



City of Portland Martin Luther King Memorial Selection Committee

November 19, 2019
Room 24

1. Discussion and review of finalists presentations
 - a. Finalists Public Feedback
2. Next Steps and meeting
3. Adjournment

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

*Creating a Memorial in Honor of
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Portland*

Please feel free to mark off your preferred proposal if you'd like your feedback shared with the Selection Committee. Alternatively, you can leave written feedback on the back of this card.

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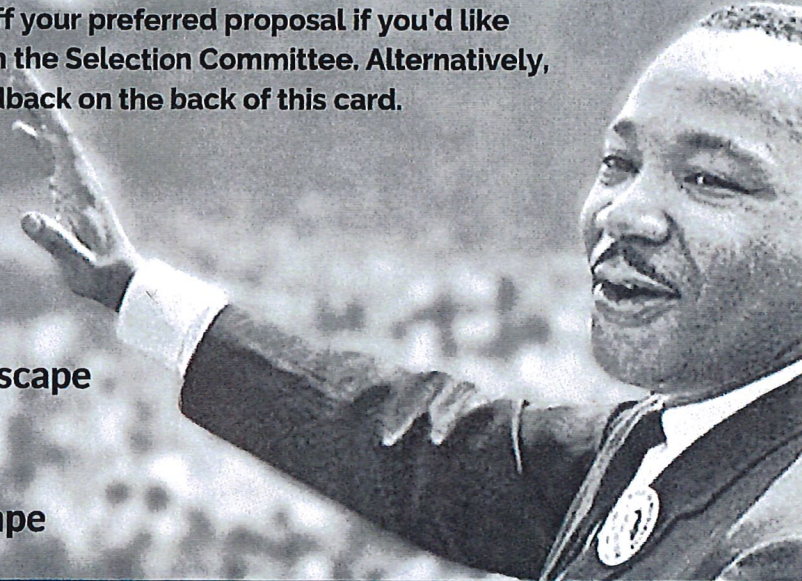
Robert Katz



Ironwood Landscape

☐

TJD&A Landscape



WWW.PORTLANDMAINE.GOV/MLKMEMORIAL

The Katz proposal featured way too many complicated + disjointed ideas. Despite his explanation, the central "Mayan Pyramid" made no sense.

I strongly encourage the committee to reject designs that rely on QR codes + smart phones to tell their story. Technology changes quickly + the memorial will be obsolete before we know it.

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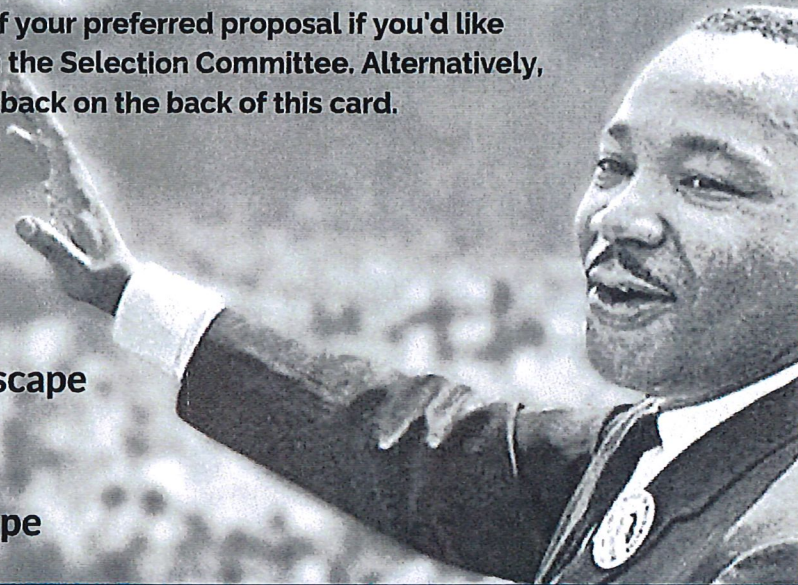
Robert Katz



Ironwood Landscape



TJD&A Landscape



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Because it
feels so real
and unique
and fun
and really intrusting
with the sound
effects!



Robert
Katz!

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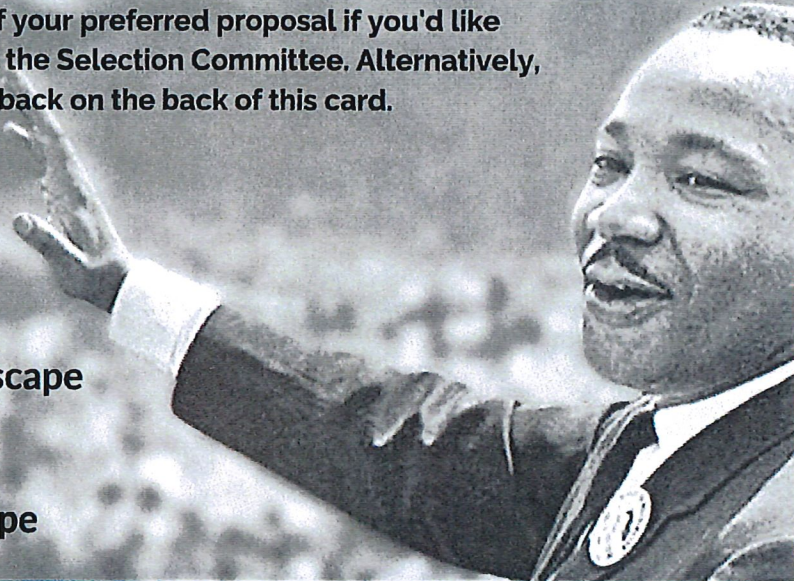
Robert Katz



Ironwood Landscape



TJD&A Landscape



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We loved all of the

RICH Symbolism and
how it tied into
Portland's 'welcoming city'
energy today.

