

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

CITY OF LOWELL

In City Council

VOTE

Authorizing the City Manager on Behalf of the City of Lowell, to accept a Gift from artist Kamil Peters and Do-It-Yourself Lowell of a sculpture entitled “Black Joy” to be displayed in a small park on the corner of Appleton and Gorham Streets.

DIY Lowell, along with artist Kamil Peters, desires to donate a sculpture entitled “Black Joy” to be displayed in a small park on the corner of Appleton and Gorham Streets; and

The City of Lowell desires to accept the gift of said sculpture.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT VOTED:

That the City Manager be and is hereby authorized in the name of the City of Lowell, to accept a gift from Kamil Peters and DIY Lowell of a sculpture entitled “Black Joy” to be displayed in a small park on the corner of Appleton and Gorham Streets, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53A ½.

BE IT FURTHER VOTED:

That the City Manager will convey the City’s appreciation for the gift.

Exhibit "A"





The Community Sculpture Vision Committee is grateful to the City Council for the opportunity to share the proposal to install “Black Joy” downtown. This project is the culmination of a pop-up art and history trail developed by DIY Lowell in 2021. The original committee leading that project developed a theme of “Black Joy” for a centerpiece sculpture, but due to difficulty finding an artist, the project was unable to be completed in 2021.

The Community Sculpture Vision Committee was formed after a community meeting facilitated by the artist, Kamil Peters, and attended by nearly 20 youth and adults. A committee consisting of six Black Lowell residents ranging from teens to elders of all backgrounds was formed to guide the work after that kick-off meeting. The committee built on the original ideas, providing vision and guidance to Mr. Peters. Mr. Peters took this vision and developed an exciting concept: It starts with the floor plan of one of the early slave ships. These ships brought kings and queens, lawyers and doctors over those seas of a great race of people: African Americans. From the voids that represent where the bodies were laid, long metal vines and stems protrude with African flowers on their ends, representing this legacy. To represent the continuously blooming joy that sprung from this history, the sculpture accommodates present-day annual flowers and vines returning every spring.

Although the sculpture was originally intended to be a temporary exhibition, the committee saw the potential for a permanent installation. With that in mind, it considered several locations for the project, including within a city park and within a traffic island. The committee decided on the brick plaza at the corner of Gorham and Appleton Streets for several reasons: It would gain the attention of downtown visitors; it is near the South Common, a culturally-important place in Lowell’s Black community; it is pedestrian scale and the location will allow close inspection; and it is at the end of the pop-up art trail along Middlesex Street, which has lamppost art banners by Black artists. In addition, the committee hopes the attention the sculpture puts on the plaza will continue the revitalization of the neighborhood, home to many Black-owned businesses.

The committee also hopes to have an unveiling later this spring, which will include food and music. Beyond that, the committee hopes this will be an enduring part of the Lowell landscape for years to come. To that end, DIY Lowell has pledged to work to organize volunteer stewardship of the area and potentially other enhancements of the area such as interpretive signage. The committee wishes to express its gratitude to the Lowell City Council for considering this proposal and to the funders, New England Foundation for the Arts, Lowell Cultural Council, and Mosaic Lowell.



Thomas A. Golden, Jr.
City Manager

March 28, 2023

Mayor Sokhary Chau
and
Members of City Council

RE: Acceptance of Gift of Black Joy Sculpture

Dear Mayor Chau and Members of the City Council:

The attached vote authorizes the acceptance of a gift of a sculpture entitled “Black Joy”. The gift is from artist Kamil Peters and DIY Lowell and is made as part of their 2021 Visualize Lowell’s Black History installation. The sculpture will be displayed in a small park on the corner of Appleton and Gorham Streets, as pictured in Exhibit “A”. Attached to this vote is also a statement from the Community Sculpture Vision Committee and photographs of the sculpture.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Golden, Jr.
City Manager