

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
CULTURAL ART COMMISSION MINUTES**

September 12, 2013
City Managers Conference Room
1400 Highland Avenue
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner James Gill
Commissioner Nancy Dunn
Commissioner Russ Samuels
Commissioner Peter De Maria
Commissioner Loli Ramazani*
*Arrived at 7:52 p.m.

Absent: None

Others Present: Cultural Arts Supervisor Megumi Moisen

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the August 13, 2013 meeting were approved with the following amendments:

- In the public announcement on page 2, Robert Enriquez did not “propose” but “announced” the Sunscreen Film Festival.
- On Sculpture Garden Annual Exhibition (page 5), the brochures are not available at the present time, and will be updated.
- On Strand Staircase Project (page 10), the commission discussed how to clearly define the scope of the project and the Commission’s involvement.
- On the Green Project in the Section of Commission Items (page 12), Commissioner Ramezani’s statement needs to be changed as “...does not see how this project relates to Cultural Arts Commission to lead.”

MOTION: Commissioner Samuels made a motion to approve the minutes of August 13, 2013 as amended. Commissioner Gill seconded the motion.

Ayes: Commissioner Samuels, Gill, De Maria, Dunn
Noes: None
Absent: Commissioner Ramazani
Abstain: None

D. CEREMONIAL

None.

E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Alison Wright, a local artist and architect from Manhattan Beach, brought forth the idea of the *Doors on Doors* project. The project is a temporary installation of the photographs of doors of the New York City Hall of 1810 onto the actual doors of the Manhattan Beach City Hall entrance built in 1975. Her idea seeks to juxtapose the door images to increase the dialogue between the doors from different eras focusing on the artistic ideals of what the doors really are. The contrast between the French Renaissance Revival style of the 1810 Manhattan, New York doors and the sturdy modern type of doors of the Manhattan Beach City Hall will be recognized. It's about the changing of perception for the City as they undergo renovations: what kind of stories we want to tell about ourselves, and what aspects we want to highlight for the future as a progressive community.

Commissioner Gill questioned if this kind of project belongs to the sculpture garden, or if it deserved a separate topic of discussion in and of itself that needs to be placed on the Commission's agenda for further discussion. Ms. Moisen reported that discussion related to the Sculpture Garden was to take place on September 17th City Council meeting, and the staff report was already written and submitted. It is difficult to change the content at this point.

Commissioner Gill stated that the RFP flyers for the Sculpture Garden was going to be out after the Council meeting and artist submissions are due on October 28th. Commissioning of the projects would take place in December 2013 at the earliest.

Commissioner De Maria believed that the best course of action was to get Ms. Wright's piece out as soon as possible was to place it in the sculpture garden, with the hopes that it could possibly get consideration to install it earlier. So it could be viewed in conjunction with the TedX event in November at Manhattan Beach Middle School.

Commissioners Samuels and Chairperson Gill discussed whether it was appropriate to accept Ms. Wright's piece before any other artist submissions will have taken place. It was deemed that this topic would need further discussion, and thus it was moved to be placed as an agenda item.

E. CULTURAL ARTS MANAGER REPORT

Ms. Moisen reported that the Lee Whitten tile mural outside of the old library has been removed and placed in storage. The Commission recommended to the City Council to relocate the mural to the outside wall to the entrance of the parking lot at City Hall on the 13th Street.

Ms. Moisen stated that the Cultural Arts Manager's position was offered to a potential candidate, and the person has until the end of September to accept the position.

Ms. Moisen reported the update of the Centennial Art Project, and the contract has been reviewed by Harries and Hedder, the commission winning artist group.

Ms. Moisen asked the Commission if they could formally recognize Ann Martin, former Cultural Arts Commissioner and curator of six shows at the Creative Arts Center, for her contribution to the community through the arts. Commissioner Gill said that they could bring Ms. Martin to the “Ceremonial” section of a future Cultural Arts Commission meeting to express their appreciation.

F. GENERAL BUSINESS

13/0801.3 Ansel Adams Exhibition

No report on this issue. Monthly updates will come from time to time regarding the exhibit.

13/0208.1 Sculptural Garden Exhibition

Ms. Moisen stated that the staff report for the Sculptural Garden requesting an appropriation of \$5,000 stipend per piece to be spent on up to seven items from the Public Art Trust Fund for the 2013 – 2014 exhibitions had been submitted to Council for the September 17th meeting. The same report also requests a one year extension of the current installation of *Believe Green* and *Not A Step*. Discussion ensued between the Commissioners on whether or not the budget will be moved forward and whether or not an extension for the two pieces will be acceptable.

Within the discussion of the Sculptural Garden, discussion of Alison Wright’s *Doors on Doors* proposal continued. Commissioner Samuels expressed his opinion that Ms. Wright’s project didn’t belong to the Sculptural Garden exhibit and cited that the project needs to be a focus on itself. Commissioner Gill said that it would be improbable for the *Doors on Doors* display to be installed for the TedX event because of an ethical issue that the Commission could run into by rushing the approval for only Ms. Wright’s piece while other submissions had still been selected.

Commissioner De Maria was of the opinion that while timing is an issue, the work should be treated as a separate entity with regards to the Sculptural Garden and should be placed up as soon as possible, with the hopes that it will be up in time for the TedX event.

Commissioner Dunn’s belief was to place the artwork in either way, stating that she wished to see it up at some point. It would be a missed opportunity if it wasn’t up for the TedX event.

Ms. Wright stated that it would not be fair to other artists if her piece was to be installed as a part of the Sculpture Garden but ahead of schedule to be seen in conjunction with the TedX event. She also expressed that she wanted it to be viewed as soon as possible.

Commissioner Gill and Commissioner Dunn asked if the Sculpture Garden staff report could include the comments and concerns related to Ms. Wright's proposal within the "discussion" section. Ms. Moisen answered that she was not sure, and she was going to meet Parks and Recreation Director Mark Leyman about this issue.

The eventual result was that there was a consensus on asking the Council to move the *Doors on Doors* project forward under the pretense that it is time sensitive, with the backup plan to have it fall back into the submissions with the Sculptural Arts Garden.

13/0208.2 Strand Staircase Project

Commissioners expressed their need for more information about the Strand Staircase Project. A walking tour involving the entire Commission, City Engineer Elroy Kiptkeep, and consultant Scott Rice was decided as a recommended plan of action by the Commission. Fridays seemed to be when the Commission had the most availability for this walking tour.

Commissioner Gill presented images of existing staircase designs as samples. Other suggestions were to involve the community in making an art contest out of the staircases.

Commissioner De Maria voiced that materials are the biggest problem when keeping the price point and the upkeep in mind. He suggested that making the staircase either water blown or sandblown would make it permanent and call for less maintenance.

Additionally, he proposed that the concrete be poured two feet thicker to enable the project to be done quickly, and this can be improved upon later. Commissioner Dunn agreed with the plan of action sought out by Commissioner De Maria. Commissioner Samuels addressed the issue with the scope, with regards to whether the money would be best spent on making subtle improvement on all the staircases, or making grand improvements to a select few staircases.

Discussion also took place regarding the vision statement for the Strand Staircase Project. The following statement drafts submitted by two commissioners were reviewed for consideration:

"Our vision is to ensure that the staircase improvement plan does not simply meet legal requirements and lowest budget, but that it meets the standard of beauty that the city of Manhattan Beach and our beach deserve by including an artistic element in the design plans." Submitted by Commissioner Gill.

"To provide Manhattan Beach residents and visitors an enhanced experience of our community by including artistic and cultural elements to the Strand Staircase Repair/Renovation Project. To add elegance, beauty and aesthetics to the "Jewel Necklace" (The Strand) of Manhattan Beach that lift our aspirations, inspire our

creativity, and reflect our community's values." Submitted by Commissioner Dunn.

Commissioner Gill wished to keep the statement short and precise, while Commissioner Dunn and Commissioner Samuels believed that the statement should include their desire for action and a belief in the beauty of Manhattan Beach. The Commission tried to combine those two statements to demonstrate that their ideas are stemmed from their desire to reflect community values. The Commissioners all agreed that the vision statement still needed to be reworked and submitted to Acting Cultural Art Manager Allen by September 19th. 2013.

13/0913.4 Strand Bench Project

In addition to the previously accepted Shell bench by Christoph Kapeller, further development of the prototype designs for the Strand Bench Project was discussed. Ms. Moisen reported that the approval for the purchase of the Shell Bench mold will be requested for Council's review on October 8th. Commissioner Dunn requested to receive a copy of all staff reports with items that relate to the Cultural Arts Commission .

The Commission wanted the selected a few designs to move forward to be included in the prototype bench design catalogue for potential donors. After reviewing the design panels of benches previously submitted by local architects, the Commission was leaning towards two lower profile benches by Soprano & Mooney and Christoph Kapeller. "Beach Pillow" by Ball-Nogues Studio and Stacy Duke's bench design with back were also considered for further development.

Commissioner Samuels was in favor of building a catalog with progressive looking benches, while Commissioner Ramazani's intention was to include some traditional looking benches too. Commissioner De Maria stated that it is not simply about creating a bench, but rather a functional work of art, with the designs presented before the Commission as the best of both the modern and traditional. He also voiced that the benches should be low key because the ocean view is of the highest importance for the visitors and residents on the strand.

Commissioner Gill stated that they need more information before they finalize their selections. Commissioner De Maria suggested following the same format of information used in the previous Shell design presentation to the City Council, which included measurements, costs, color samples, etc. Commissioner Gill requested staff to collect more information about the four bench designs and deliver to the Commission to consider.

H. COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Dunn sought out information on whether Metlox could hold a similar

event to the Concerts in the Park at Polliwog Park, such as Thursday night Jazz during the summer. She hoped that creating events like this would stimulate business in the downtown district. Commissioner De Maria, with the support of Commissioner Ramazani, also suggested a temporary art project take place as an alternative to the music events in Metlox. Commissioner Gill suggested the Commissioners to submit their ideas to Marianne Varney, the president of the Downtown Business Association.

Commissioner Gill brought up two items, and the first one was concerning the decommissioning of the sculpture by Harold Roach by the post office. Commissioner Samuels expressed his hopes that the refurbishing of the space will make it look better. He acknowledged that there are two parts to the plan: the first of which is getting the council to submit this issue to the Commission's agenda, followed by further research into the project as a whole. Commissioner Ramazani added that it goes further than making the project beautiful, but rather to make the post office safer as well.

Second item raised by Commissioner Gill was about the mural painting in the City hall that has been covered for years. Commissioner Samuels believed that it is the community's right to see the artwork donated from our sister city, and this too should be placed on the commission's agenda so they can research more. Commissioner Gill wondered if this could even be decommissioned or sold; he would like staff to ask the Council for permission to discuss the future of the artwork in the City Hall.

Commissioner Ramazani brought up the topic of the Sun Screen Film Festival, which takes place on October 11th -13th. According to Commissioner Ramazani, Robert Enriquez, talent manager, film producer, and also business owner in Manhattan Beach, was wondering if there was any way he could raise awareness; for example, by placing the flyer on the City's website, or advertising at the Hometown Fair. Commissioner Gill suggested that Mr. Enriquez speaks to City Council with his proposal. Ms. Moisen will research if the City's website can link to the Film Festival's site.

H. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.