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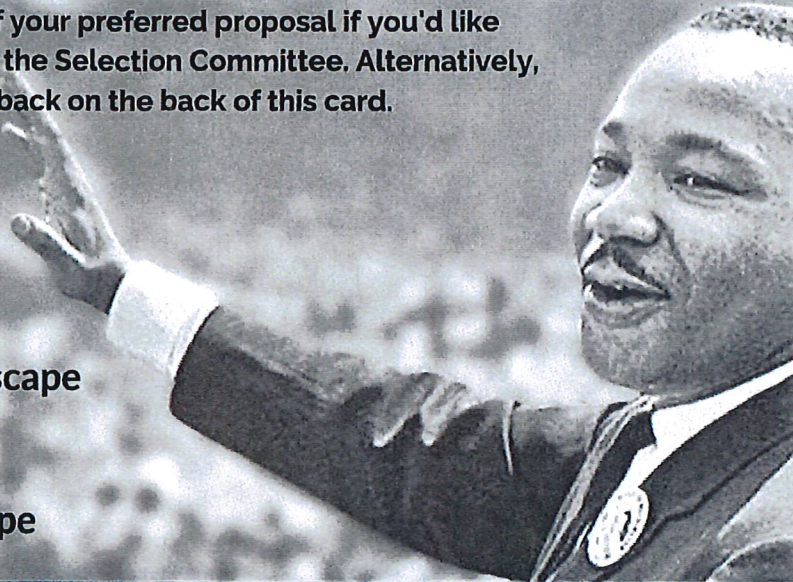
Robert Katz



Ironwood Landscape



TJD&A Landscape



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I like how the Katz team emphasized the fact that the fight against social injustice did not begin or end with MLK.

I also liked the simplicity of the design.

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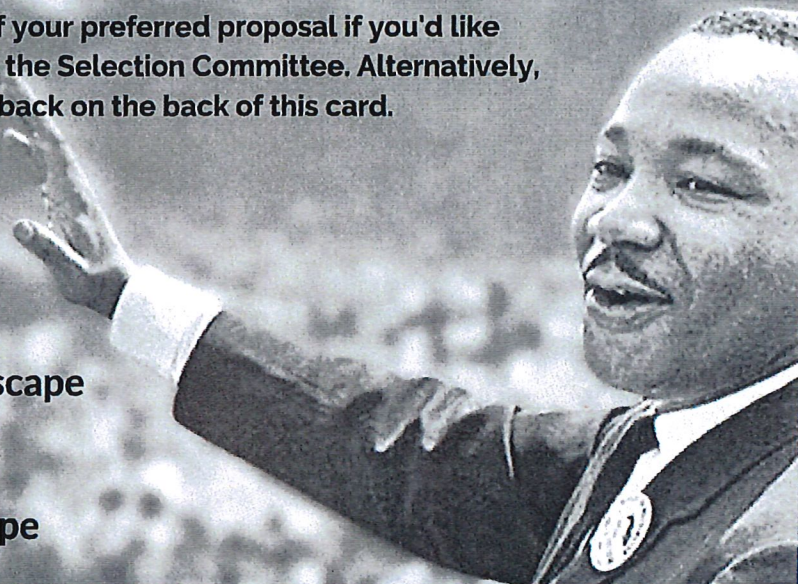
Robert Katz



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Robert Katz

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Ironwood Landscape

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TJD&A Landscape

Brilliant
presentation
+
concept.

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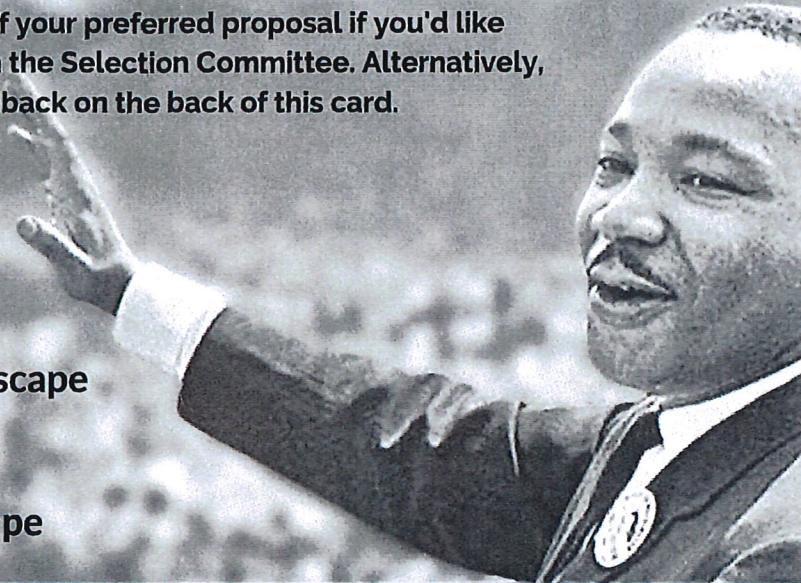
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Ironwood Landscape



TJD&A Landscape



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Great Ideas + Symbolism.

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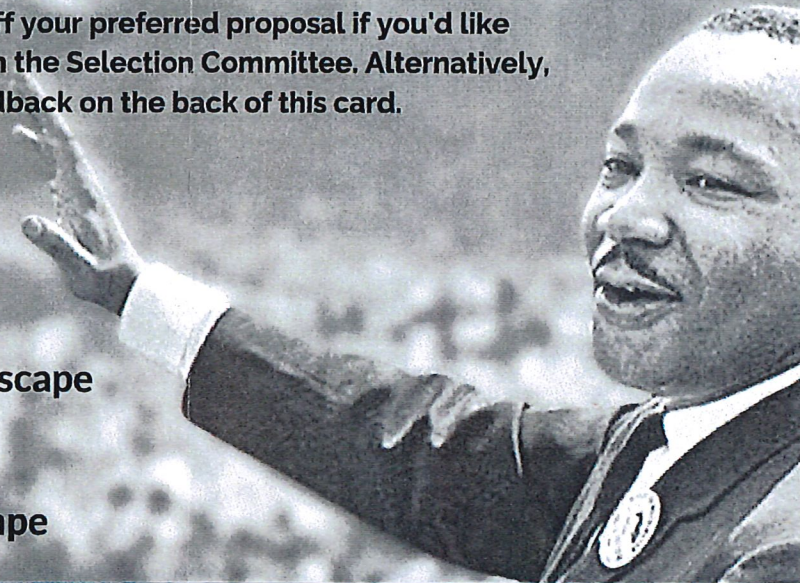
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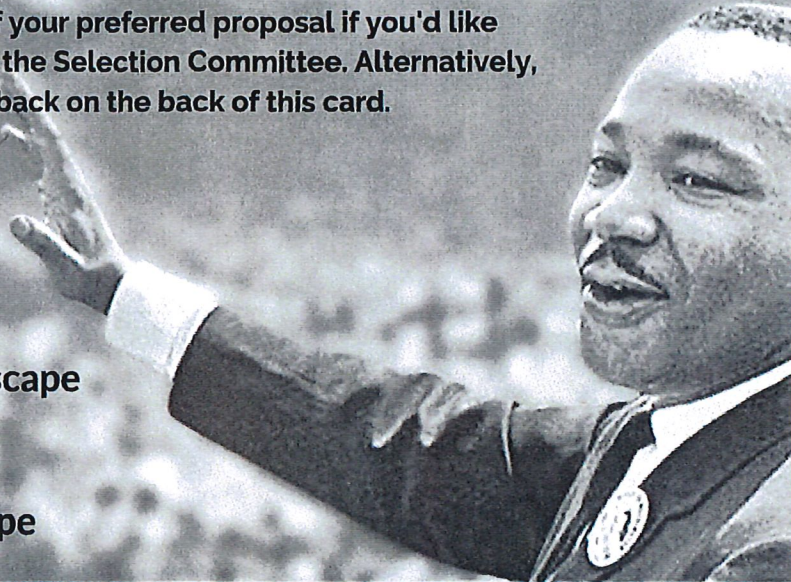


Ironwood Landscape



TJD&A Landscape

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The concept of welcoming people to sit together is appealing as well as being able to relate to the history of people becoming free and of oppression.

The whole project encourage one to think

The scale model shows a level of commitment not demonstrated by other entries.

