

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

September 24, 2018
City Hall – City Council Chambers
1400 Highland Avenue
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Manna called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM.

B. PLEDGE TO FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Grayson, Matsumoto, May, Rubino, Ryan, Taner, Chairperson Manna

Absent: None

Others present: Martin Betz, Cultural Arts Manager, Ceramics Supervisor Eilen Stewart

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - August 20, 2018

Commissioner Taner noted that in Paragraph G. of the minutes he mentioned he had a proposal for an art conference which has not been agendaized. It was agreed that this can be added tonight for discussion under “Commission Items”.

It was moved and seconded (Rubino/Ryan) that the minutes of August 20, 2018 be approved as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Commissioner Rubino requested that Item H (“Art in the Park”) be moved ahead in the agenda, between items F. and G; no objections, it was so ordered.

E. CEREMONIAL - None

F. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (3-Minute Limit)

Presentation by Evanna Shaffer, City resident as well as yoga instructor, artist and teacher. Ms. Schaffer gave a slide presentation of a concept with implications for public art and other applications. The concept is a 360 degree 46-ft. diameter dome that creates a 5-D fully immersible art experience. Said dome is easily transported, can be located anywhere in an open space, e.g. on a roof. This technology has been used in collaboration with Google; dome has a platform with mirrored floor which can heat, cool, and rotate, and is safe. There’s a lot of research showing neurological benefit; examples of such events are, in NYC (“Inscape”), Las Vegas (“MSG Sphere”).

Ms. Shaffer responded to Commissioner questions: She seeks input from the Commission only to find out if there is general interest. The dome could be used as a public art installation and/or venue for art classes or activity; estimates a cost for the dome use as between \$57k and \$88k; no specific location in Manhattan Beach has been targeted but the dome is very flexible and can be located in any public area, and whether a fee would be charged would depend on some unknowns. She is not involved for personal profit or a commercial interest but by the desire to bring this very unique experience to the community; and is working with Tedx to be part of its local Expo next year.

Commission feedback: Commissioner Ryan acknowledged virtual reality is exciting but many details would need to be worked out. **Chair Manna** pointed out the potential for application as an arts experience and this is within the Commission’s purview, while the conduct of classes is not, and is something Parks and Recreation should address. As an art experience, it would be very interesting. Ms. Shaffer will get more information and hopes to revisit at a future meeting.

Chair Manna thanked Ms. Shaffer for her presentation.

Gary McAulay, President, Manhattan Beach Historical Society, expressed his concern that recently a tile mosaic of a mermaid that has been in place at the Neptunian Women’s Club has been destroyed during remodel construction, without notification of the artist. **Mr. McAulay** noted that while he realizes that a private installation is not entirely within the Commission’s purview, he believes there is some relevance to the Commission. He asked if the Commission can work with the community to educate the public of the need to protect all art in public places. Brief discussion followed; **Commissioner May** suggested that the artist pursue this as this is foremost her personal loss.

G. GENERAL BUSINESS (order on agenda changed- this item originally F.)
18.0924.01 Arts in the Park Project – Commissioner Rubino

Commissioner Rubino presentation: Commissioner Rubino provided an overview with slides explaining the “Arts in the Park” which involves reaching out and engaging the community regarding performing and visual arts. This subject has been discussed quite a bit and approved by the City Council in June, as part of the Commission’s Work Plan; would be a hands-on, interactive and collaborative event for all ages, an experience to **participate in** as opposed to **observing**. Artists would display their art but also be able to provide their own literature. As to who would be involved, **Commissioner Rubino** mentioned schools, including any Manhattan Beach (MB) school public and private in beach cities (HB, RB, ES, Torrance) and their arts organizations but MB would have priority.

A subcommittee, including **Commissioners May, Matsumoto, Rubino**, met and decided: event hours of 10-am-3:00 pm, booths to be scattered throughout Polliwog Park, and each artist is to provide a hands-on experience; estimated cost: \$33,000; planning committee include one rep from public school; May 15, 2019 is a proposed date. The requested action is to support the concept.

Staff response: Manager Betz expressed a concern that there may be a need to spread the event out to a bigger physical area. **Commissioner Rubino** stated the Committee will approach Parks and Recreation to see about some staff assistance. As this is the first year, only about 20 booths will participate; the final recommendations will come out of the larger committee to be formed.

Commission feedback: Commissioner Taner asked and it was confirmed that the \$33k would come out of the existing Art Fund and the event would take place both at the Art Center and Polliwog Park; and will be a free event. He believes it will be successful but wonders if it will be geared more to children. **Commissioner May** cited a past similar event that was enjoyed by both youths and adults and Commissioner Rubino gave examples of adult oriented activities such as dancing and Commissioner May noted she has some great contacts for activities geared to adults.

Chair Manna called for the motion. It was subsequently moved (Taner/Manna) that the Commission support the concept of Arts in the Park as presented with a budget of \$33,000.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Matsumoto, May, Rubino, Taner, Chairperson Manna

Noes: Ryan

Abstain: None

Absent: None

The Chair announced the motion has passed 5-1.

H. STAFF ITEMS

Cultural Arts Division update – Betz

Art Fair - Manager Betz noted this event - held last weekend at Metlox, organized by staff member Tom Delaney, which was well attended and successful. The event is regarded by staff as a test but the thinking is that it could become a regular event. Mr. Betz will provide a more info in October.

Chair Manna led off discussion; he was impressed with the quality of the art but is concerned that this could be negatively affected if, in the future an artist entry fee is imposed. **Manager Betz** commented that currently there is high interest among artists to participate, but this is an important issue. **Commissioner May** agreed and added the amount of a fee would be a big factor, citing that, for example, she believes \$250 would be discouraging. **Commissioner Ryan** felt that the aesthetics of the event could be elevated, and especially, if charging artists, the booths should have a more unified look. **Supervisor Eilen Stewart** noted the example of the Hometown Fair - that it requires artists to have a **white** booth, but there is variety in the **type** of structure. **Commissioner Rubino** really enjoyed the event, thought it was well done, especially for the first time out, but noted in terms of art content that there were quite a few pier pieces. She suggested that instead of buyers taking their art away once purchased, somehow the art be required to remain at the booth (with a sold sticker?) for others to enjoy. She feels this would give the event more of a show, instead of retail feel, and this is relevant to the Commission, whose job it is to make art available to the community, and would especially benefit the public who aren't able to attend in the am.

Manager Betz noted that the goal of the event should be considered, i.e., is it more to provide art as an indoor gallery? If so, perhaps there should be a requirement that arrangements be made for later pickup of sold art. Mr. Betz reminded that, while staff values the Commission's input, its role is not as a collaborator making decisions but more as an advisor, providing observations and suggestions.

Commissioner May noted these are mainly logistical issues that will be worked out; She questions whether, if the booths should become too uniform or whether there should be an effort to have a higher aesthetic, that the event might lose its unique feel.

Chair Manna closed discussion, pointing out that these are the types of comments that come out of a first show. **Commissioner Taner** confirmed with Mr. Betz that this event is paid out of the Cultural Arts Division's annual budget, not the Art Fund. He suggested that the City look into whether the event can be run through a nonprofit entity which will enable more fund raising and perhaps give more options to the staff planners. Commissioner Taner also suggested a couple things: that advertising may be more fruitful if it targeted nearby communities such as Palos Verdes which have more of an art collector culture and secondly, perhaps other independent events might be able to be organized surrounding the fair (e.g. a brunch at nearby Shade Hotel).

Manager Betz thanked the Commission and indicated he will incorporate their input into his debriefing.

Sculpture Garden Update - The City Council has reviewed the Commission prior recommended finalists, and has chosen ten artists, and locations; they now ask that the Commission revisit and revote for finalists. This will involve about ten submissions and will be on the October agenda.

The Commission briefly discussed; **Commissioner Ryan** noted concern for the artists with this extra step; she requested and it was confirmed that 3 prototypes shown prior were paid for by the City.

Manager Betz explained that of the former finalists, not all will be among the ten to be revisited and in one case the same artist is to be considered but for different pieces. The process is still evolving and to some degree this is due to the fact that there are new councilmembers, new Commissioners, and the fact that the number of submittals has exploded, going from about 10 to 60. He would like to form a sub-committee to work on the protocols of the selection process which will likely involve a first review by the City Council. Materials will be provided to the Commission about two weeks prior to the October 15 meeting.

