

Nancy Diamond
Co-chair
Richard Epstein
Co-chair

April 9, 2020

The Honorable James Marpe
First Selectman
Westport, CT 06880

Kathie Bennewitz
Miggs Burroughs

Re: 8-24 Filing Request
Responsible Party: Westport Arts Advisory Committee (WAAC)

Eric Chiang
Frederick Chiu

Via email, 2 Attachments

John Dodig

To the Honorable Jim Marpe:

Lee Goldstein
Dierdre Kelly
Dierdre Price

An important sculpture soon will be added to the Westport Public Art Collections (WestPAC), *Rock Paper Scissors Monument* (2013) by Kevin Box, donated by long-time Westport arts philanthropists Ann Sheffer and her husband Bill Sheffler.

Kelle Ruden
Carole Schweid

As the “Responsible Party” for this project, the Westport Arts Advisory Committee (WAAC) is seeking approval to site this sculpture adjacent to the Westport Library.

Elizabeth Strick
Jim Marpe
First Selectman



Kevin Box
Rock Paper Scissors Monument (2013)
Bronze, stainless steel with granite base
111 in h (9. 25 ft) x 36 in w x 35 in;
Santa Fe artist Kevin Box pushes boundaries of traditional metal casting by creating sculptures that are so delicate, detailed, and weightless that they appear to be made simply of paper. The unique combination of the delicacy of paper with the fortitude of metal created whimsical, fun and beautiful pieces with surprising weight, both literally and figuratively. *“It took two years of tireless experimentation for me to develop the process of casting paper into bronze, another seven years to perfect it & continues to evolve today”*

Description of the Project & How it will be Accomplished:

Rock Paper Scissors currently sits in the yard of the donors’ home on Saugatuck Island. Upon request and at the donors’ cost, it will be moved and re-sited to the Library by [Crozier Fine Arts](#). Crozier is a global leader in fine art storage and logistics and has worked on many projects for the donor, the Library and on projects managed by Kathleen Motes Bennewitz as an independent curator. We estimate (although not yet confirmed due to Covid) the installation will take 4 to 5 hours. The given sculpture has a granite base which will be secured to a concrete base, set at a structurally appropriate depth, determined and cured in advance. The project will be overseen by Town Curator Kathleen Bennewitz, who is a member of both the WAAC and WestPAC committees.

History of the Project:

- Donors Ann Sheffer and Bill Scheffler are both lifelong Westporters and graduates of Staples High School. Ann was a member of the RTM from 1993 to 2005, and served as chair of the Library, Museum, and Arts Committee.
- She was appointed by President Bill Clinton to the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities from 1993 to 2000; and from 2005 to 2013 she served on the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. Over the years, Ann has served on the Board of Directors of several Westport arts organizations including the Westport Library, Westport Playhouse, Westport Arts Center and Westport Historical Society; and was a founding member of the Westport Arts Advisory Committee. She and her husband Bill Scheffler, who also served on the RTM from 1993-2005, are avid art collectors and have donated several works to WestPAC.
- Ann and Bill moved to Palm Springs, CA, giving up a Westport residency for the first time since their births. Ann approached Town Curator Kathie Bennewitz in February 2020, expressing their interest in donating *Rock Paper Scissors* to WestPAC.

Reasons for the Project:

- Westport has expanded the Westport Public Art Collections by donations of original and distinguished artworks to the Town and Public Schools since the Westport Arts Advisory Committee (WAAC) was founded in 1994 by Westport artist Bert Chernow. Bert believed that art was essential enrichment for a community and its students. He launched the Collections (WestPAC) initially by seeking donations from artist colleagues and collector friends; WestPAC today consists of more than 1,800 works of art, which can be found in our schools and town sites. It is also searchable [online](#) for all to access.
- Chernow's beliefs and actions were built onto Westport's already existing reputation as an "art town." Part of WAAC's mission is to perpetuate that reputation. As much of WestPAC is not visible to the public, eg. works hanging in schools now with limited security access, outdoor public art is a way for both residents and visitors to enjoy our collections.
- Outdoor public art is no stranger to Westport, as both our [Minuteman](#) (1909-10) and [Doughboy](#) (1930), sculptures commissioned from prominent American artists, stand today as civic monuments. All across town, sculpture donations to WestPAC have been sited outdoors, for example: [A Bridge in Time](#), (on the Riverwalk) is enjoyed by passersby downtown; [A Woman's Head](#), (Staples High School by students and teachers alike from the art studios and school approach; and most recently, [The Couple](#) (bequest to the town by Susan Malloy, placed on loan at Earthplace). For more than a hundred years, art in public places and spaces has been a critical component of Westport's culture.
- Outdoor public art is consistent with neighboring Connecticut towns as well. Norwalk and Stamford have emerged as two Fairfield County municipalities with rich public art programs designed to place works in city facilities and public areas. Norwalk has a lively [Public Murals & Traffic Graphic Program](#); Stamford annually hosts [Downtown Abstractions](#), a themed outdoor sculpture exhibit that is part of its robust public art initiative. New London has recently initiated a [Sculpture Mile](#) on public land that is hailed as a destination by state tourism.
- Placing a sculpture donated by one of Westport's noted philanthropists near the Library, one of Ann Sheffer's beloved Westport not-for-profit institutions, seems to be an appropriate way to acknowledge her ongoing contributions to the Town as well.