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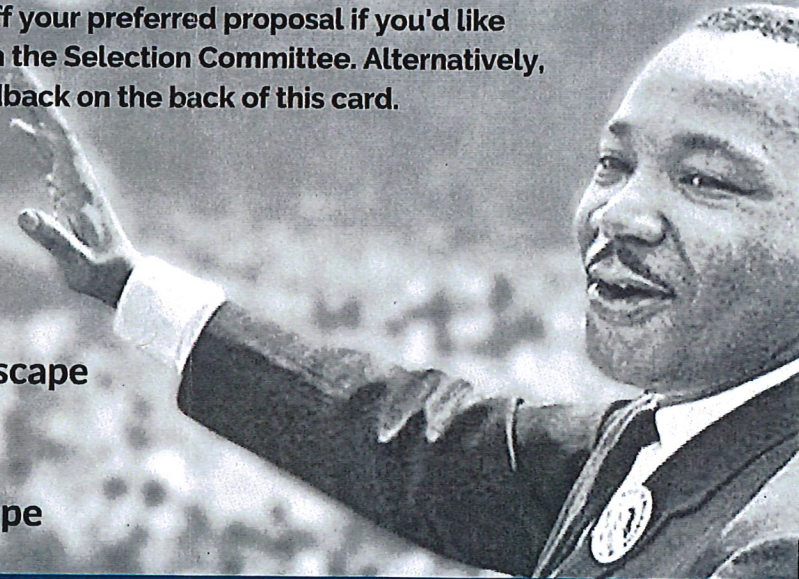
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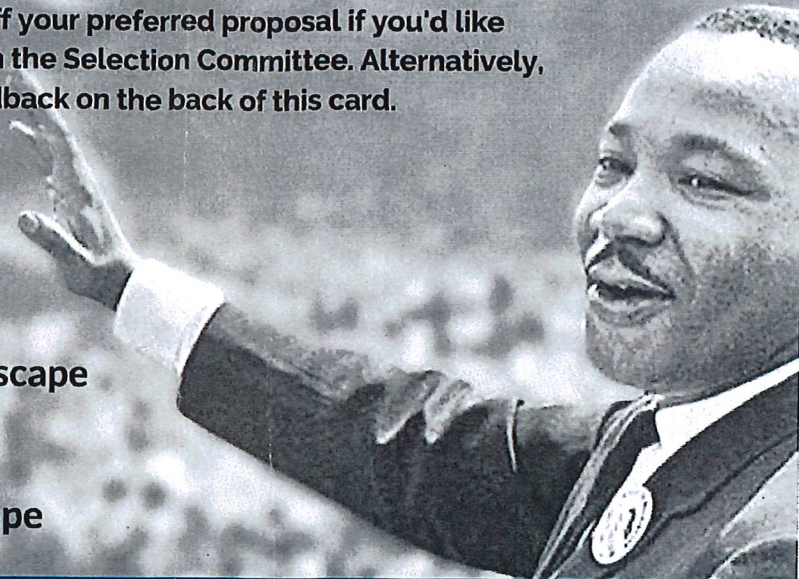
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Ironwood Landscape

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TJD&A Landscape

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see
back

IRON WOOD HAS THE BEST MEMORIAL,
BUT TDS & A HAS THE MOST COMMITMENT TO
ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

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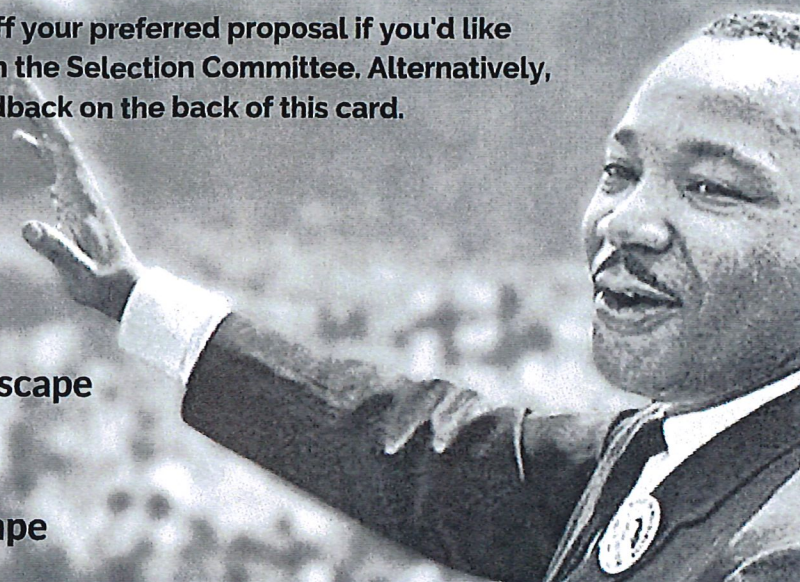
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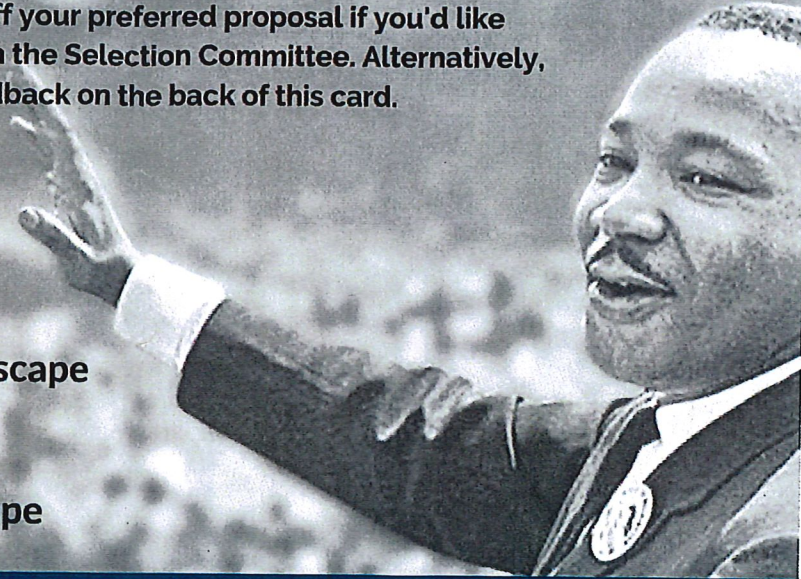
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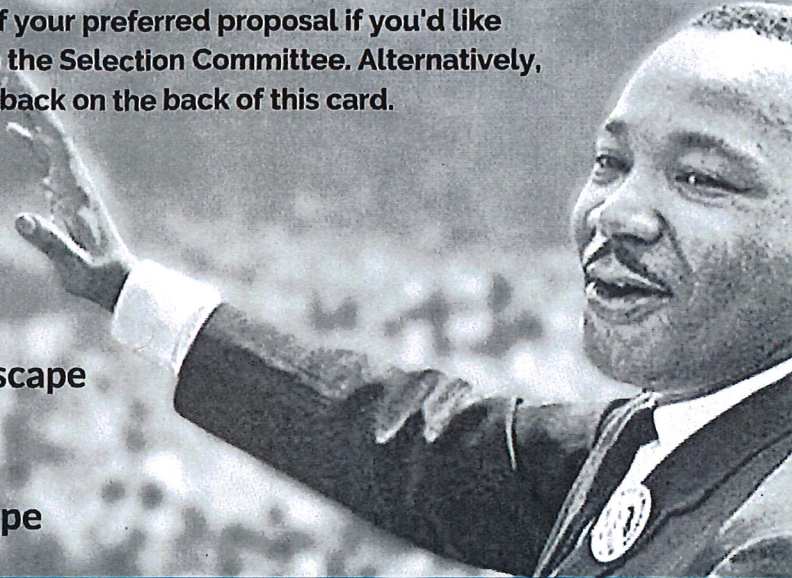
Robert Katz

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Ironwood Landscape

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TJD&A Landscape



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Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

MLK Memorial

1 message

Elizabeth Watson <elizabeth.watson@maine.edu>

Mon, Nov 18, 2019 at 3:00 PM

To: jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov

Hi Jessica,

I would like to share my preference for Bob Katz as one of the the three finalists for the memorial for MLK as presented on Nov 14th. His proposal included many aspects of the historic and aesthetic qualities that I believe would be suitable for the site. The extensive use of interpretative installations would be beneficial for academic curricular for students and I particularly liked the areas for multi seating options.

The inclusion of floral landscaping would be a big plus for the area now devoid of any common touch of nature.

I will admit that I am perhaps prejudiced in my choice.

I know this artists past works well. As my academic adviser/friend for the past 25 plus years, I have worked collaboratively with Bob on many art installations on the University of Maine at Augusta Campus.

His works are always evocative and enlightening and well thought of as examples of his vision. His humanity is always relatable and his collaborative nature evident.

Thank you to the Committee for the task you have undertaken, sincerely,

Elizabeth Watson
22 Carroll St
McLellan SchoolHouse
Portland, ME



Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

Re: MLKMemorial

1 message

Jill Duson <jduson@portlandmaine.gov>

Sun, Nov 17, 2019 at 6:47 PM

To: Holly Lord <holord2@gmail.com>

Cc: Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

Thanks for sharing your thoughts.

I am copying staff so it becomes part of the record and will included in the packet for review by the committee on the 19th.

On Sun, Nov 17, 2019, 4:44 PM Holly Lord <holord2@gmail.com> wrote:

Please vote for the Robert Katz Memorial. Article in the paper was very well done!

I support his version for several reasons: local person

Much more welcoming and inviting....and human!

Thanks for all you do,

Holly Lord

Portland resident

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone



Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

MLK presentations

1 message

Jim Hall <mtjimhall@gmail.com>

Sun, Nov 17, 2019 at 6:00 PM

To: jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov, Jill Duson <jduson@portlandmaine.gov>

To the MLK Memorial Committee,

Thanks for your work, and for bringing these proposals to Portland. My feelings were not simple (or resolved) enough to speak or "vote" during the session, but I hope the committee finds my comments below useful.

The first thing that struck me when comparing the proposals was the varying degree of community collaboration. The most traditional design "presentation" was from Ironwood, and I was left feeling their attitude was, "Here's a more expensive option than you asked for, but that doesn't matter because you can raise funds." Katz offered a more personal vision, and impressed me by having already lined up a trust of Maine artists, builders and even donated materials to move forward. But TJD&A was the only designer who has actually already reached out to the local community, and made this a cornerstone of their approach. In their case I would like to have heard a somewhat more robust proposal for how they intend to engage from here, especially around the idea of a "Friends of the Memorial" group steering ongoing developments.

Land use was another differentiator for me. TJD&A proposal again seemed the most thoughtful about the community's use of the site, incorporating a buffer of shade trees as part of the design itself, and building toward a more permeable gathering place with a Wilmot St extension. I absolutely love Katz's idea of an ever-living garden on the Bayside trail, designed with seasonal change in mind, though I wondered what Portland Public Works might have to say about maintaining such an installation in perpetuity. One of the best aspects of the Ironwood design was the addition of the cloistered contemplative arc, so I was saddened to learn that they artificially shifted cost of this into a later second "phase".

I felt that all the proposals had merit as sculptural art – though provided varying levels of the requisite "memorial" aspect (i.e. "How do I know I'm at an MLK site?"). I wished the Katz presentation itself had offered the audience some of the "gradual discovery" aspect he referenced during questioning... but ultimately I'm not sure I could get behind such a symbolic piece that largely requires background reading to understand MLK associations. The Ironwood "beacon" was especially striking in its simplicity – but if I had to choose, TJD&A's "*Justice MLK*" neon feels the most understanding of the personality of Portland, Bayside in particular.

