

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

September 16, 2019
City Hall – City Manager Conference Room
1400 Highland Avenue
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rubino called the meeting to order at 6:13 PM.

B. PLEDGE TO FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Bennett, May, Ryan, Taner, Chair Rubino

Absent: Manna

Staff present: Martin Betz, Cultural Arts Manager, Eilen Stewart, Arts Supervisor, Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary (remote)

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - August 19, 2019

Chair Rubino asked if there were any changes, seeing none and hearing no objection, it was so ordered to approve as submitted.

E. CEREMONIAL - Chair Rubino noted that the Commission will view the AC Conner paintings later in the meeting after the General Business item is completed. This was done between 8:01 and 8:19 p.m. (see end of General Business item 19/0916.02 Discussion of Manhattan Beach Art Center signage).

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

G. GENERAL BUSINESS

19/0916.01 Discussion of Sculpture Garden Program Name and Event

Cultural Arts Manager Martin Betz noted that the Commission authorized this agenda item at the last meeting in that it might be time to change the name of the program known as “The Sculpture Garden”. Arts Manager Betz stated his support as he has observed the program has changed considerably since its inception in 2009, and since he has been with the City. Procedurally, with Chair Rubino concurring, he suggested that the Commissioners write down their ideas, discuss and then, after determining the names that they think should officially be considered, a vote will be taken. It was agreed that “word-smithing” can be done subsequently as there may be variations on a single name. The following 16 names were nominated:

Commissioner Manna (through Mr. Betz)

- 1) Everywhere Art (or variation: Art Everywhere);
- 2) Art About Town (variations: Art Around Town, Around Town Art)
- 3) Cultural Arts Program
- 4) Beautify MB
- 5) The MB Canvas

6) The City Gallery (or variation: Beach City Gallery)

Commissioner Taner:

7) Art for All (or variation: Manhattan Beach Art for All Program) (Will spell out MB)

8) Art Outdoors

Commissioner Rubino:

9) Manhattan Beach Artscapes (variation: City Artscapes)

Commissioner May:

10) Urban Perspectives (variations: (Art) (90266)

11) Urban Open Gallery (variation Open Urban Gallery)

12) 2020 (Vision?) Perspective on Art

13) Plein Air Gallery

14) Art Beat 90266 / (variation: Art Beat 2020) (*eliminated because used by Irvine*)

Commissioner Bennett:

15) Manhattan Beach Art Lens

Manager Betz:

16) Manhattan Beach Sculpture Project

Discussion was held as to whether the name could be broader to other programs, rather than specific to Sculpture Garden. Manager Betz noted he felt that the ongoing Cultural Arts programs already have names and he is uncomfortable with going beyond that as to do so would amount to strategic planning - which is beyond the scope of this item.

Commissioner Taner noted that three of 16 names (“Arts in Public Places”, “Urban Arts Perspectives” and “Urban Perspectives 90266”) were broad. He asked whether these could be used in the future should the scope of the newly named program at some point go beyond the sculpture program.

Manager Betz reminded that the impetus for a new name was that the description of “Sculpture Garden”, which implies a concentration of specific sculpture art in a specific place, is now out dated and confusing. For example, the “pole and pot” method of installing sculpture has given way to other methods (such as ladders) and as such, there is more flexibility and sculptures are able to be located throughout the city.

Chair Rubino asked for clarification: would it be possible if they choose a name to intentionally be all inclusive and generic? Manager Betz summarized that he feels that would be inappropriate because: 1) the staff report indicated this is a focused, not generic application; 2) other ongoing CAC oversight programs already have specific names; and, 3) to do so would involve a larger scope issue involving setting strategic direction - which is outside the scope of this meeting. The Commission acknowledged this point. Commissioner Ryan stated that while she understands this, she would welcome an opportunity to create a branding for the Cultural Arts Commission (CAC) to help promote art in the City.

Manager Betz agreed and ideally, the Commission would be suggesting what programs should be done, instead of taking direction from staff. Mr. Betz clarified that the Strand Bench Program has been discontinued and he would be happy to give the Commissioners a full list of the current programs by their official names. He went over a background of the CAC, noting that the City Council had censured a prior Commission after determining that it had exceeded its authority which

was to be an advisory, not policy creating committee. Mr. Betz noted he thinks this Commission could be a more cohesive unit and possibly, while acting within its official role, have some more authority.

Commissioner May stated she believes it is good to have an umbrella name applicable to all projects; Commissioner Bennett agreed and suggested on the website, there could be a tab that takes you to the Commission and a listing of all its projects which could serve as good public relations and publicity. Chair Rubino endorsed this as it could be a strong identifier for the Commission. Manager Betz also reminded that the Commission will soon be working on a big new program - Grants - which has a big public arts component, and this will empower them as they will be able to select the kinds of art (visual, performing, etc.) that will be recommended.

