



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:20-1052

Agenda Item Number: 21.

Agenda Date: 1/30/2020

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Department of Arts & Culture

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Debbie Racca-Sittre

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: All

SUBJECT:

Donation Agreement with Enrique Carbajal aka Sebastian Sculptor and Siempre Mexico, Inc. for the donation of the sculpture "La Puerta de la Igualdad" (The Door of Equality)

SUMMARY:

This Ordinance authorizes a Donation Agreement with Enrique Carbajal aka Sebastian Sculptor and Siempre Mexico, Inc. for a donation of the sculpture "La Puerta de la Igualdad" (The Door of Equality) to the City of San Antonio.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Almost 20 years ago, the City of San Antonio received "Antorcha de Amistad" (The Torch of Friendship), a monumental gateway sculpture created by renowned Mexican sculptor Enrique Carbajal, known professionally as Sebastian, as a gift of state from the Mexican government and San Antonio's Mexican business community. The installation of the Torch in 2002 represented a major milestone for public art in San Antonio, becoming downtown's first large-scale contemporary sculpture, placed just blocks from The Alamo, nearby Historic River Walk, and Hemisfair. At 65 feet in height, the sculpture is a towering abstract form composed of vivid red triangular columns that rise, curl and salute the united and friendly relations between San Antonio and Mexico and now serves as the gateway to the new River Walk Public Art Garden.

In 2019, the City-wide exhibit "Sebastian in San Antonio: 50+ Years / 20+ Sites / 100+ Works" was coordinated by the Department of Arts & Culture and its collaborative partners. The retrospective celebrates Sebastian's more than 50-year career and features more than 100 sculptures and works of the famed Mexican artist. The

exhibit opened in September 2019 and will be on display until May 2020 in more than 20 locations around San Antonio and even includes some of Sebastian's private collection. Stakeholders and participating partners include: The Department of Arts & Culture, World Heritage Office, San Antonio Public Library, Center City Development Office, Aviation Department, Avenida Guadalupe, University of Texas at San Antonio, University Hospital, Alamo Colleges, Mexican Cultural Institute, Mexican Consulate, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), and the McNay Art Museum.

In 2020, a second downtown gateway sculpture by Sebastian is being gifted to the City of San Antonio, a city that the artist now considers his second home. The artwork was designed to be located at the center of the San Pedro Avenue roundabout, a block north of San Antonio Central Library, itself an award-winning post-modern architectural treasure designed by renowned Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta. The San Pedro Avenue roundabout is currently the home of a sculpture on loan. The new permanent sculpture, “La Puerta de la Igualdad” (The Door of Equality) will feature two 30-foot-tall royal blue columns that stand side by side as tightly wound geometric pillars that rise into the sky, equal in strength and beauty leaving the center open to symbolize the infinite struggle for justice. The torqued and twisted steel columns showcase the grind of the work done by human rights champions in San Antonio. These pillars, set as a gateway, symbolize that San Antonio’s door is always open, a nod to our tenacious history.

The rich royal blue color of the two columns is representing the dichotomy for the 2 pillars. On one column, the color blue represents peace, tranquility and wisdom; loyalty, strength and trust on the other. The pillars will also be lighted from the inside. This new welcoming landmark will signify the promise of opportunity in San Antonio and our community’s commitment to protecting rights, liberties, and freedom. The sculpture is valued at \$800,000 and is being gifted as a ‘thank you’ from the artist Sebastian, for the City’s generosity and work on his City-wide retrospective as well as a symbol of his love for San Antonio and passion for geometric symbolism. In November 2019, the San Antonio Arts Commission approved the donation of the piece “La Puerta de la Igualdad” (The Door of Equality).

ISSUE:

City Council is being asked to approve a Donation Agreement with Enrique Carbajal aka Sebastian Sculptor and Siempre Mexico, Inc. for a donation of the sculpture La Puerta de la Igualdad (The Door of Equality) to the City of San Antonio.

In 2020, a downtown gateway sculpture by Sebastian will be installed as a gift to the city and will be located at the center of the San Pedro Avenue roundabout. “La Puerta de la Igualdad” (The Door of Equality) will feature two 30-foot-tall royal blue internally lighted columns that stand side by side as tightly wound geometric pillars that rise into the sky, equal in strength and beauty leaving the center open to symbolize the infinite struggle for justice and equality.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council could choose not to approve the donation agreement for the sculpture “La Puerta de la Igualdad” (The Door of Equality) by Sebastian. The City would have to forego the asset of the \$800,000 piece being added to our public art inventory. Additionally, The San Pedro roundabout, the planned location for the sculpture, would not gain a permanent gateway public art piece.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The sculpture is valued at \$800,000 and is being donated to the City’s inventory of Public Art. Transportation,

foundation design and installation of the piece in the amount of \$167,203.67 will be paid to various on-call vendors using 1% for Public Art funds from the 2012 General Obligation Bond Streets Program in connection with the Downtown Streets Reconstruction Project.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff and the San Antonio Arts Commission recommend that City Council approve this ordinance accepting a gift of the sculpture “La Puerta de la Igualdad” (The Door of Equality) from the sculptor Enrique Carbajal and Siempre Mexico, Inc. to the City of San Antonio.