

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

June 17, 2019
City Hall – City Council Chambers
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, Manna, May, Ryan, Chair Rubino

Absent: Taner

Others present: Martin Betz, Cultural Arts Manager, Eilen Stewart, Cultural Arts Supervisor, Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - May 20, 2019

Chair Rubino called for any changes to the minutes; seeing none, the Chair moved approval of the minutes as submitted; it was so ordered.

E. CEREMONIAL - Welcome to Commissioner Bennett

Chair Rubino welcomed new Commissioner Georgia Bennett who will serve as student representative. Ms. Bennett gave a brief; profile of herself: a lifelong resident, she has just finished her Junior year at Mira Costa where she is enrolled in the AP studio arts program; looking towards college, she plans to minor in visual arts, is very excited to be a part of the Commission and hopes to make her mark.

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

G. GENERAL BUSINESS

Discussion of Joint CAC and City Council Meeting

Chair Rubino started discussion by reporting on the outcome of the June 3rd joint meeting with the City Council at which the Commission's 2019-2020 Work Plan was discussed. She noted the following main outcomes:

- Ongoing projects were approved as proposed: Sculpture Garden; Community Arts Grants; Public Art Conservation Assessment; City Hall Lobby Public Art Project; City Murals; Light Gate Glass Replacement, and the Utility Box Beautification. Many of these are awaiting contracts and are expected to be completed or well on their way by mid-year.
- The Strand Bench Alcove Program will be continued, but will be moved over to the Parks and Recreation Commission.
- Sculpture Program renaming: the Sculpture Garden program is continuing as a program, but its official renaming was not discussed at the joint meeting; this should be further discussed by the CAC prior to finalizing contracts.
- The A.C. Conner exhibit format is changed – now will have two parts (Martin Betz to go over).
- Arts in the Park: to come back to the Council after January, 2020, when other major projects are completed.

Cultural Arts Manager Betz noted that only two Commissioners, Chair Rubino and Commissioner Taner, were in attendance; he apologized that notice of the joint meeting had not been given to the Commission due to an administration snafu. He made the following main points:

- Main City Council message/vision: the Commission should finish current projects before taking on substantial new ones. Manager Betz noted unfortunately because of a staff turnover in a key position, the processing of CAC project contracts has been delayed, but he is hopeful that this will be done this summer. The Council also indicated they want to see a more comprehensive program including more smaller, “one-offs” and add-on projects spread out more widely throughout City.
- Arts in the Park: He felt that the resulting slowdown in implementing this year’s projects had an impact on this proposal, in addition to the fact that staff was asking for a sizeable funding (\$30,000) just after the Council had gone through a difficult budget-cutting exercise. This project will be brought back to the City Council in the future.
- Community Grants program: this is the first year and he expects the Commission to be very involved. The tentative timeline is: announce publicly in September, CAC review of proposals in November, review by City Council in December, with a start in January.
- A.C. Conner Exhibition: instead of a single more extensive exhibit with the Historical Society, the project has been broken down into two separate exhibits. The first part, an exhibit of a smaller amount of paintings in City Hall will be installed by the end of July. The Historical Society will hold another, larger exhibit later that will have an historic context.
- Art Center Improvements: no real direction was given by the City Council; Manager Betz suggested that the Commission continue to discuss and refine the concept to be ready for the next Work Plan.

In response to questions from **Commissioner Manna**, **Mr. Betz** reported that he is in process of working out agreements and expects to soon schedule the glass replacement for Light Gate (work to be done by fine arts contractor) and removal of the “Puff of Wind” sculpture from the Civic Center plaza.

Chair Rubino gave an additional report, providing updates for all of the projects that were on the Work Plan as proposed at the joint meeting. She reiterated that staff is waiting on contracts for the Sculpture Garden, but cement mountings are being installed; Strand Alcove Benches program is completed as to the Cultural Arts Commission (both damaged benches now fixed); Community Arts Grants program is getting started now; the Public Arts Conservation Assessment is in the works and is estimated to be completed in September; the City Hall Lobby project and the City Building Murals are both going forward, and these two will be presented to the City Council tomorrow; and the Utility Box project and Building Murals Project are both waiting on contract approval.