All participants want to incorporate some kind of digital or interactive piece. In this realm I felt the "on site" solution from Ironwood was the most likely to succeed (though my background in theatrical design could create a personal bias here). If it's the committee's intention to grow this site to encompass future event planning, then we should reward TJD&A for the thought they put into both site layout and overall approach. I'm personally not too sure how much visitors would engage online features like streamable audio elements and background text. Anecdotally, when I was commuting to Boston I walked many times by QR codes at a site between my parking and office, and although I and others appreciated the associated sculpture, I never saw anyone (including myself) scan for more information.

Some historical considerations also sway me. The ship-like design of TLDJ's "vessels" suggests Portland's nautical history, while also potentially opening up conversation around America's history in slave trade – an aspect that could feel like a troubling distraction to honoring MLK proper, but to my mind offers a gentle airing of a taboo subject sorely in need of more open truth and reconciliation. When I saw Ironwood's event markers, I was reminded of Portland's freedom trail markers. Whether that was purposeful or just the result of the more functional design, it felt appropriate.

Ultimately I found myself wishing I could "shop" from amongst the designs, and vote for a concatenated "best of all worlds" memorial... but if pressed then TJD&A's respect for the community wins my heart as most respecting the legacy of MLK.

Sincerely,
Jim Hall
Portland ME



Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

Re: MLK memorial

1 message

Jill Duson <jduson@portlandmaine.gov>

Sun, Nov 17, 2019 at 5:11 PM

To: Susan McCloskey <smccloskey@maine.rr.com>

Cc: Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

Hi Susan

Thanks for sharing your thoughts.

I am copying staff so it becomes part of the record and will be included in the packet for review by the committee on the 19th.

On Sun, Nov 17, 2019, 2:07 PM Susan McCloskey <smccloskey@maine.rr.com> wrote:

Hi, Jill--just want to pass on a few thoughts about the design submissions for the memorial. (Wish I had the email addresses of the other committee members.)

I loved Ironwood's design--it works on so many levels to bring the experience of the memorial beyond its actual footprint. The group's response to the RFP mentions that the beacon (great idea) would be lit with various colors, which while representing people of various hues would also distinguish it from other lighting in the surroundings, such as street lights. The bell is another great idea. Being churchlike, it evokes Dr. King's calling to the ministry as well as songs (from folk to Bon Jovi) that reference bells of freedom and justice. (Maybe it could be set for a different tone than the cathedral bells, just so they don't sound the same.)

I also liked the simplicity of the grove of trees. It looks like after becoming established it would be self-sustaining.

I liked Robert Katz's group's idea of a welcome table, but the execution of it was neither welcoming nor a table. I think their whole proposal tried to do too much.

Looking forward to finding out what you all decide!

Susan



Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

MLK design

1 message

Mary Weiss <cornicheonline@yahoo.com>

Sat, Nov 16, 2019 at 10:23 AM

To: jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov

Dear Ms. Grondin,

I am forwarding a copy of my letter to the editor of the Portland Press Herald to express my hearty endorsement of Robert Katz's proposal for the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Portland. I would appreciate your presenting it to any of the appropriate people who have participation in making the selection.

Warm regards and thanks,

Mary Becker Weiss

From: Mary Weiss <cornicheonline@yahoo.com>**Date:** November 15, 2019 at 8:51:06 PM EST**To:** Mary Becker Weiss <cornicheonline@yahoo.com>**Subject:** MLK design

I am particularly drawn to Mr. Katz's proposal which is reminiscent of his interactive installation at the Michael Khlar Center in Augusta at HHRC which gives a voice to and honors survivors of the Holocaust who came to America and ultimately made their homes in Maine. The indelible impact of Mr. Katz's proposal in collaboration with Douglas Quin to honor the life and legacy of Martin Luther King will be nearly impossible to describe. It will not only uniquely honor Dr. King who stood for years with courage and conviction in the most treacherous and tumultuous struggles of the Civil Rights Era, it will be a tribute to those who stood at his side every step of the way and for those courageous individuals who continue to honor his legacy in promoting freedom, acceptance and love to this day. It is a proud day for the City of Portland and for the State of Maine.

Mary Becker Weiss
Brunswick Maine Artist



Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

MLK Memorial

1 message

Ann Hinkle <annh222@gmail.com>

Fri, Nov 15, 2019 at 12:33 PM

To: jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov

Hello:

I watched the MLK design presentations last evening. All three presenters had interesting concepts, some "quite interesting..."

My first choice is Ironwood Design Group. I like the way the memorial is designed to be beautiful and used during all four seasons and at night as well as during daylight. I also like that Ironwood used the "Beloved Community" concept which focuses the memorial on Dr. King's work to create community among all people using words less well known, and perhaps easily skipped over because of their familiarity, i.e. I have a Dream. The memorial is less technology dependent than the other submissions. The changing nature of the features to focus on milestones in Dr. King's life will also draw people to the memorial, since its appearance won't be static. The single beacon is stunning. I also appreciated that Mr. Hyland addressed community input as well as budget and time-frame considerations in his presentation.

