

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

January 28, 2025

Location: Manhattan Beach City Council Chambers
1400 Highland Avenue, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
and Hybrid (remote/Zoom)

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tokashiki called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

B. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Patterson, Vice Chair Karger, Colmey, Chair Tokashiki, Torrey

Absent: Padnos

Staff present: Senior Recreation Supervisor (SRS) Eric Brinkman, Cultural Arts Supervisor Randy Niessen, Cultural Arts Coordinator Andrew Booras, Senior Management Analyst Linda Robb, Recording Secretary Rosemary Lackow

Chair Tokashiki welcomed new commissioner Dana Torrey.

SRS Brinkman introduced the Cultural Arts management team who gave self-introductions:

Cultural Arts Supervisor Randy Niessen is an artist and arts manager; has worked in the arts for 15 years, in galleries and municipal programs, most recently for the City of El Segundo.

Cultural Arts Coordinator Andrew Booras has been with Manhattan Beach for 2 years, prior worked for El Segundo, currently works primarily in arts programming for the city at the Manhattan Beach Arts Center, and assists with the summer concerts in the park.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 18, 2024

It was moved and seconded (Patterson/Karger) to approve the November 18th 2024 minutes as submitted; motion passed by voice vote: 5-1 (Padnos absent).

E. CEREMONIAL - None

F. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (3-Minute Limit) - None

G. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Work Plan Item Discussion

Utility Box Beautification (Phase III). SRS Brinkman updated: Submittals received: twenty-five adult applications from twelve artists, four from Manhattan Beach and just a few each from Redondo

Beach, Hermosa Beach, El Segundo and Lawndale. Seven applications were received from youth artists, three were from Manhattan Beach.

The Commission discussed extending the application deadline noting that the response may have been impacted by the holidays and fires. It was determined that the extension will push the date of installation to this fall. Staff has done some outreach to the schools, but can do more and will discuss with Commissioner Padnos regarding displaying posters at Mira Costa and do more social media advertising.

It was moved and seconded (Colmey/Karger) and unanimously approved that the deadline for submittal be extended approximately six weeks to March 9th. This could allow enough time for the project to come back to the Commission at the March 17th meeting.

SRS Brinkman encouraged all commissioners to brainstorm outlets for publicizing including through Commissioner Padnos at Mira Costa by placing posters.

a. **Murals Update.** SRS Brinkman updated that *Pelicans In Flight*, by Charles Lynn Bragg is now completed. The only other remaining mural, *3D Shark* at the civic center parking structure will be placed on the February 4th council consent agenda for allocation of \$18,000 additional to cover the expanded mural.

b. **Sculpture Garden.** SRS Brinkman updated: project remains paused; to be added to next (2026) work plan.

c. **New Art Initiatives**

i. **Public Art Brochure** (Tokashiki, Karger, Dohner) SRS Brinkman displayed and summarized two new GIS maps showing locations of items in the City's public art collection, noting staff will confirm all information is updated. Mr. Brinkman demonstrated how maps are interactive: by clicking on an artwork, information pops up about the piece and artist. Commissioner Karger noted that information collected by the committee is available on a spreadsheet. It was recognized that the current "storymap" on the GIS webpage is out of date.

SRS Brinkman noted the approach now is to make the brochure simplified and to separate out the types of pieces (e.g. utility boxes, Strand benches, etc.) with a focus only on major public art pieces. It will be a trifold, separating the collection into east vs. west sides of the city. A QR code will be included to link to the website where more information can be found. Staff can execute this simplified approach fairly easily and he believes a working draft can be brought to the next commission meeting.

Going forward, 1) staff will work with IT as needed, to update the website with a CAC webpage for a user friendly link to the two maps (utility box murals and all other public art); and 2) staff will refine the draft brochure for Commission review at the next meeting and; 3) the outdated public art story map will be removed from the website.

