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## Art benches adorn Strand

by Julie Sharp

The Strand is home to six new artist-created seaside benches intended to look like part of the natural ocean landscape.

The benches were created by artist Stacy Dukes and were recently purchased by the city through the Arts Trust Fund.

The fund's money comes from 1 percent of city-levied developer fees on commercial and industrial developments and on residential developments of four or more units. The purchase price for the six benches was \$75,000.

Dukes explained the granite-looking composite of the bench is waste material, a byproduct from the steel industry, and this is the first time it has been used in bench construction. As for the design, Dukes said

the ocean was his inspiration. "This bench looks like it could of swept up onto the beach – not so man-made," said Dukes. "I didn't want it to be corny or glib."

The benches are located on the Strand at Shell Street, 39th Street, 32nd Street, Marine Avenue and Third Street.

The City Council and the Cultural Arts Commission are hoping that all of the 44 benches along the Strand eventually will be replaced with one of Duke's benches or something similar and purchased through the donor art program.

Donor benches may be of a city pre-approved design or an original design subject to council-set guidelines and approval. A donor's name and the artist who created the bench can appear on them.



Pictured with one of the new benches at 11th Street and The Strand, from left are artist Stacy Dukes, Parks and Recreation Director Richard Gill, Cultural Arts Manager Juanita Purner, Mayor Pro-Tem Richard Montgomery, Cultural Arts Commissioner Susan Sweeney, Cultural Arts Chair Shelby Phillips, Cultural Arts Commissioner Candy Duncan and former Cultural Arts Commissioner Sharon Greco.

(photo by Julie Sharp)