Commissioner Taner suggested that as appropriate, there could be an umbrella name e.g. "Arts in Public Places" which encompasses all types of arts and would be citizen-friendly and within this, "Manhattan Beach Sculpture Project" could be a sub-category.

Chair Rubino asked for direction as to whether this topic (creating an umbrella name) could be placed on a future agenda? She floated the idea that Manager Betz study this and come back with information as to how to proceed. Asking for clarification, Commissioner Taner suggested that the direction would be for Staff to research what needs to be done to be able to attach an umbrella name to all projects (noting that there are a few of the 16 proposed names that being, general, could serve as such an umbrella).

Arts Manager Betz suggested that the CAC could have a separate page and list projects, and could start publicizing what they do. This idea would be consistent with the ultimate plan to get to where the Commission was around 2013. Mr. Betz suggested that some of the trust money could be used to publicize the CAC and its programs more.

Arts Manager Betz stated that the major benefit he sees is that by advertising cultural arts programs, you gain more public support and this, in turn, helps staff.

Chair Rubino called for a motion.

It was moved/seconded (Ryan/Taner) to close the discussion limited to 16 nominations and vote on the replacement name for the Sculpture Garden.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Bennett, May, Ryan, Tanner, Chair Rubino
Noes: None
Absent: Manna
Abstain: None

It was moved/seconded (Taner/May) to agendize at the next meeting a larger discussion regarding the direction of the CAC and the possibility of creating an umbrella name for projects which may be used for branding:

Roll Call:

Ayes: Bennett, May, Ryan, Tanner, Chair Rubino
Noes: None
Absent: Manna
Abstain: None

Chair Rubino opened the floor for discussion on the process to vote; the following protocols were established: 1) 5 votes per Commissioner; 2) narrow down to 3 most liked names; 3) after initial vote, hold a discussion on the three; 4) vote is based on current name wording, later will “word-smith” a final name, but must contain the word or concept “sculpture”. Art Beat (#14), was eliminated as this name already in use by Irvine. Arts Supervisor Eilen Stewart cautioned that using “2020” which has been popular for both a year and a “vision” may not work well; and it was agreed to not use in any case due to being over-used.

Voting proceeded with results below, and the top three (shaded) were #s 9, 10, 16.

1. Everywhere Art = No votes
2. Art About Town = No votes
3. Cultural Arts Program = No votes
4. Beautify MB = 1 vote
5. MB Canvas = 2 votes
6. City Gallery = No votes
7. Art for All = No votes
8. Art Outdoors = 1 vote
9. MB/City Artscapes = 6 votes
10. Urban (Art) Perspectives = 8 votes
11. Urban Open Gallery = No votes
12. 2020 Perspective on Art = No votes
13. Plein Air Gallery = No votes
14. Art Beat 90266/2020 = 5 votes
15. MB Art Lens = 1 vote
16. MB Sculpture Project 90266 = 8 votes

Chair Rubino invited discussion before taking a vote for a final single name.

Commissioner Taner stated his personal preference of the top three is “Urban Perspectives” which although vague, suggests 2-dimensional or sculptural aspect and he feels it doesn’t need “art” in title. **Commissioner Bennett** likes Urban Art Perspectives, because it is open ended and invites interpretation which is what art is all about. **Commissioners May, Ryan** had no comment. **Chair Rubino stated** she feels that Urban Perspectives suggests the City of Los Angeles, a much more urban setting and therefore she feels it is not appropriate for Manhattan Beach. She likes “Manhattan Beach Sculpture Project” as it is exactly what the program is and “Artscapes”. **Commissioner Bennett** suggested adding 90266 to Artscapes. **Manager Betz** cautioned in the use of “Urban Arts” since it has been used extensively by West Hollywood and Los Angeles.

Chair Rubino closed the discussion, thanking all for their input. Arts Supervisor Stewart directed voting between Artscapes, Urban Perspective, Sculpture Project - each commissioner was directed

to vote for 2 names and the group agreed to eliminate “Artscapes”. Further discussion followed for the remaining two programs, Urban Perspectives and The Sculpture Project. Art Supervisor Stewart cautioned, while it is up to the Commission, she doesn’t think residents identify the city as “urban”.

