

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH**  
**MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION**

April 11, 2017

Manhattan Beach City Hall, City Council Chambers  
1400 Highland Avenue  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson May called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**B. ROLL CALL**

Present: Gill, Manna, Prigozhin Chairperson May.

Absent: Friedman

Others present: Eilen Stewart, Ceramics Supervisor, Deborah Hom, Recreation Supervisor, Michelle Stoll, Paloma Valdez, Zaha Shtewi and Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 14, 2017**

A motion was made and seconded (Gill/Manna) to approve as submitted.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Gill, Prigozhin, Manna, Chairperson May

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Friedman

**D. CEREMONIAL - None**

**E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (3-Minute Limit)**

**Dan Ashcraft**, and **Sherry Kramer**, Torrance Cultural Arts Foundation (TOCA) announced that on June 24 the Foundation is hosting a South Bay Festival of the Arts. They described the event including that there will be 4 live performance stages, with food and craft beer booths, and they will be reaching out to promote as many local artists as possible. Dan explained they are here tonight to welcome any ways that the Manhattan Beach Cultural Arts Commission could participate and/or ways that they can also promote some Manhattan Beach cultural events. They are working with sponsorships and their target attendance is at least 3,000 attendees.

Chair May noted that she is working on the North End of Highland Art Walk and suggested that they discuss cross promoting both of these events.

Sherry Kramer responded to Commission questions, that they will be advertising in both the Beach Reprter and Daily Breeze and promoting also in the South Bay Magazine, that TOCA is a nonprofit and they are reaching out to all the South Bay Cultural Arts groups.

The Commission suggested possible resources for the June festival including Cultural Arts Manager Betz and Nina Zak Laddon of the Friends of Redondo Beach Arts. Mr. Ashcraft thanked the Commissin and left flyers for their event.

**F. STAFF ITEMS**  
**Cultural Arts Division Update**

**Report on “Somos Locos”:** Michelle Stoll gave a brief report on the March 18<sup>th</sup> skatepark event and California Locos 4-day pop-up art show, using a slide presentation. She noted that the 5-member Locos group was a great art tie-in to the ribbon cutting in that the artists had various backgrounds in graffiti and skate art, music and high art and while they are all well known independent artists, they sometimes work as a group as in this event. Spyder, one of the commercial sponsors which has the “Skatespot” store in Manhattan Beach, was very instrumental in marketing as well as providing skateboards that were raffled off. Another skateboard company, Dusters which partners often with the Locos was also a valuable sponsor. Rebel Coast Winery and The Dudes Brewery and Critics Choice contributed in-kind donations of beverages and food and music was performed by Jamison Jarvis. Eight-five persons attended the book signing and six hundred persons attended the art exhibit which followed the skate park event.

Ms. Stoll emphasized that a major key to the show’s success was extensive marketing, especially through the sponsors through social media (e.g. Spyder has 13,000 followers who were blasted three times before the show) but also at a grass roots level as she walked into several local stores and distributed posters. There were billboards in other non-local areas, cover news stories (Easy Reader) and listings such as in the LA Weekly and blogs. Ms. Stoll concluded by showing a video of the event and stating that she has received a lot of feedback, including from the Locos that the event was excellent, especially in that it was locally produced.

Recreation Supervisor Eilen Stewart added that another very positive aspect was the efficient collaboration between multiple divisions and departments. Ms. Stoll also emphasized that there was a lot of cross marketing for example between the Skate Spot and Dusters and the event and the art.

**Report on “Live” cultural arts program:** Zaha Shtewi, Paloma Valdez and Eilen Stewart presented on the new MBAC event “Live” that premiered last Thursday. Ms. Shtewi explained that Live is a free series of activities that are being offered on first and last Thursdays monthly at the MCAC. The activities are designed to enhance artistic skills and develop presentation confidence in local artists. On the first Thursday, there is a costume figure drawing activity and on the last Thursday there is an “open mike” activity. Both of these events are open to everyone age 16 and older and go from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Regarding the figure drawing, there are no instructors or any pressure. All attendees bring their own materials and a \$12 donation is suggested which goes to the model. For the Open mike event which is held on the last Thursdays, this is intended to encourage anyone to improve their skills, whether a poet, musician, comedian, performance artist or story teller. They ask performers to not advertise or promote any commercial business, and refrain from displaying nudity use hate speech or proselytize.

Paloma Valdez explained that “costume figural drawing” involves a model in costume and the focus is on lighting, shadowing and draping and all skill levels are encouraged. Ms. Stewart explained that starting out staff decided to see what the response was and then decide whether more education needs to be done about figural drawing. The first event drew well (about 15 persons) and this seems to be an indication that this is a fairly well known activity and the staff marketing through social media (Instagram account #mbaclive) is working. The average age of the participants is about 20. Next month, on May 4<sup>th</sup> they will have a “Star Wars” theme for the costume drawing, and there will be two models.

The Commission discussed the Live program. Commissioner Prigozhin inquired as to why the event did not provide a qualified person who could critique the drawings being done by the participants and give feedback. Ms. Valdez explained that the intent was to have a non-academic setting, with no pressure to achieve any certain level of proficiency or number of sketches and to target a large general audience. She also explained that another purpose of the event is to “grow” the community and encourage participation, and to not just cater to the artist community but also to support the models who typically create their own costumes. Staff is finding that a strong symbiotic relationship can be built between the models and artist/participants.