Commissioner Manna asked whether the expansion of the number of utility boxes to be beautified might be an example of the types of small projects that are desired by the Council. **Manager Betz** responded that, though it was not clear, he believes that the Council’s vision is more along the line of wanting more live performances, such as small jazz concerts in the park added onto to existing events. **Mr. Betz** noted that he felt that there are many smaller types of events that are already being done and perhaps staff might provide information about those to the City Council.

H. STAFF ITEMS

Cultural Arts Division Update –

Mr. Betz reviewed two Work Plan projects that are going before the City Council tomorrow night: The City Murals, and the City Hall Lobby Art Project.

Mural Project: **Manager Betz** presented slides showing proposed murals at 8 locations and the cost/requested disbursement from the Public Art Fund for each: 1. Parking Garage Civic Center (Bo Bridges, \$8,500); 2. Ramp into Parking Structure (Bo Bridges, \$27,000); 3. Elevator Structure in Civic Center Parking Lot (Joanna Garel, \$19,000); 4. Joslyn Community Center East Wall – (Charles Bragg, \$20,000); 5. Metlox Plaza (Kelsey Montague, \$16,000); 6. North Side of Racquetball facility, Marine Ave Park (Trek Kelley,

\$30,000); 7. Skate Spot, Marine Ave Park (Josh Barnes, \$15,000); and 8. Low wall in Lot 6, Highland Ave. (Kid Wiseman, \$10,000).

The Commission briefly discussed the mural project noting that they felt the proposed murals are colorful and engaging. Some concern was noted that there was repetition in multiple lifeguard tower murals relatively close to each other; **Chair Rubino** asked whether the artists might be able to engage local students in installing the murals; Mr. Betz noted the installations will be completed by February, 2020, and **Chair Rubino** suggested that the City do some advance publicity, promoting the mural installations.

City Hall Lobby Project RFQ: **Manager Betz** reviewed the four semi-finalists for this projects plus two alternates including their background and examples of their work, including: Hou de Sousa, Susan Zoccola, Kipp Kobayashi and Monika Bravo and two alternates, including Cliff Garten and Rob Ley. The four semi-finalists, upon approval by the Council, will be given a \$4,000 stipend to develop a specific proposal for the lobby space. The four developed proposals will then be reviewed by the APPC (Art in Public Places Committee) and the APPC's recommendation will then be reviewed by the Cultural Arts Commission which will in turn provide a recommendation to the City Council. The Council is being asked to approve a total of \$250,000 from the Public Art Trust Fund to pay for the final project.

The Commission briefly discussed the Lobby project. **Mr. Betz** noted that at the joint Council meeting, he will be emphasizing the review process and thoughts of the Arts Commission, in that they were looking more at the artistic style of each artist and whether it would be appropriate for Manhattan Beach. After the Council approves, each of the four semi-finalists will come to the City, speak to staff, visit the space and then develop a project proposal that they will submit after about three months, to the City.

Mr. Betz encouraged the Commissioners to attend and listen to the discussion noting they may be called up to answer questions, if so desired by the Council.

Other Programs: **Cultural Arts Manager Betz** and **Arts Supervisor Eilen Stewart** reported on other important programs. Mr. Betz reported that the annual summer Concerts in the Park will be starting up with the Salute to the Troops on June 30th and on July 20th, "Stomping Grounds", a new high school focused music and arts festival, will be held in the Arts Center parking lot. There will be eight high school bands and a number of art workshops, and food will be available.

Arts Supervisor **Eilen Stewart** reported that the exhibit "Morphologizing", after a very successful run, closed last Sunday. There was a lot of positive feedback and no negative reaction. Next, the Annual Community Art Exhibit will open July 12 and run through September 29th. This replaces a number of short quick community shows that targeted certain segments of the community and now these have been folded into one community wide exhibit. This allows for a much more efficient use of staff resources and effectively brings the community together. Last year there were about 100 submissions and they accepted about 70. Also, an Instagram contest was held and images were displayed. This is not a juried show – the aim is to encourage participation and staff feels last year the exhibit was extremely successful.