The Robert Katz presentation is my least favorite. The pyramid strikes me as having no real relation to Dr. King. I thought the explanation for its choice was too focused on the presenters personal experiences with the only tie being that slaves built the pyramids and Mayan temples and Dr King stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Because of the size and number of columns and the pyramid it would be difficult to use the table for either a meal or a conversation. The pyramid also prevents the amphitheater seating from being used for presentations or activities. The city might also consider the liability issues that could arise from people climbing the pyramid with no soft surface around it should a climber fall. The single chair sticking up out of a maintenance-intensive planting bed is just odd. I also think the memorial is too dependent on cell phone use. Will QRC codes even be used in a few years? One thinks of 8-tracks and VCRs. What might be the costs of keeping the technology current and how difficult might it be installing updated technology over time?

Evan Katz and TDJ Architect's proposal benefits from visual simplicity but strikes me as too similar to many small street and trail-side parks. The neon sign on Franklin Street holds zero or even negative appeal for me. While I understand its reference to the sign on the motel where Dr. King was assassinated, I wonder how many other people will make that connection while driving by. Once again the references to Dr. King are embedded in cell phone and web technology. Who will be responsible for updating onsite technology as well as serving as web master? As we all know technology changes very quickly, and often expensively. If the technology is not fully maintained all the city will have is a nice trail-side park with little reference to its purpose as a memorial to Dr. King.

One general suggestion for all three designers: Please consider the bumpy ride bricks and pavers create whether for bicycle riders, strollers and especially people using wheelchairs for mobility.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the selection process for this important memorial.

Ann Hinkle
Chandlers Wharf
Portland



Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

MLK Memorial Competition

1 message

Nick Mills <nickbmills@gmail.com>

Sat, Nov 16, 2019 at 4:22 PM

To: jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov

Dear Jessica Grondin,
I am offering my comments on the three finalists.
Please forward to the proper committee.

Dear MLK Memorial Competition Committee, I was very impressed with the three finalists, but I believe the proposal submitted by Prof. Robert Katz and his team should be selected as the final design. I was very much impressed by the device of the Welcome Table and the interactive aspects of the design.

*Thank you,
Nick B. Mills*

--

Nick B. Mills

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION**Global Strategic Communication****Speechwriting -- Training -- Coaching**

Mobile: 207-831-5278



Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

MLK Proposal Comments

2 messages

Sarah Michniewicz <sarahmichniewicz@icloud.com>

Tue, Nov 19, 2019 at 4:06 AM

To: Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>, Jill Duson <jduson@portlandmaine.gov>

Hello MLK Committee,

Thank you for your work on the selection process for Portland's MLK memorial. I'm excited to see this project finally reach fruition and to have it located in my neighborhood. After attending committee meetings, watching the presentations, and filling out the artist rubric with my own impressions I have a few thoughts to share on the three finalists.

All were clearly committed to the task, and should be congratulated for their thoughtful designs. I've noted pros and cons for each presentation below, but will summarize my thoughts here.

KATZ

Katz's proposal was ambitious and presented a wide variety of elements that fill the memorial space, maybe too much so. Some, like the garden, are timeless and accessible. Others, like the table structure, the empty chair, and the granite posts, are heavily metaphorical. While many visitors may appreciate the obliquity of this approach, it will be inaccessible for many others, especially for those without a smart phone. I believe descriptive plaques are planned for the garden area, but for me the need to parse the imagery detracts from its power. I personally don't love the idea of QR codes on the pillars, I think that would be distracting. I really like that they have materials donated and already available, and that local artists are involved.

IRONWOOD

Ironwood presented the most traditional memorial template, through a very polished presentation. I like the use of sculpture, light, and words to create an experience of Dr. King's legacy. Their proposal looks very much like what one would expect of such a memorial. I appreciate that, and think they would create a beautiful and satisfying space in Bayside. The beacon structure and swirl of words in light are very engaging. They have perhaps most directly answered the charge to "inspire visitors to reflect on Dr. King's life and the values he espoused." They clearly articulated the ways in which they would fulfill most of the other project requirements. Their design highlights one man's commitment to social justice, resilience, and racial equity. However they apparently did not conduct community outreach; they are instead planning to do so if selected. This approach is disappointing, as is the need for additional fundraising for a "Phase 2" that seemed at first to be part of the final design.

TDJ&A

TDJ&A's proposal was very moving. They reached out early to the community, and the community is essential to the final memorial. The intent, as I understand it, is to both remember Dr. King *and* practice his ideals by engaging and collaborating with the community in order to create positive change in the present. This is an incredibly admirable goal, and they are the only finalist that took that approach. Because of this, it's hard to make an apples to apples comparison between TJD&A and the other two proposals.

Their design is a commitment to personally impacting social justice, resilience, and racial equity in Portland. I hope you will consider that in your deliberations. They also made the excellent suggestion of making the Wilmot Street extension the memorial's gateway. This approach speaks to a desire to truly engage within the community, not just catch the eye of drivers zipping past on Franklin Street.

