

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

February 19, 2020
City Council Chambers – City Hall
1400 Highland Avenue
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rubino called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM.

B. PLEDGE TO FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Manna, May, Taner, Chair Rubino

Absent: Bennett, Ryan

Staff present: Mark Leyman, Parks and Recreation Director, Eilen Stewart, Interim Cultural Arts Manager, Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - January 14, 2020

It was moved and seconded (Manna/May) to approve the minutes with no changes; motion passed by voice vote (4-0-2-0) (Ayes-Noes-Absent-Abstain)

E. CEREMONIAL - None

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

G. GENERAL BUSINESS - None

H. STAFF ITEMS

Interim Cultural Arts Manager Eilen Stewart reported and the Commission briefly discussed:

1. Cultural Arts Division updates (major events, programs):

- a. **Utility Box Wrappings:** all now installed; the Commission expressed interest in having a reception and map of the art locations. ICAM Stewart suggested that such an event could be combined with other in progress public art programs (e.g. murals) when they are also completed; Director Leyman added: such an event can be organized by the CAC and the City's Dial-a-Ride van could be scheduled.
- b. **Dragon Tales Sculpture:** Director Leyman reported that the permanent location will be the Art Center on MBB; until installation can be arranged it is at the Public Works Department yard.
- c. **City Hall Lobby update:** ICAM Stewart reported and showed slides, providing new information submitted voluntarily by semi-finalist Hou De Sousa, in response to feedback from APPC and CAC. New clarifying elements include delicately engraved or embossed palm trees, a city seal and a ceiling treatment. The price tag for the new Hou de Sousa elements as described tonight will be about \$112k. Additional info has not yet been received by the other semi-finalist, Monika Bravo, but both of the proposals will be submitted to the City Council at its May 5th meeting. Brief discussion ensued; Chair Rubino likes the city seal/logo concept but would also like to see the delicate embossed images placed around the City seal; ICAM Stewart stated this could be discussed with the artist. Commissioner Manna also likes the seal concept but its not a "must have" and recognizes that cost is an

important consideration. Commissioners May and Taner had no objections to the new concepts.

- d. **Public Arts Assessment:** ICAM Eilen Stewart presented a preliminary report with slides, showing examples of existing public art that has been inventoried and will be brought before the Commission at its next (March) meeting. The Commission will hear about each piece/work and will be able to address the disposition of all pieces; e.g. should the piece be repaired, restored, relocated or decommissioned? She noted that several pieces are in great need of repair and showed in a slide presentation several examples of art works: the Art Center outdoor fountain, the Velasquez piece that has been removed from City Hall lobby (awaiting shipping to Mexico); a work by local artist Gary Sweeney at the Scout House, a wall tile piece “Cultural Waves” near the pier; and a metal sculpture piece near the pier; various pieces at Metlox (“red dog”, kiln, and plaza wall tile) and the Strand benches. Commissioner Taner noted that artist Gary Sweeney is accessible and suggested that staff contact him regarding the Scout House piece. Director Leyman clarified that the City owns the Metlox art pieces and is responsible for their maintenance. Commissioner Taner requested that at the next meeting when this is discussed, that staff provide an estimated value of the pieces; ICAM Stewart agreed this would be good information, however without an actual appraisal, staff will have to do its best to come up with a value estimate. Briefly the Commission discussed the MBAC fountain; Commissioner May stated her opinion that the brickwork doesn’t really “go” with the fountain. ICAM Stewart noted that the brickwork is part of the original piece and design; one possible recommendation on that piece would be to develop a maintenance plan.
2. PATF Budget update: no significant change since last month when the balance was reported at approximately \$1,325,000.
3. City Council updates: Director Leyman reported: at its February 4th meeting, City Council considered a proposed new public street banner policy; the council acted to form a subcommittee (Hadley/Hersman) to work with staff to revise the banner policy and return to City Council at a future meeting, possibly first meeting in May.
4. Updated Mural Options (Bo Bridges and Civic Center Living Wall). Staff has brought this 2-part item to the Commission for its input at the request of City Council.

Bo Bridges mural: Two locations are suggested for downtown - the south facing City Hall wall opposite the library and the west facing wall of the City parking structure in the 300 block of 12th Street, next to the Sugar Fish restaurant. Sample images with an ocean/surfer theme were shown. The Commission discussed and agreed that, as to location, the 12th Street parking structure wall is preferable because, compared to City Hall, it is more visible and would not compete as in the case of the City Hall wall, which is close to *Light Gate*. As to image, the Commission agreed that the pier should be avoided as the actual pier is close by and this could be viewed as too commonly used. Opinions varied as to whether a photographic image should be used; it was suggested that a non-photo image, as in the traditional type of mural be featured. Of the two images shown, the preference was for the view of a surfer on a board looking up through the water towards bright sunlight. The Commission’s general perspective was that the City Hall is a special location, and any mural on it should also be very special, and speak to something distinctive to the City as a whole.

