

# ADVISORY COMMUNICATION



**To:** Edina City Council

**From:** Barbara La Valleur, Arts & Culture Commissioner and Chair, Public Art Edina  
Michael Frey, Art Center General Manager

**Date:** 21 July 2015

**Council Agenda** Item IX. D. Advisory Communication from Arts & Culture Commission in support of Acquisition of a K9 Sculpture

## **Action Requested:**

Approve and accept the donation of a K9 Sculpture to be placed outdoors at Edina City Hall.

## **Situation:**

Public Art Edina received an initial \$5,000 donation in May 2015 for the acquisition of a bronze canine sculpture to honor the Canine Unit and the Edina Police Department.

## **Background:**

History: In 1972, Police Officer Doug Madsen approached then Chief of Police Bennett about starting a canine program in the City of Edina. Chief Bennett liked the idea, and Officer Madsen volunteered to be the first canine handler with a donated 20 month old German Shepherd dog named Jet.

The tradition of canine units in the City of Edina continues today with generous financial support of the Edina Federated Women's Club, the Edina Crime Prevention Fund, the Pohlada Family Foundation, and Edina Public Schools – WISE Guys Club, Scout Pack 78, Dow Water & Process Solutions and many others. The canine program would not be possible without the efforts of many who worked tirelessly.

Public Art Edina has entertained the idea of a canine sculpture as far back as 2009. The recent \$5,000 Federated Women's Club donation reinvigorates the conversation between the Edina City Council, the Federated Women's Club, the Police Department, the Crime Prevention Fund Committee, the Edina Community Foundation, the Arts & Culture Commission and Public Art Edina.

## **Assessment:**

An initial gift of \$5,000 has generously been made, and ongoing conversations and fundraising efforts are underway. The next step is to respectfully seek input from Edina City Council regarding acceptance, location, and plaque honoring the donors.

Public Art Edina has identified Edina resident and artist Michelle Recke as a possible artist for the



commissioned piece, and a purchased maquette of the artist's canine sculpture work serves to help visualize the scope of the project.

Coincidentally, the Art Center received an e-mail from resident Elizabeth Stevens in January 2015 in support of the project and the offer to help.

The information and photos below are from a presentation to the Edina Federated Women's Club compiled by Barbara La Valleur.



Maquette of Kodiak by Artist Michelle Recke



Public Art Edina has discussed the possibility of having a sculpture in front of City Hall for many years. We always come back to a K-9 sculpture as it is directly in front City Hall and the Edina Police which enjoys an abundance of traffic.

With the generous gift of \$5,000 Public Art Edina would like use those funds towards commissioning a K-9 sculpture. We have been in discussion with an Edina sculpture artist who specializes in bronze dogs. She has done a maquette of Kodiak which was brought to our annual meeting. Thanks to Ruth Valgema, a passionate dog lover, former member of Public Art Edina who bought the Kodiak replica at the Edina Art Center Members' Juried Show. She kindly agreed to allow Susan Smith to bring it to the meeting.

It is wonderful that the Edina Federated Women's Club supports this sculpture given the historical fact that this organization initially funded the K-9 officer, Kodiak, 15 years ago.

In discussions with Public Art Edina members, the K-9 handler and the City Communications Department, it was agreed that Kodiak would be the perfect 'model' for such a sculpture due to his



exemplary service as well as his beautiful coloring which will be visible in the patina of the bronze.

Kodiak, whose Badge # was 11, was about three feet in height and weighted about 75 pounds. He began with the Edina Police Department in 2002 at the age of 2. His handler and partner was Sgt. Kevin Rofidal who is no stranger to this organization. Kodiak retired March 3rd, 2010 and died three years later.

Kodiak's career included 841 narcotics searches, 197 missing person searches and multiple other services (including once tracking down a window peeper). In addition, during his career Kodiak made a name for himself nationally, placing 12th out of 98 dogs in the 2007 National Detector Dog Trial.

Later, Diesel, Badge #12, joined the force and retired Dec. 27th, 2014 dying very unexpectedly just a week later. So the timing of creating a K-9 sculpture is timely and critical.

It is believed that no K-9 officer has been honored with a life sized bronze sculpture. Wouldn't it be great if the Edina Federated Women's Club funded the first K-9 sculpture in the state for Edina?

Estimates for the sculpture are about \$10,000 which does not include any work that may have to be done if the City allows it to be located in front of City Hall. There may need to be a raised area created so that the sculpture would be visible as you drive in front of the building. In addition, we would want to have a bronze plaque with Edina Federated Women's Club as the donors as well as the names of all our K-9 officers and their handlers would have a prominent place by the sculpture.

Once the funding for the project is in place, Public Art Edina must follow city protocol to present it to the City Council for their approval before going forward. It has been approved by Public Art Edina and the Edina Arts and Culture Commission.

It is anticipated that there will be keen interest by people - especially children - wanting their photo taken by the sculpture and I believe the large bronze plaque will be a positive reflection of the great contributions to our city from this organization. Thank you.

Next Steps: Meet with members of Edina Federated Women's Club, the Edina Crime Prevention Fund, the Edina Police Department and Public Art Edina to discuss project specifics, i.e. size of sculpture, cost, and placement of work.

**Recommendation:**

It is the recommendation of the Arts & Culture Commission and Public Art Edina that Edina City Council approves and accepts the donation of a K9 Sculpture to be placed at Edina City Hall.