Commissioner Ryan stated she feels that “urban” is positive in that it connotes diversity/multi-culturalism and **Commissioner Taner** stated he likes “Urban Perspectives 90266” in that it will be both attractive and still is a bit challenging as is art. **Arts Supervisor Stewart** explained procedurally the final name will be given to the City Council as a recommendation; **Chair Rubino** suggested that the Commission give all of the top three but should note the preferred name.

Manager Betz endorsed the course suggested by the Chair, that in making a recommendation to the Council, there should also be an explanation as to why the top name is preferred, along with the background/purpose of the program name change.

Chair Rubino invited any further comments on Urban Perspectives, suggesting it should include 90266 in its name. She prefers a name that is more generic vs. specific; loves the word “perspectives” but “urban” - not so much. Commissioner May, upon looking up “urban” in the dictionary, stated she feels it is ok to use it, based on the definition.

Chair Rubino invited discussion on both names. It was generally agreed to add 90266 to Urban Perspectives and likewise Manhattan Beach and 90266 are acceptable additions.

Chair Rubino closed discussion for a final vote between the two (2) name concepts. Urban Perspectives was voted as the preferred name and she directed that the Commission refine the wording.

Commissioner Taner stated he prefers both “urban: and “90266” for Urban Perspectives 90266. He feels the inclusion of “urban” will elevate the quality of artists, act as a natural filter and will reflect well on the City. Commissioners May, Ryan and Bennett had no further comment; and final name of the preferred new name for Sculpture Garden to be recommended to the City Council was determined to be “Urban Perspective 90266”.

Discussion on Recognition Event:

Manager Betz explained that staff is not ready to discuss this in detail because the sculptures have not all been installed, but in concept, he would like to see having a bus tour of art in the City that would start and end at some art event reception, at the Art Center or other venue.

Chair Rubino suggested that this item be tabled until a future time when more information is available and some of the sculptures are in place. It was so ordered by the Chair.

19/0916.02 Discussion of Manhattan Beach Art Center signage

Cultural Arts Manager Betz noted that, at the last meeting, the Commission authorized this item with discussion focused on possible “stop-gap” improvements for signage at the Art Center. Commissioner Manna is interested in a possible replacement of the electric building identification sign which is in a state of disrepair and believes that this is an appropriate public art project.

Mr. Betz clarified that the purpose of tonight’s discussion is to decide whether to put off the sign improvement for a larger project or do now. He feels that it is appropriate to move forward now as it is on the Work Plan. **Commissioner May** suggested that the sign could be just moved closer to the driveway, but Mr. Betz pointed out that the sign materials are in need of being replaced and he recommended that the Commission hear the staff presentation and he feels there could be an arts component as an artistic sign. He could do a Request for Proposal, get financial estimates and make a budget and go through the Public Art process. That is direction the Commission could give.

He found that many art venues actually have minimal signs. He showed slides of the existing conditions and it was speculated that the existing sign originally was for the public library. The sign should be visible from 400 feet for cars going 40 miles per hour. The existing sign is blocked by the tennis court. It has tubes inside but not sure if it is illuminated at night. It needs change. There is sufficient frontage. Get minds away from the existing sign and consider other options and the City is not necessarily “married” to the John Van Hamersveld art work. There are some decorative walls that are under-utilized. He showed slides of other art venues and possible ideas.

There being no more staff comments, **the Chair** clarified that the vote needed is on a motion to replace the sign only and to see what options are available (banners vs. façade sign, etc.). **Mr. Betz** clarified that in order to spend public money, the sign must have a public art component.

Discussion ensued. **Commissioner Taner** suggested that the Commission choose an option that allows staff to move forward as soon as possible. He likes the idea of having a series of directional signs on the Manhattan Beach Boulevard median. **Commissioner Ryan** stated she felt a more involved decision can wait until more is decided about the building future; she subsequently left the meeting at 7:47 pm.

Commissioner May likes the idea of going out to bid now, and raised the issue of the efficacy of banners especially those on the side of the building. **Arts Supervisor Stewart** commented that the only such banner that has been noticed was the Van Hamersveld banner so that’s why no more banners have been hung. Taner stated he was thinking more about banners on permanent poles on both sides of the street. He didn’t realize there were utility poles on the median (some on the sidewalk and some are on the median). Mr. Betz would consult with city staff on how this could be done and how to get permission. **Chair Rubino** stated she felt approval would go to the City Council. Commissioner May suggested getting started with banners (by Christmas?) Commissioner Bennett said she felt that street banners are effective.

Commissioner Ryan, rejoining at 7:55 PM stated she felt that the entire building can use an overhaul and is in support.

Chair Rubino stated her agreement with everyone and called for a motion. It was moved and seconded (Bennett/Taner) to have a two-step plan, first to put up banners expeditiously and, second, to have a conversation about the long term future of the building.