The opening last year was attended by about 600 persons and attendance remained high throughout the show. This year there have been about 170 submissions and 104 pieces have been selected – the show will be very full. Demographically there have been 56 submissions from "older adults" - 55 years plus, 26 from younger adults 18-24 years, 15 from 10-18 year olds, and 7 submissions are from children less than 10 years old. **Ms. Stewart** encouraged the Commissioners to attend the opening on July 12th.

After the Community Exhibit, rounding out the year there will be a "Time For Art" exhibit (October 18 through December 29) featuring the work of Lita Albuquerque. Opening January 17 through March 22,

there will be an exhibit, an homage to three MB artists (Alex Weinstein, Marlene D'Amato and Wendy Stillman) who work in various abstract styles.

Chair Rubino initiated a brief discussion on how exhibit attendance is documented and whether, if, for example, increased attendance at the Community Exhibit may have a correlation with increased attendance at other cultural arts events. **Art Supervisor Stewart** noted that staff keeps track of attendance for all shows and while there has been an increase (in 2014 the goal was to attract 80 people, now the target is 200 people minimum), she feels it is difficult to prove a direct correlation between events. Some discussion followed on how publicity of upcoming events is handled at each event. **Commissioner Manna** suggested that if there is video taken of each show, a monitor can run a short video displaying prior shows. **Manager Betz** noted that format of shows has changed (going from 12 to four per year) and this somewhat throws off attendance statistics, but this will recalibrate over time; further he noted that the goal for every show may not be popularity (e.g. may be more geared for an educational purpose) and this could skew the attendance statistics. **Chair Rubino** concluded that she thought a simple graphing of overall attendance that shows visually how the art audience is growing might be a useful in supporting a budget request, such as for improvements for the Art Center.

City Council Updates

As updates from the City Council have been already discussed, the Commission focused on the Work Plan request for façade improvements (better visibility through signage) at the Art Center. Manager Betz mentioned that staff has found that street banners, which have been informally discussed as a possible form of signage, would have a fairly high price tag and also requires Public Works resources. Mr. Betz advised that while a formal request will be delayed before the City Council, for now, the Commission can start discussing this as a concept.

It was subsequently moved and seconded (Ryan/Manna) that the topic of formulating a concept for a future Work Plan signage proposal for the Art Center be agendaized, if possible, at the next (July) Cultural Arts Commission meeting.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Bennett, Manna, May, Ryan, Chair Rubino
NOES: None
ABSENT: Taner
ABSTAIN: None

Manager Betz discussed briefly with the Commission that in the next discussions about the Art Center improvement project, one starting point may be to go over a history of past suggestions which would include street banners and he also suggested that a timeline be developed to serve as a framework. **Mr. Betz** reminded that his preference would be to work towards a more comprehensive approach, such as starting with developing an RFQ for professional services, because the Arts Fund has considerable funds (1.3 million dollars) that need to be committed by 2022.

I. COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner May noted that the 600 block of Cypress Avenue in Hermosa Beach is an interesting arts community with two galleries, “Resin” and “Shockboxx Gallery”. Shockboxx will have an interesting show “Working Through Foam” (about making surfboards) opening June 22.

Chair Rubino raised two topics. First, she asked if staff might consider agendaizing at an upcoming meeting, the idea promoted by Commissioner Taner, to consider ways to recognize the Cultural Arts Commissioners and City Councilmember at cultural arts events. Manager Betz advised that there are challenges with the recognition proposal, in that not all events have a format that lends itself to such presentations; he would prefer to incorporate Commissioner and other VIP recognitions into pre-exhibit tours, which in the past occurred an hour prior to an exhibit opening. Manager Betz will give this some thought.

Chair Rubino also announced that this Saturday the Torrance Arts Foundation will hold its Third Annual South Bay Festival of the Arts.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:01 P.M, **Chair Rubino** moved adjournment, to the regular meeting of July 15th at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue.