouse was flattered by the art and is also supportive.

The commission granted Conceptual Approval of the jester – and asked the artist to meet with the significant cultural resources in the Playhouse District to give the him an even better understanding of the rich cultural and artistic heritage of the Playhouse District to provide a basis for expanding the storytelling aspects of the jester.

Ramon Velasco (the artist) did what he was asked to do – and from the interviews determined that all 8 artistic resources in the District had touched Shakespeare in one form or another. He took that unifying theme to heart and titled his sculpture “The Performer”, a prominent actor in Shakespeare’s work.

We love the artist’s work, respect the process and believe “artistic license” best belongs to the artist.

Again, sorry to have bothered you with this. Please don’t hesitate to call me if you have any questions. My cell is 213-446-3969.

Thanks for your consideration,

Dave

Councilman Holden,

Thanks very much for helping with our public art requirement. I’m attaching the following background information in case you want to see it:

- Photo of Ramon Velasco’s bronze sculpture (model is in clay);
- Staff report recommending against approval dated June 13, 2012;
- Artist’s responses to the Staff/Commission conditions of approval dated June 13, 2012;
- Notice of Decision granting concept approval dated February 21, 2012

Here are the relevant points, from my perspective:

- We complied with the City’s requirement to engage a qualified art consultant;
- We reviewed a list of over 30 qualified public artists prepared by the city approved art consultant;
- We narrowed the list down to two and then conducted extensive due diligence on each of the finalists and interviewed them. We included both architects (Gensler and Stefanos Polyzoides) as well as the representatives from PLC (both Pasadena Heritage and Pasadenans for a Livable City).
- The group unanimously selected Ramon Velasco – an accomplished artist who lives in Pasadena and who has successfully completed public art projects for surrounding cities as well at USC;
- Ramon came up with the idea of a jester as emblematic of the performing arts district of Pasadena and presented the jester sculpture to the art commission on February 8, 2012 – and the Art Commission granted conceptual approval. With their approval, they suggested the artist meet with the many of the arts resources in the Playhouse District to expand the work’s imagery, incorporate text and expand upon the storytelling aspects of the work;

- Ramon met with the Playhouse, Boston Court, Red Hen Press, A Noise Within, Vroman’s, Ice House, Laemmle’s, Pacific Asian Museum, and Pasadena Museum of California Art – and determined that each and every one of them had a connection to Shakespeare;
- As such, he titled his work “The Performer” as a unifying nod to the Shakespearean character featured in 27 out of 37 of Shakespeare’s plays, and added two significant textual quotes – as desired by the commission as well as a significant amount of detail which the commission recognized as “excellent craftsmanship”;
- The staff report rejected the work;
- The commission supported staff’s assessment. Comments from both staff and the commission seemed to focus upon their “charge to deliver contemporary art to Pasadena” – and my sense is that they think a historical figure, symbolic of the performing arts, is traditional and not contemporary – and as such, does not fit their charter;
- As you have seen over the years with this project, I have been willing to work with all types of folks to find common ground for the good of the community. In this case, two members of the community spoke in strong favor of the artist’s work (Nina Chomsky and Sue Mossman) while no members of the public spoke in opposition. Normally, I would offer to work with staff and the commission to fine tune a solution – but I am not getting any indication that staff would work cooperatively to fine-tune the jester: My sense is their underlying desire is to get rid of the jester even though the commission approved the concept of a jester.
- It’s been 7 days since the hearing and we still don’t have the Notice of Decision – but I suspect the letter will be devoid of specific changes they’d like to see to approve the “Performer”. The comments from the staff and commissioners tend to be very abstract and not concrete.
- In sum, I don’t have confidence that working with staff and the commission will result in a jester – and as such, I am requesting that the City Council judge the artist’s work against the requirements of the City’s stated objectives and requirements.

Thanks very much for your consideration – and if there is any other information that would be helpful, please let me know. Since our hearing was on June 13, I believe we need to have the appeal/call for review completed by Friday, June 22. To protect our project, we’ll also have to submit an appeal tomorrow as well.

Dave  
213-446-3969

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<image001.jpg>

<Performer Maquette  
012.jpg>

<Staff Report Final 680  
E Colorado Final Art

Plan 6-13-2012.pdf>

<Response to Feb 21.docx>

<680 E Colorado Conditions of Approval Ltr 2-21-2012.pdf>