Roll Call:

Ayes:	Bennett, May, Ryan, Tanner, Chair Rubino
Noes:	None
Absent:	Manna
Abstain:	None

The Chair announced that this recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council.

The Chair stated that there is a component of the first agenda item that relates to discussion of **having a**

recognition event (as suggested by Commissioner Taner) and she would like to have this discussion now (see agenda item 19/0916.01).

Other business: Chair Rubino also noted that she has a meeting scheduled with the Mayor to discuss the suggestion made at the last meeting by Commissioner Taner to consider use of the vacant building across from City Hall on Highland Avenue. She will report on this at the next meeting.

Viewing of AC Conner paintings: see agenda item E. Ceremonial. At 8:01 Chair Rubino called a five-minute break to view the A.C. Conner art in City Hall; she reconvened the meeting at 8:19 pm. In the City Manager conference room.

H. STAFF ITEMS

Cultural Arts Division updates - Cultural Arts Manager Betz/Arts Supervisor Stewart reported on the following:

- Light Gate: the glass has been replaced; the CAC will host a reception on November 14, re-dedicating the sculpture – stay tuned.
- Calendar updates October: due to scheduling conflicts the opening for the next major exhibit “Immersio” will be delayed from 10/18 to 11/1; the exhibit will be the work of Claudia Meyer and will be a Time4Art production by Homeira Goldstein. There will be no closing event for the current exhibit. For most of the month of October, the Art Center will be closed and spruced up. Oct 5-6, the Home Town Fair will take place, during which staff will be hosting an Open House at the Ceramics Studio where student/staff art will be for sale; all Commissioners are invited to stop by; Oct. 26 the City will be conducting a ceramics workshop.
- Lobby project: in about 10 weeks or so, proposals are expected and will be scheduling a meeting before the APPC. The Artists are almost done looking at the space.
- The “Metlox event” will not happen this year, with Tom Delaney, due to illness.

City Council updates - Staff will be going to Council with additional mural locations – stay tuned.

I. COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner May reported that she was just asked by artist Gary Sweeney if there could be a show for long time (90+ years) resident and artist Don Spencer. Manager Betz responded that a proposal should be submitted but noted the earliest available date at the Art Center would be 2023/24, therefore an alternate venue such as the library, should be pursued. The City can help looking into a library space. Ms. Stewart also suggested the Community exhibition.

Commissioner Ryan asked and Mr. Betz responded to her that an email response has been sent concerning an artist.

Commissioner Taner asked about a suggestion he made at the last meeting that the Commission, through the Chair, send a letter of congratulations to the LA County Art and Culture Department Executive Director, Kristin Sakoda, with an invite to visit the City and meet with staff and officials. Chair Rubino stated she planned to speak on that.

Chair Rubino reported on Commissioner Taner's suggestion: It has been determined first that, per the direction of Parks and Rec, the letter should come from the Mayor, but then it was determined that too much time has gone by (4 months elapsed). Commissioner Taner shared his experiences with Los Angeles County art administration – in the future he feels that the CAC could educate citizens about grants opportunities available through the County. **Mr. Betz** noted that Manhattan Beach is applying for one grant through Public Works. Another program through LACMA exists that deals with diversity/inclusion in arts that may be valuable, that is fascinating. He passed out some literature from the County. **Chair Rubino** stated that she will be at a meeting very soon at which Kristin Sakoda will be present, and she will try to talk to her and congratulate her for the Commission. **Manager Betz**, who sits on a grants panel, stated that he can discuss grants later.

Commissioner Bennett noted that the storm drain covers in the Strand that her charity organization has painted - all the way to Marine Avenue/22nd Street and two at the pier - are done. There are images of native South Bay fish.

Commissioner Ryan noted that there has been a free offer by this organization to do more, in the beach cities, but Manhattan Beach has not been able to sign contracts.

Chair Rubino mentioned at 401 E. 4th Place, Los Angeles (The Arts district), an annual pop-up art exhibit/event will be held this Saturday, 6-10 pm.

Commissioner Taner noted for the record that the actual swearing in of Kristin Sakoda was only on August 7th. Chair Rubino can bring up in her Mayor meeting.

Commissioner May suggested that the CAC think of more ways to get more publicity (articles) in the Beach Reporter about MB art events. Mr. Betz noted that they publish all of the ads for exhibits and are doing more with other events (e.g. recently published the Light Gate re-dedication).

J. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:41 P.M, **Chair Rubino called for a motion to adjourn (Taner/May)**, so moved - to the regular meeting of October 21, 2019 at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue.