

RFQ Call to Artists

Historic Roser Park Neighborhood Association, St. Petersburg, FL

The Historic Roser Park Neighborhood Association will commission art for a linear park in collaboration with the City of St. Petersburg. It seeks art that will creatively relate to its unique geography, architecture, and/or history. Art must be durable in the Florida environment. Project budget is \$65,000 inclusive. Visit www.historicroserpark.org/publicart for more information about Historic Roser Park, project requirements and how to apply. **Deadline: April 15, 2016** . Direct questions to Ann Wykell, publicartsolutions@gmail.com

About the site

History: Roser Park is built into and around a unique geographic formation that is essentially a large ravine carved out of the flat Florida peninsula by prehistoric water action. This is highly unusual in Florida which is almost completely flat. The remnant of that water way is a narrow creek that flows through the lowest point in the neighborhood and which is bordered today by a narrow park on one side and a red brick street on the other which is original to the neighborhood's development in the early 20th century. Houses rise from the street above the creek. Before the Spanish contact there was a flourishing Tocabagan Indian community living in the area. A shell mound created by those First Peoples exists today in Roser Park. Other mounds have been dug up and used for construction in the 1950's.

Roser Park, the first residential subdivision to be established outside of the downtown St. Petersburg business district, was developed by Charles Martin Roser, an Ohioan who foresaw the opportunities of the Florida land boom of the early twentieth century. The location along Booker Creek was picturesque as well as geographically and ecologically unusual. It was an early "streetcar suburb" conveniently located along the downtown trolley line, and is listed on the National Register for its significance in community planning and development, architecture, and landscape architecture. Roser Park also encompasses historic Greenwood Cemetery and Booker Creek.

The neighborhood was originally developed on both sides of the creek. The hospital, which Roser supported, eventually expanded by obtaining the adjacent properties and now Roser Park is approximately half its original size with Bayfront Hospital buildings on the border of the creek-side park looking down.

In the 1990's residents of the neighborhood began to advocate with the city to repair and restore as much as possible of the original neighborhood and obtained designation as a Historic District. Today Roser Park has one of the most active neighborhood associations in St. Petersburg. It has written a Neighborhood Plan with the city's Neighborhood Services

department which has resulted in funding for public art. The community continues to advocate and work together to restore Roser Park to its original design as much as possible.

Roser Park Architecture and Design: Roser created a neighborhood with a wide array of architectural styles, including Frame Vernacular, Bungalow, Prairie, Foursquare, Craftsman, Mediterranean Revival, Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, and Tudor Revival. Roser Park is also an excellent local example of development inspired by the City Beautiful Movement, which advocated the creation of livable cities through the inclusion of public parks and designed landscape spaces into the urban and suburban environment. Originally laid out with open vistas and suburban-style, traditional lawns in front of each home, today the neighborhood features a more natural, dense, high growth of trees and other typical Florida landscape plants with minimal lawn. The creek originally featured walking paths with many shade trees. Today it is primarily open grass. One historic tree, locally known as “Charlie” remains.

The neighborhood has retained many original design features including the rusticated stone retaining walls along the main road at the bottom, the narrow, red brick roads, hexagon paver sidewalks and granite curbstones which are seen throughout St. Petersburg’s older neighborhoods,

The existing walking path on the park side of the creek is in the process of being reconfigured as a bike path with a similar route.

Booker Creek has been “culvertized” and is lined in concrete. On the street side it is separated from the narrow brick street only by a curb. There are no sidewalks along the street as retaining walls meet the street. A contemporary, steel footbridge that connects the two sides replaced the original one which had been built out of wood. The path and future bike path is largely open grass broken up by clumps of trees and plantings. At the neighborhood entrance end, the largest such grouping includes an identifying sign, low-growing plants, etc and was intended as a focal point of the path by the city park planners.

To enter the neighborhood drivers or cyclists descend on the brick streets to the bottom where the road runs along the creek and ascends on the other side. The neighborhood enjoys a sense of isolation from the surrounding urban areas and busy streets as they are unseen and unheard from within.

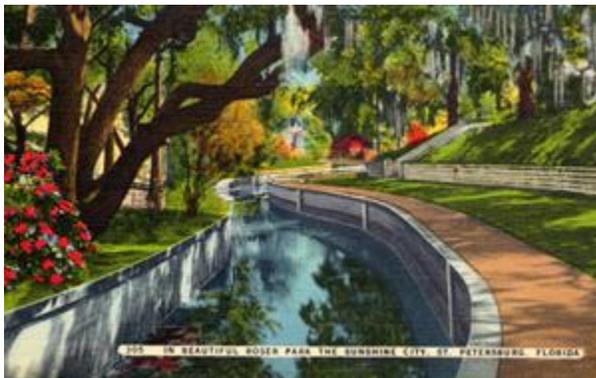
About Charles Roser, the developer of Roser Park

Roser came to St. Petersburg in 1910 and quickly established himself as one of the city's foremost developers, promoters and philanthropists. He was philanthropic and among his first major were the establishment of Mound Park Hospital's home for nurses next to Roser Park and Mercy Hospital for black residents. He also donated land for schools. According to

newspapers, "Roser was constantly spending money on the park, streets and nurses home (Roser Hall) and never accepted any money from the city.

Roser began work on the Roser Park subdivision in 1911, purchasing a 10-acre citrus grove. Apparently, people didn't think he could make a go of it, remarking at the time that "no one would drop money into that mud hole." The Evening Independent reported that "the first subdivision to be opened outside the city, with all brick streets and every other city convenience, is the new suburb by C.M. Roser — Roser Park." Much of this land, including Booker Creek, he gifted to the city on February 27, 1918, the official birthday of Roser Park.

It is believed that he earned his fame and fortune by developing the recipe, baking process or possibly extruder equipment, for the Fig Newton cookie, and selling it to the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco). Legend has it that Roser sold Nabisco the rights to his fig cookies or process, for one million dollars, the modern equivalent of about 19 million. Nabisco has maintained for some time that the Fig Newton was invented in 1891 by a Philadelphia inventor. Nabisco was formed in 1898 through the merger of 114 bakeries. Some sources say that Roser sold his recipe to the Kennedy Biscuit Works before it was swept up by the Nabisco merger. Charles Roser died on April 12, 1937, at age 73.



Early postcard depicting the creek, park and brick street



Early postcard shows the original open landscape



Roser Park today.



Modern foot bridge over the creek

About the Community

Roser Park has been preserved and improved through its historic-preservation minded residents who form one of the most active and organized neighborhood associations in the city. They organize an annual garden tour, advocate with the city for improvements that are compatible with the historic nature of the neighborhood, socialize through events and generally know each other in an era when neighbors often don't even know each others' names. They like the unique, slightly quirky, nature of both the built environment and the social environment of their community.

St. Petersburg is a city of neighborhoods with over 95 neighborhood associations recognized by the City's Neighborhood Services Department. It's median age and profile has changed significantly from its earlier days as a retiree destination. Its downtown is lively and busy weeknights as well as weekends. Its cultural profile is significant with quality museums of art and history, an orchestra, professional theater, waterfront parks and public art. The downtown has seen many high-rise, upscale condos and luxury apartments rising on sites that were formerly early to mid twentieth century residential properties.

About Art Opportunities and Possible Art Locations

The design must relate, in some way, to the "story", character or park setting of Roser Park. All styles, creative approaches and materials durable in the Florida environment, are eligible.

The Committee is open to artists' ideas for siting the art as long as it is easily experienced by people walking or biking along the park side of the creek. Ideally the art will be placed in relationship to existing features such as the tree clump with signage, to result in maximizing the impact of both.

Additional information about sites for art:

- The trees-signage grouping includes a low brick wall and bench. This space can be redesigned, the wall removed or replaced, seating added and sign redesigned if art is placed there. These additional elements would not be included in the art budget unless the art is functional, such as seating or a wall.
- Art design can include functional elements such as planters, seating wall or other
- Art can bridge the two sides of the creek but there is no space on the neighborhood side for free standing sculpture.



Park side of creek



Tree clump with signage

Budget

\$65,000 inclusive of design, engineering, fabrication and installation.

Finalists will be paid a \$750 design honorarium plus travel to St. Petersburg to present their proposals.

Eligibility

Artists must have:

- At least one successful, completed project of similar scope and scale in an outdoor setting
- Advanced art education or comparable training, apprenticeship or employment
- Experience with materials required for this project or team members who bring that expertise

How to apply

Artists have two options for submitting an application. Artists should compile the required files and either

1. Upload all files [preferred method] at:

<https://hub.hubcentrix.com/sharefld.php?share=6714&mc=9d4ed9abab1e1934564d519dd1a6a5e7>

PASSWORD: RoserPark (case sensitive)

OR

2. If necessary artists may mail or ship their application to:

Ann Wykell

5080 Locust St NE #226

St Petersburg, FL 33703

NO EMAIL OR DROPBOX

A complete application includes:

1. Artist resume that includes current address, phone, email, website (if there is one) as pdf or word file
2. Six to ten work samples in jpg format no larger than 1mg in size
3. Image list of work samples that include the title, media, dimensions and one sentence explanation of the work (optional but recommended. Example: "Commission for corporate plaza") as pdf or word file
4. Artist statement that references the applicant's qualifications to design for this project, any experience working with historic themes or research-based source material and information about the artist' process In pdf or word file

*IF MAILING OR SHIPPING SAVE ALL DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES ON A CD OR THUMB DRIVE **AND** INCLUDE HARD COPIES OF TEXT DOCUMENTS. No binders or staples.*

All work sample files must be labeled with: number artist name and title

Example:

1 Matisse Henri Dance

Text files must be labeled with: artist name and document name

Example: Matisse Henri resume

Incomplete submissions may be cause for elimination.

DEADLINE APRIL 15, 2016 (Upload and Postmark)