Work Plan status: **Manager Betz** proceeded to go over projects. The **Strand bench program** (now on hold – only 4 spots left for benches) will go to City Council on October 16. For the **walkabout events**, the goal is to work out a comprehensive plan and this will be brought to the Commission in November. The **assessment of historical archives** may also be agendaized in November. The **utility box project** is proceeding; submissions are being received, but the proposals need some work. That project will likely be presented to the CAC also in November and the implementation may start as early as January, 2019. The **City Hall public art project** will go to Council in November; an RFQ has already been issued. The **public mural project** will come back to the Commission in October for recommendations for locations, which are predominantly outdoor and then will go back to the City Council for final approval.

Art exhibits: **Eilen Stewart** reported that **Terra Firma** at the Art Center will come down October 14 and a new exhibit “Mimisis” which will pair video with painting and flat art will be installed immediately afterward which will open October 26.

I. COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Taner art conference proposal:

Commissioner Taner described his proposal for a 6-hour art conference, to be attended by the CAC, and to which community leaders - civic leaders and influencers, schools, public and private and education foundation, community organizations (Rotary, etc.,) and those involved in art in Manhattan Beach, and perhaps from nearby communities. The idea would be to discuss the direction of the arts in Manhattan Beach; attendees would be briefed in advance; he is open to all sorts of ideas, but he feels this is fully within the mandate and role of the CAC. He understands that the Brown Act would need to be addressed. The point will be for the Commissioners to introduce themselves and their role and then whether the City’s programming should take a leap forward. He feels the time is ripe to have a discussion as to whether the City can be a sort of mixed melting pot of beach arts and beyond the City limits, and the pros and cons of this. He concluded by stating that if greenlighted, he would form a small committee, and draft an agenda and methodology for accomplishing this, which would be brought back to the Commission at an appropriate time, perhaps January. He feels that the conference will be a minimal cost, \$3,000 or less, depending on whether lunch is provided.

Manager Betz responded that there are many questions to be answered, many logistical. **Manager Betz** stated that he feels the proposed conference has value to the Commission more as a fact-finding opportunity to enable them to explore what's going on in the community, but he will look into how this would happen; doesn't recall a past such event.

Commission feedback: **Commissioner Ryan** supports the concept, explaining that, while new to the Commission, she is a longtime resident. She voted against the art in the park concept earlier only because she feels that it may be out of alignment with efforts so far. She feels that the City needs clear vision for "who we are" with respect to art in the community. Maybe we are a hands-on experience in the park, but perhaps this can be elevated just a bit. It will be helpful to hear from leaders.

Commissioner May stated that she sees potentially two different factors; those who are newer to the community who may want to "elevate" arts more and then there are those who have lived in the City for many years, who want to maintain art more in line more as a home town feel. Perhaps its 50/50. **Commissioner May** thinks of the City as "the beach" and noted there have always been artists living in the City but they have stated they would have liked to have been able to show and sell their art more. Not until recently has the City strongly supported art. **Commissioner Ryan** explained that by "elevate" she doesn't necessarily mean more expensive. **Commissioner Taner** acknowledged there are different ways of thinking, but believes that all artists want to be able to show and sell their art. Can discuss for example, how to present local art to larger audiences (cited Etsy, Saatchi Art etc.) Perhaps an outcome, for example, might be to recommend that the racquetball building in Marine Avenue Park be changed into a mini Bergamot Station. **Commissioner Ryan** again stated she likes coming together with ideas and getting to a common vision. **Chair Manna** stated that he believes this is a great idea.

Manager Betz suggested that stated this event if held as a retreat can be financially supported as training in the budget and this will simplify its planning. He will explore this and get back to the Commission. **Commissioner Taner** will coordinate by email with **Manager Betz** regarding preparing a proposal with possible agenda, venues and dates.

Chair Manna may not be in attendance in November. If so, Vice Chair Rubino will preside. **Chair Manna** also reported his recent visit to New Mexico – he was very impressed with Santa Fe and the art in that area (Taos, etc.). Perhaps the City can strive to be the "Santa Fe" of its region?

Discussion of Arts in the Park Project – Commissioner Rubino (see earlier discussion)
Commissioner May will email with **Commissioner Rubino** for information to pass on.

J. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:01, P.M, **Chair Manna** moved, second by **May**, adjournment, to the regular meeting of October 15, 2018 at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue; there being no objections, it was so ordered.