

Memorandum

Date: March 10, 2014

To: David Corliss, City Manager
From: Spencer Museum of Art
CC: Diane Stoddard, Assistant City Manager
RE: *Pollinators* Mural Update

Background

In 2007, in conjunction with a touring exhibition organized by the Spencer Museum of Art celebrating Harlem Renaissance artist and Kansas native Aaron Douglas, the Spencer commissioned the creation of *Pollinators*, an original work of site-specific public art with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. The mural, designed and created by nationally recognized muralist David Loewenstein with broad community participation, represents seven prominent historical African American cultural figures with ties to Kansas, including Aaron Douglas, Gordon Parks, Langston Hughes, and Gwendolyn Brooks. Since its creation in 2007, *Pollinators* has become an iconic part of the Lawrence landscape and a significant source of local pride.

Since plans for the development at 9th and New Hampshire by First Management, Inc. were announced in 2012, the Spencer Museum of Art has sought to identify an appropriate strategy for preserving the *Pollinators* mural. We have been in communication with a number of diverse organizations and groups with interest in preservation of the mural. Those groups include: Lawrence Historic Resources Commission, Lawrence Farmer's Market, East Lawrence Neighborhood Association, Lawrence Cultural District Task Force, Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts, members of the regional African American communities, members of the local artistic community, and local media outlets.

In fall of 2012, staff of the Spencer Museum began meeting with the artist and held a meeting with representatives of Treanor Architects to discuss the preservation of the mural. Spencer Museum Director Saralyn Reece Hardy first discussed the issue with Doug Compton, owner of First Management, Inc., by phone in June of 2013. In November of 2013, Hardy sent Mr. Compton a formal request for a meeting, to which Mr. Compton responded by mail. That correspondence is attached to the agenda for the March 11, 2014 meeting of the Lawrence City Commission. The first in-person meeting between representatives of the Spencer Museum of Art and First Management, Inc. took place on February 25, 2014. The meeting was positive and indicated shared interest in identifying a mutually agreeable resolution to preserve the mural. As recently as March 10, 2014 (today), the Spencer Museum of Art requested an on-site meeting with representatives of First Management, Inc. to discuss options for preserving the mural.

Future Plans

The Spencer Museum of Art looks forward to continued discussion with First Management, Inc. We plan to convene a meeting of the interested organizations identified above in order to evaluate the desires of the community so that future decisions regarding the mural will align with the goals of the broadest set of community stakeholders.

Bobbie Walthall

To: David L. Corliss
Subject: RE: Pollinators Mural

From: Lawrence Assoc of Neighborhoods [<mailto:lawrenceneighborhoods@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2014 9:24 AM
To: mdever@sunflower.com; mikeamyx515@hotmail.com; Jeremy Farmer; terry Riordan; schummfoods@gmail.com
Cc: David L. Corliss; Scott McCullough
Subject: Pollinators Mural

Dear Mayor and City Commissioners,

The Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods (LAN) wholeheartedly supports conservation and preservation of the Pollinators mural on the northern wall of the building at the northeast corner of 9th & New Hampshire. We thank you for your support to date for conservation of the mural.

The Pollinators mural is a vibrant testament the rich history, culture, and collaboration that characterize our community. To allow its destruction or diminishment would be a truly tragic blow to our community's commitment to the Arts and our longstanding dedication to celebrating African-American history in Lawrence.

We urge the City Commission to stand firm in requiring the developer, First Management, to undertake the full cost of preserving and relocating the mural to another publicly accessible site.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration,

Linda Bush, Chair

Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods

LawrenceNeighborhoods@gmail.com

cc: Scott McCullough

David Corliss