Public Benefit:

- It has been demonstrated, in stellar communities across the nation and the state, that a successful public art program builds a positive sense of community, contributes to economic growth and tourism, and enriches the lives of individuals. A member recently appointed to the Boston Arts Commission said it best, *“public art can educate, inform, delight, and surprise the viewer with their messages of strength and beauty while elevating a sense of pride for its residents. All of the great cities around the world are known for their public art.”*
- The uplifting sculpture *Rock Paper Scissors* embodies the creativity and learning one associates with our newly reimagined Library. It will assist in attracting children and families to the vibrant learning center.
- The location of the sculpture, in the narrow green median between the head of the town's newly created pathways leading to the Library's main entrance, was chosen for two reasons: a) it will serve as a 'gateway' to both the upper and lower entrances of the Library and b) it will be partially visible from Jesup Road and attract viewers to the building and historic Jesup Green.

We greatly appreciate your thoughtful consideration of and attention to this important request. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Nancy Diamond
Co-Chair, Westport Arts Advisory Committee

Attachments

Cc: Mary Young, Kathie Bennewitz, Bill Harmer, Richard Epstein

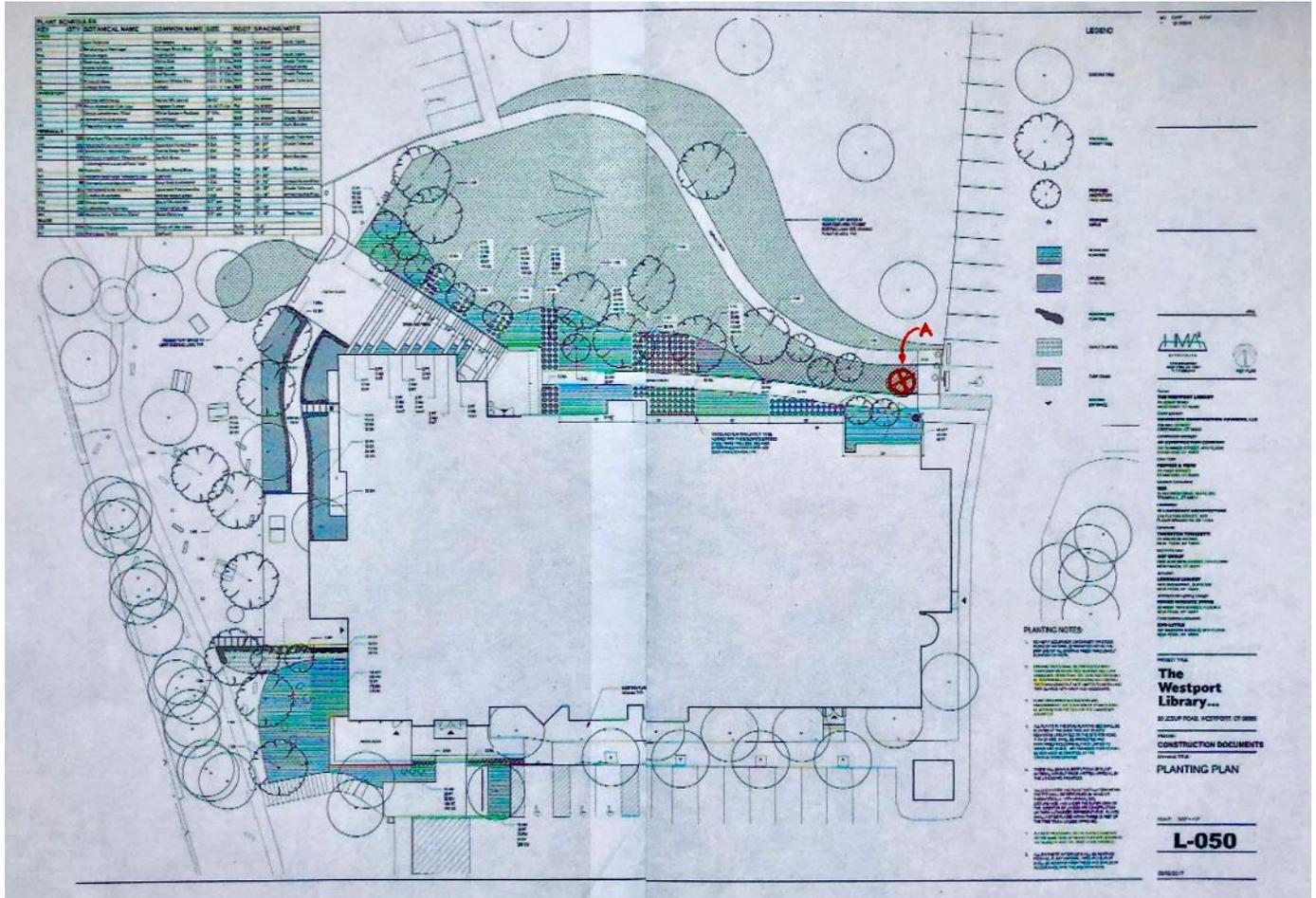
Appendix A.

Map Showing Site Location:

Prospective Location, marked in red "A":

Centered on narrow green median between the head of the town's newly created pathways from the Westport Police Department parking lot across to the Library's new Jesup Green staircase and down to the lower parking lot.

Note: not drawn to scale, but fits comfortably within site designated



Appendix B

Rendering of proposed location and siting



Kevin Box
Rock Paper Scissors Monument
(2013)

**Bronze, stainless steel with granite
base**
(111 in h (9. 25 ft) x 36 in w x 35 in.)