****If TDJ&A is not selected, I urge you to find some way to work with them to install the neon "Justice" sign, or possibly a series of signs (Justice, Dream, Believe) at the Chestnut Street end of the trail. This would be an ideal way to guide visitors to the memorial from a much more accessible area. Chestnut Street, unlike Franklin Street, has existing street parking opportunities and far more foot traffic. These signs would help develop Bayside's unique aesthetic and begin to bring much needed light and art to the neighborhood. The nearby Miss Portland Diner and the new marquee sign for Coals Pizza on Preble Street have a similar vibe.**

Thanks for taking my feedback. I am hoping to make it to the meeting tomorrow night. If not, I look forward to finding out who was selected!

Best,

Sarah

Ironwood:

Pros:

- Visually attractive; the beacon element is successful on an artistic and practical level. It's a piece of art that creates another artistic element of the memorial, the words in light. I love this idea-it's innovative and inviting. Could the color of the lighted words change to show up better on a snowy pathway in winter?
- Creates a defined experience and draws visitors along the path, offering natural stopping points for reflection and education along the way.
- Is an inviting public space with capacity for onsite programming.
- Directly answers the charge to "inspire visitors to reflect on Dr. King's life and the values he espoused."
- Not overly reliant on external information to engage visitors.

Cons:

- The main gateway is in a poor location. While it would be visible to the fast and heavy traffic on Franklin Street, it's not a natural entry point for pedestrians-there is no parking in the vicinity and foot traffic is relatively light. I would like to see this element moved to the Wilmot Street extension area as suggested in TDJ&A's proposal. This location is much more inviting and beneficial to the neighborhood.
- Sound elements such as the peace bell may work better in theory than practice-the tone used in the video became grating by the end of four minutes.
- More ambitious than the current budget allows, with no guarantee that some of the best elements (the curved bench, an additional beacon) will be completed. A lag in securing funding may delay the entire project or require two separate disruptions to the trail.
- Lack of community outreach. Apparently Ironwood will conduct community outreach if chosen, but it's very disappointing that was not done for this initial design. This is a major project, a long time in the making, and the Bayside neighborhood deserves a seat at the table. Going forth with such a project in a historically poor neighborhood without due consideration for the community runs contrary to the values the memorial seeks to embody.

Katz

Pros:

- Ambitious. Has a wide variety of elements, which might appeal to a wider array of visitors.
- The garden is welcoming and peaceful, and creates a pleasing series of arcs that echo the path of the trail.
- Sound elements are on demand, not constant.
- Materials are donated and already available, local artist are involved.

Cons:

- Busy, lacks cohesion.
- The more abstract elements, such as the 5'7" posts meant to represent Dr. King, may be inscrutable for many visitors. The "table" element in particular is intensely metaphorical and visually confounding.
- Obvious QR codes on posts are distracting and unattractive.
- May rely too heavily on the optional audio narrative; relying on an app may make the experience inaccessible for some visitors.

TDJ&A

Pros:

- Reached out early to the neighborhood, want to move forth with community input by soliciting ideas for words to be carved on vessels
- Most attuned to community needs and involvement, most room for collaboration.
- Simple, elegant structures. A canvas onto which words selected through community collaboration will be carved.
- Neon sign element speaks the the developing aesthetic of the neighborhood-please consider this as a potential project for developing the western end of the trail.
- External material via website can grow and change, could act as a gateway to bring people to the memorial
- Peaceful open space, points of light embedded in the ground.

Cons:

- Seems abstract in it's current stage of development
- Could be overly reliant on supplemental material (website, smartphone interface)

Jill Duson <jduson@portlandmaine.gov>
To: Sarah Michniewicz <sarahmichniewicz@icloud.com>
Cc: Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

Tue, Nov 19, 2019 at 7:15 AM

Hi Sarah

Thank you for notes. They will be included in the materials for review by the committee.

Thank you for your long term engagement with this project.

[Quoted text hidden]



Jessica Grondin <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

Comment on MLK project

1 message

Hanish, Martin B. <mhanish@cmcc.edu>

Mon, Nov 18, 2019 at 9:34 PM

To: "jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov" <jgrondin@portlandmaine.gov>

Dear Ms. Grondin, I would be most appreciative if you would forward my comments to the appropriate members on the MLK selection committee. Thank you.

To the MLK Committee:

I am writing to you from the perspective of an educator. Although I do not live/work in Portland I was excited to learn of Portland's intent to create a MLK memorial. So with great enthusiasm and anticipation I watched the live stream of the three projects under consideration, all of which were very impressive.

I travel to Portland for its rich cultural opportunities, museums, theater , etc. While it is understandable that this project will have a local impact on the neighborhood, I hope the committee will recognize the importance of this project as an educational destination for all Mainers as well as visitors from away and especially Maine's school children.

I was most impressed with the project proposed by Professor Katz. Using excerpts from MLK speeches and sounds of protests, this memorial provides students with an opportunity to learn about MLK's lifetime endeavors by immersing them into the factual, conceptual and spiritual aspects of his life and times. It is fitting that the "Welcoming Table" invites people into the memorial as a symbol of the way Portland has welcomed newcomers into its community.

As diversity grows all through the state of Maine, this project will have even more significance over time. It is my opinion that the "Welcoming Table" presented by Robert Katz exemplifies the important legacy of MLK and the fundamentals of all civil rights movements past, present and future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Martin Hanish
Adjunct Lecturer
Central Maine Community College