A suggestion was made to staff that perhaps a critiquer could be added as an optional part of the drawing event and the critiquing could perhaps be done away from the other attendees in another studio space. Regarding the open mike activity it was explained that the intent is to make the activity as open as possible to interested persons. Another suggestion from the Commission was to mix the art in the center so as to have no dead space but rather open up the space. Ms. Valdez explained that the main goal of “Live” is to bring arts back to the South Bay and the MBAC in particular. The Commission expressed their enthusiasm and support for the program.

**Report on “Dance of Thought” (Shane Guffogg):** Eilen Stewart described this new exhibit at MBAC that starts tomorrow (April 12, 6 – 8 pm reception) and runs to June 11. There will be food as well as beer/wine provided by in-kind sponsor donations. Ms. Stewart showed examples of the artist’s work from his website. Guffong’s paintings are ethereal with convoluted figures, and his technique involves applying dozens of thin glaze layers over a painting. This results in an effect of moving light and shadow. It is hoped that the artist will be present at the reception, but this is not certain.

**Report on Mira Costa Art Show:** Eilen Stewart reported that this exhibit which just closed April 2 went very well, there were over 200 artworks exhibited, the largest response ever. The first place honor went to a digital painting and this was received very positively.

The Commission complimented staff on the great shows that have been put on overall, noting that they are very enjoyable and it seems that “getting the word out” is working. Also it appears that they are expanding out to engage in a wide variety of groups.

## **G. COMMISSION ITEMS**

In response to an inquiry from Commissioner Gill, Ms. Stewart reported that the sailboat sculpture is done, however, the City building department is requiring that a safety rail be installed at the piece and after this is completed, the project will be done.

Chair May noted that she had heard that there are some scratches on the Light Gate sculpture, although she hasn’t personally seen this. Ms. Stewart stated that staff will check into this.

Commissioner Gill raised a concern in that he feels there is a flaw in how requests from the Cultural Arts Commission (CAC ) to the City Council seeking authorization to discuss new business topics are being handled. He found it to be an eye-opening experience when he was watching a recent City Council meeting to see that such items are being placed along with the CAC minutes as informational items that are voted on by the City Council in a single “receive and file” vote, with no public discussion. Therefore it seems that no action has been taken by the City Council on the 4 or 5 requests to discuss that have been made by the CAC over the last 6 to 8 months. Commissioner Gill feels that this informational item/receive and file process at the City Council level explains why there has been

no movement on several programs or activities they wished to discuss and why the Commission seems to be “dead in the water” in terms of developing programs. He believes that there is much confusion as to what the proper format is for processing such requests from the CAC to the City Council.

The Commission briefly discussed this. Chair May suggested that a more formal request should be made, but speculated perhaps Parks and Recreation staff is waiting for the finalization of the City-wide Commissioner Handbook, and discussion of the CAC’s Work Plan. Commissioner Manna suggested that perhaps this would be an appropriate subject of discussion between the CAC and City Council at their upcoming joint meeting. Ms. Stewart indicated she would relay the CAC’s comments to Cultural Arts Manager Betz.

Commissioner Gill additionally expressed concern about the Work Plan and the process for its approval. He had thought that the draft Work Plan was going to come back to CAC before it goes to the City Council. Chair May reminded that the CAC had discussed which items would be on the Plan. There was consensus that even if a list of Work Plan items had been compiled it seemed that there should be a way or process for authorizing the CAC to discuss new one-time proposals such as the bandshell pavilion proposal. Ms. Stewart stated that perhaps the Commissioner Handbook being revised would address such processes and procedures. Chair May suggested that this subject of how CAC requests to discuss topics and /or the Work Plan might be included in a future CAC agenda under “Staff Items”.

Commissioner Gill inquired as to whether the reorganization of the CAC (including Chair) is coming up soon and this topic may need to be put on the May agenda. Ms. Stewart stated that she would discuss this with Mr. Betz.

In response to an inquiry from Commissioner Manna, Ms. Stewart indicated that a location for the High School exhibition on May 19<sup>th</sup> has not yet been found. Staff has reached out to the City’s Economic Vitality Manager for his input and possible sites. The exhibit needs 1,000 to 2,000 square feet and it would be ideal if the space was not a fully finished or pristine area. The Commission and staff discussed various sites and locations as well as the timing of the exhibit.

Commissioner Gill announced that FOLA (Foundation of Local Artists) is having its 8<sup>th</sup> annual fundraiser coming up on Sunday, April 23 between 5-7 pm, and will be held at the Lido restaurant.

Chair May reported that artists are needed for the North End Art Walk to be held June 10. The Walk has doubled in size and she encouraged all to suggest names of artists who may want to participate. Commissioner Manna suggested a contact.

**H. GENERAL BUSINESS - None**

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:20 P.M., it was moved and seconded (Gill/Prighozin) and passed unanimously by voice vote to adjourn the meeting to 6:00 P.M. on May 9 in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue.