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Kirkland gets to keep beloved animals

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"Bounding Muledeer" is one of the sculptures that will remain public art in Kirkland.

All around Kirkland yesterday, "Save the Animals" signs pleading for donations to keep three beloved sculptures were taken down.

The animals have been saved.

"We did it!" said Joan McBride, Kirkland's deputy mayor, who represented the City Council in the campaign to raise \$212,160 to purchase the statues.

"In the end, it took all of us," McBride said. "It took major donors, business people, people donating money through their [city] utility bills, children and even friends who live outside our borders."

Since October, more than 600 donors, who gave from \$5 to \$50,000, slowly but steadily sent their checks and dollar bills to the city to buy the three statues, which have been on loan from real-estate developer Bill Ballantine to the city since the early 1990s. Last year, Ballantine told the city he needed to sell the art because of financial problems, and he offered Kirkland the chance to keep the statues if the city could raise the funds.

The animal statues were saved nine days before the July 31 deadline to raise the money.

The sculptures are: "Bounding Muledeer," a bronze of leaping deer, which stands on the southeast corner of Lakeview Drive and Lake Washington Boulevard; "Close Quarters," two giant rabbits cuddling in a pocket park, near the southwest corner of Lake Street and

Central Way; and "Mountain Comrades," two bears sitting on the southwest corner of Kirkland Avenue and Third Street.

Moss Bay and Market neighborhoods voted to give money from their Neighborhood Connection Program capital-projects budgets to the statue campaign. The final push came from four companies — Cam West Development, Continental Properties, Pan-Terra and Trammel Crow Residential — which donated \$17,500 in recent days to complete the fund-raising.

This is the third time Kirkland's community has stepped forward to purchase public art.

"This once again shows that Kirkland cares deeply about public art," said Lynn Stokesbary, Kirkland's assistant city manager.

And the donations are still coming in, McBride said. Now that the goal has been met, the city will ask if new donors want their checks returned to them, or if they wish to transfer the money into a fund that will be used to purchase public art in the future, she said.

The city plans to hold a party in September to celebrate raising the money to keep the sculptures.

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