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Bear relocates to Lafayette

By Pippa Fisher



How "Ursus Redivivus" will look once installed on Golden Gate Way. Photo provided

A rather large grizzly bear will be relocating to Golden Gate Way very soon. Lafayette will be hosting the bear sculpture for a two-year period in the city's first experience of temporary public art.

The work of Bay Area artists Chad Glashoff and Alex Nolan, the 7,200-pound kinetic, interactive bear stands almost 12-feet tall. The sculpture, entitled "Ursus Redivivus, Recycled Bear" is constructed almost entirely from scrap metal from escalators salvaged during a Berkeley department store remodel, and recycled tools.

The sculpture is currently standing outside the Orinda Library and is now due to move on, having been part of the city's rotating public art program. Plans to move the sculpture to Moraga fell through when the town council chose another piece to display at the Rheem Shopping Center.

Ursus spent time in Berkeley in front of the downtown Berkeley BART station from 2015-16 before coming through the tunnel to Orinda.

The city council heard from members of the Public Art Committee at the April 9 meeting. The PAC gave three suggested locations within the city for the bear. The council voted unanimously to locate the bear at 3505 Golden Gate Way, given the central location and high visibility, combined with the relative ease of installation.

In a statement included in the staff report, Nolan writes that he and Glashoff are excited for the opportunity to leave an impression on those who perceive this work of art. "It excites conversation, and references the rebuilding of an endangered species back into the wild," he says.

"Hopefully people will understand the meaning as more than just a CAL bear, but instead a lasting reminder of the wrongs done to this species, generations ago."

The \$1,050 cost of installation at this location will come from the public art fund.

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