Chair Tokashiki commented that it would be great to have a finalized product available at the next quarterly city art exhibit in mid-April.

ii. **Poet Laureate** (Patterson, Colmey, Padnos) Commissioner Patterson referenced a "Project Prospectus and Selection Criteria" document which the committee and staff have revised and distributed to the Commission. Commissioner Patterson went over the prospectus, indicating with a few tweaks, feels the program description can be finalized. She commented that the project scope, page 1, brings the

program to life and connects to other cultural arts programs and the educational programs, page 2 target various age groups and reflect engagement with the Manhattan Beach Poetry Group. She reviewed the responsibilities for the adult and student laureates, pointing out that the council or community can request additional events if reasonable and appropriate.

The Commission discussed focusing on the selection process, including geographic eligibility, and compensation.

On the selection process (page 3), the Commission discussed expanding the committee from five to seven members to include two more non-voting members, a Cultural Arts Commissioner and a Historic Society representative. Commissioner Colmey noted that a Library Commissioner would be a voting member in the spirit of being collaborative and inclusive. Commissioner Patterson supported adding a Cultural Arts Commission on a non-voting basis, in that such a person will be able to give important advice and counsel. Further, the selection committee can be re-evaluated and modified in the future if it were felt necessary. The consensus was to adding the proposed two members in non-voting capacity, to the selection Committee.

There was discussion on raising the compensation (proposed at \$1,000 per event) to minimally \$15,000.

Regarding outreach and selection criteria, CAS Niessen, recalling the experience in El Segundo, commented that an invitational outreach, targeting people thought to have good credentials could be much more successful than a general call for applicants. He has reviewed the latest prospectus draft and feels that perhaps the project eligibility should be opened up to Los Angeles County.

Regarding the budget (honorarium) CAS Niessen feels it perhaps should be increased and should use wording as a “not to exceed” amount and that the city should allow the selected candidate to somewhat define the scope and program. He feels that the Poet Laureate, once engaged, will establish a relationship with the community and additional asks for more activities or “scope creep” can occur organically.

In summary, CAS Niessen suggested that more research be done into other similar programs and that a set amount not be specified for materials in the call for applications but let the applicant, once selected propose a materials budget. Regarding eligibility, Mr. Niessen stated that if the eligibility is widened the city could specify a preference for a South Bay candidate. Commissioner Patterson noted that while she did not have a specific candidate in mind, she felt there was interest among members of the Manhattan Beach Poetry Group.

Commissioner Karger asked whether it might be helpful to add someone from the MB Poetry Group to the CAC Ad Hoc Committee for early input. It was decided that this would not be a conflict for the Poetry group member, because this is the Ad Hoc committee, not the selection committee at this stage.

Chair Tokashiki summarized three action items for the Committee going forward: 1) research other city poet laureate programs as to amount of compensation; 2) invite a member of the MB Poetry Group to join the AD Hoc Committee; and 3) consider how to open up the eligibility in the adult group to a larger pool of candidates, recognizing that the student poet laureate, is required to be a Mira Costa student (which is different from what was directed from council for the murals program eligibility).

Commissioner Patterson noted a typo on page 3 of the prospectus (under criteria): bullet 4 to be renumbered as five, there being two number 4s).

Discussion was held on the three action items.

CAS Niessen suggested, to be transparent the materials budget should be mentioned up front. If, however it appears that an honorarium increase (e.g. to \$20,000) may be an issue, perhaps the that amount should be kept lower (e.g. \$15,000) but a statement could be included that an additional (not to exceed) materials budget will be provided, without specifying a dollar amount.

Cultural Arts Coordinator Booras noted his research that the City of Los Angeles pays its Poet Laureate \$10,000 for 17 events/activities. Commissioner Patterson recalled input from a member of the MB Poetry Group who felt that the amount of compensation is less important than the materials budget in affecting the types of activities that can be undertaken.

In discussing further, The Commission came to a consensus that, this being an inaugural Poet Laureate program, the geographic eligibility for the adult laureate should be remain as proposed, limited to the local South Bay community in Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, and Redondo Beach. Should this be found to be too limiting after submittals are received, then expanding the eligibility can be considered.

