

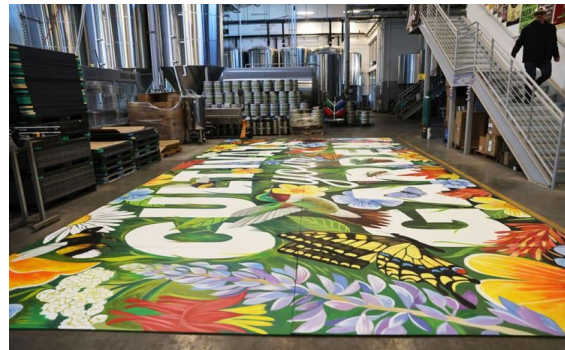
Worthy Brewing mural hits a brick wall

By SUZANNE ROIG The Bulletin
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A floral mural designed by local artists and intended to hang above the Worthy Brewing Beers & Burgers building in downtown Bend has hit a brick wall with the city.

Because the artwork is painted on plywood and not directly on the brick wall of the building owned by the business, the city has deemed it a sign and not a mural. That means the artwork, which depicts flowers and butterflies and cost owner Roger Worthington \$23,000 to commission, sits in a warehouse until the city will change the law or make an exception.

Neither is expected to happen soon.



“The only thing preventing us from bringing our art to downtown Bend is that instead of painting the art directly on the brick we are painting it on thin plywood sheets,” said Worthington in a letter to the city of Bend. “We believe that we can show that the panels mounted onto the building is a safe alternative to painting directly on a wall.”

The mural, called “Cultivate your Garden,” was commissioned by Worthington’s nonprofit Worthy Garden Club. Worthy Brewing owns the building where the mural

would be erected, Worthington said. He said he feels like the mural would add to downtown and beautify it.

The city says that the new artwork is a sign and is limited to 100 square feet and can be placed along the first story of a building, Worthington said. "Cultivate Your Garden" is 16 feet tall by 32 feet wide.

City officials said in an email that Beers & Burgers had submitted the initial application for its new mural project under an incorrect application category, and was asked to resubmit under the correct code, but has not yet received a correct sign variance application.

"We're not going to make one exception for one person," said Bend Councilor Mike Riley. "We will do what cities do, review the law and go through the process. My hope is that it doesn't take forever. Things happen and rules get adjusted when obstacles are identified."

The artwork has been paid for and will be located at the brewer's east Bend location for now.

This is the second time Worthington has experienced objections over a mural. The first was in March when a downtown neighbor objected to a previous mural design and refused to provide access for installation.

Worthington's new paneled artwork isn't the first kind of its kind in Bend. Several years ago, a paneled mural was placed on the walls of Tin Pan Alley with the support of Visit Bend, which is a supporter of public art, said Visit Bend CEO Jeff Knapp.

"Our investment and expansion of the Tin Pan Alley Art Collection has supported local artists and brightened spaces such as alleyways that are often dark and uninviting," Knapp said. "We are supportive of the expansion of public art and looking for creative ways to see beautification projects forward."

The Beers & Burgers art is big and beautiful, Knapp said. But it is roughly eight times larger than the Tin Pan Alley murals.

"If the city could just interpret the word mural broadly, within the spirit of supporting to beautify downtown with non-commercial artwork and not dogmatically put form over substance," said Worthington, "we could have this art upon the bleak concrete block wall this week."

"We're not asking the city for any favors, just approval," Worthington said. "The mural sends the right message. The rule was put in place in the 1970s when we tried to avoid billboard pollution. We're not advertising the company, just hanging art on the wall."