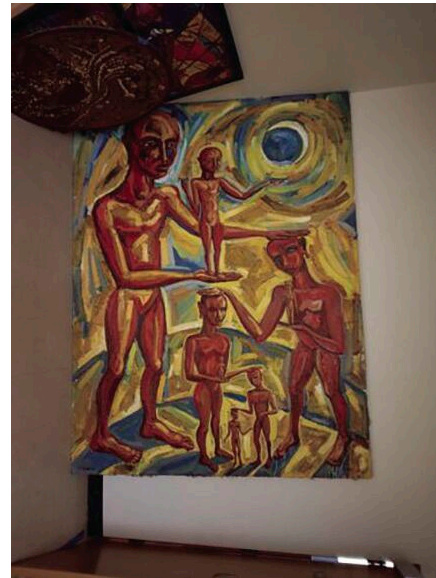


City seeks grant to continue eccentric art display

September 9, 2023



The City Council approved two items, last week: one was approval to seek a Coast Central Credit Union grant for up to \$25,000; The other action was to adjust the city budget \$4250 to accommodate this expenditure. The vote to allocate these funds narrowly passed 3-2, with Councilor Jason Greenough, Mayor Pro Tem Blake Inscore and Mayor Isaiah Wright voting YES and councilors Kelley Schellong and Ray Altman casting NO votes.

The City acquired the over 900-piece collection of non-traditional art, mosaics and sculptures from Hambro Group's former tenant Val Polyanin. For two decades, the eccentric Ukrainian artist displayed his works on Highway 101, South Beach. Polyanin left his collection, then relocated to Chicago where he currently resides.

In June of last year, the Council presented, then accepted the Hambro donation request and directed staff to store the art in the vacated Bank of America building at 250 H St. The Council further allocated \$10,000 from the Economic Development budget and discussed options for what the city would do with Polyanin works.

In August of last year, staff photographed, catalogued and inventoried 914 pieces of the Polyanin collection and valued the capital asset at \$694,500.

In February, utilizing funds from the Economic Development budget, which included \$1500 of received donations, the city developed, organized and presented the Polyanin collection on the First Friday event from

May and ending this October.

With the ultimate goal of establishing the former bank building into the new city hall, time is limited.

A Preservation Committee was organized with a vested interest in finding a new home for the collection. Committee goals are:

- Where will the art go after the construction of City Hall begins?
- Who will pay for the future costs of storing or exhibiting the work?
- Who will staff or manage the collection?

The City has and continues to consult with several individuals including the Kohler Foundation in Chicago in finding a new home for the avant-garde collection.

With the city poised to apply for the \$25,000 grant with funds directed for leasing, utility and other related tenant costs, opposition for future funding from City resources is palpable. The Coast Credit Union grant requires the recipient pay any costs upfront, then submit a request for reimbursement.

If the city is awarded the grant, per lease terms of a prospective new site for storage or display, additional funding may be needed. According to Ashley Taylor, the City Economic Development and Recreation Director, the \$4,250 expenditure for this project is estimated to include \$2,500 for utilities, \$1,200 for exhibition supplies and \$500 for advertising and marketing.