Chair Tokashiki restated the action items for the committee with the understanding that the adult laureate eligibility criteria remain limited to nearby South Bay cities: 1) do additional research on compensation for other poet laureate programs, and, 2) invite input from the MB Poetry Group.

iii. Memorial for the Fallen (Tokashiki, Colmey, Patterson): SRS Brinkman updated: he and Commissioner Colmey visited two grassy areas at the Civic Center Plaza previously suggested by Mr. McAulay. Both sites may have ADA compliance issues, explaining, that a plaque which has inscriptions that require close viewing triggers stringent access criteria. A solution may be to break the memorial down into two separate components, 1) an information piece (e.g. plaque) and 2) the thematic artwork (e.g. sculpture) which does not have as stringent ADA requirements because it can be viewed from a distance. It was noted, however, if the project is separated as such, only the artwork may be able to be funded through the public art trust fund.

Two ‘next step’ actions were identified: 1) more research to understand the feasibility of designing as two separate components, and funding implications. LoveMB foundation may be a source of funding for the plaque; and 2) the committee to meet and discuss these issues with Gary McAulay a key stakeholder.

Chair Tokashiki commented that the committee is still interested in finding an artist who is a service veteran.

H. STAFF ITEMS

Cultural Arts Division updates: SRS Brinkman reported:

- The new city exhibit “Ripple Effect’ opened last Friday at the Art Center, 150 attended, will continue until March 30, 2025; is a tribute to the ocean’s great influence.
- Live Oak Park ceramics studio: new kiln is now operational; ribbon cutting will be in February.
- Bruce’s Beach artwork project: APPC meeting to be held this Thursday, 6-8 p.m. at the MBAC to review a draft RFQ; all interested persons invited. Chair Tokashiki asked whether the Bruces Beach RFQ can serve as a template for other projects.
- City historic collection archiving: HAI has completed digitization of the city’s paper and ephemera collection and will soon be migrated onto the city’s server. The city is also talking to LA County Library regarding the library hosting the city’s digitized historical collection on its website.

- *Egrets in Flight* sculpture in Polliwog Park at the botanic garden has been moved a few feet north and will be repaired.
- Leadership Manhattan time capsule artwork status: a decision is to be made by council as to whether to deaccession it or keep and potentially refill it. Director Leyman is in communication with Leadership MB on this, and noted that the unveiling of contents is coming up in March.

PATF budget update - SRS Brinkman reported:

- Total trust fund: 1.7 million
- Allocated: \$946,000
- Un-allocated: \$780,000
- Expiring: none until 2026

City Council updates: SRS Brinkman reported:

- Artwork Conservation Program: at its December 3 meeting, City Council considered the Commission’s recommendations for artwork conservation showing enthusiasm and more awareness about conservation. The council directed:
 - 1) **Allocate funding to repair** six artworks recommended by the Commission including: *Beyond This Point Lies the Rest of the World*; *911 Memorial*; *Catalina Classic*; *Martin Ganz Memorial (Live Oak Park)*; *Metlox Kiln*; and *LightGate*;
 - 2) **Deaccession and remove:** *Mankind’s Struggle For Eternal Peace* (15th Street Post Office sculpture); and *Permanent Wave*, west facing tile mosaic at pier comfort station.
 - 3) **Strand benches:** work towards removing all existing benches and explore replacing with a standard more resilient and maintenance friendly bench without a memorial component.
 - 3) **Formal deaccession policy:** Staff to explore for adoption, which will inform strand bench removals. Staff will review existing contracts, but City owns all benches; will involve outreach to owners of artworks/benches.
- February 4 City Council meeting: additional funds for the 3-D Shark mural to be scheduled for funding (consent calendar)

I. COMMISSION ITEMS - None

J. ADJOURNMENT

At 5:35 p.m. it was moved and seconded (Karger/Colmey) and passed unanimously by voice vote, to adjourn the meeting to 4:00 pm, February 19, 2025 (special date due to President’s holiday).