Civic Center Living Walls: The Commission discussed a suggestion from Council Member Hersman to transform existing corrugated metal partitions in the Civic Center Plaza area to “living walls” with dense arrangements of succulents attached. Feedback from the Commission was positive - that the idea fits in well with the City’s embrace of environmental sustainability, will be attractive and function as a living mural, as long as it is installed and maintained properly; and perhaps decorative lighting could be installed.

5. Other updates: ICAM Stewart reported on a recent *Light Gate* sunset viewing, although attendance (50 – 60 persons) was a little less than typical, many attendees noted that the new glass looks really great and it seemed that there is more interaction between viewers and the sculpture.

I. COMMISSION ITEMS

Discussion of Work Plan Items

Marketing Ad Hoc Committee (Taner/Ryan): Commissioner Taner reported that he and Commissioner Ryan have met to discuss ideas for marketing; a report will be made at the next meeting as Commissioner Ryan was unable to be present tonight.

Art Center Ad Hoc Committee (Manna/Rubino): Commissioner Manna reported that he and Chair Rubino have walked around the entire building and immediate area. As a first and relatively low-cost step, the existing sign can be refurbished or repaired to be operative again. Also, pole banners can be considered, but understands that the City Council is working on this as a city-wide policy and suggested the CAC could provide input to the Council Ad Hoc Street Banner Committee which will report back to the Council in May. Items that they CAC might address include banner content, display duration and locations and whether CAC promotions might have an exemption. Director Leyman responded affirmatively and suggested that the Art Center AHC provide more detailed input at its next meeting in March which can be forwarded to the Council AHC.

Commissioner Manna further described areas and aspects that they feel need some attention, repair or improvement such as: the back wall of the fountain, the entire building wall facing the parking lot (unattractive), overall landscaping with a critical eye looking how best to blend with the building and its elements such as free standing walls and paths; signage should be looked at – for something special or defining, and that includes directional signs, and possibly a landscape architect should be retained. The building itself needs attention including power-washing, and the Van Hamersveld frieze is showing a small amount of wear and tear. Perhaps some decorative elements (e.g. series of murals) can be attached that will tell a story while being complementary to the exterior brick and window patterns on the various wall segments. Commissioner Manna concluded by suggesting, and it was agreed, that the Commission’s next meeting could be held at the Art Center to give the entire group an opportunity to observe conditions ahead of the meeting.

Commissioner Taner noted that the Art Center has been discussed much in a wide spectrum, in terms of programming and asked whether it might be a good idea, going forward, to also consider in the assessment conversations, the longer-term future role of the building/site. Director Leyman responded that the Park Master Plan is addressing that issue and this Commission should wait to see what the community input is on public facilities – and staff will be looking at programming as

to what makes sense 5 – 10 years ahead. This staff work will take about 6 months to develop. Commissioner Taner clarified that he supports the suggestion of the CAC AHC and was suggesting that in discussing the assessment issues, there should be a practical aspect, in that they as a Commission might consider how future programming might be affected by improvements suggested at this time.

It was agreed that at 5:30 the Commission will have a “walk and talk” at the exterior of the Art Center ahead of the regular scheduled meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Other Commission items:

Commissioner Taner noted that the last week he had the pleasure of attending two art fairs as part of “Frieze Week Los Angeles” - he feels such events have spurred a lot of interest in the arts including in Manhattan Beach. He noted that there is a lot of funding in grants for municipalities – e.g. up to \$500,000 is available through the California Arts Commission; one such opportunity is the “Innovations and Intersections” grant programs which has an April 16 application deadline.

Director Leyman stated he is positive towards this idea and invite the Commission to partner with City staff in writing a grant application. He cautioned, however, that the challenge is that there are very strict regulations for reporting how the monies are spent and this can be very labor intensive for staff but there are companies that can be contracted to administer grant programs. Commissioner Taner noted he wanted to make the point that there are funding sources available in the way of art grants.

Commissioner May recognized that there is currently a good article about Manhattan Beach in “South Bay Magazine”. **Commissioner Manna** noted he visited and recommends the Vincent Price Art Museum in Monterey Park.

ICAM Stewart reminded the Commission of the City’s policy for meeting absences, noting the limit of three within a given year (June to next July). Anyone with questions about their status should contact her.

J. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:26 P.M, Chair Rubino called for adjournment, seeing no objection, the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, March 16, 2020 at the Manhattan Beach Art Center, 1560 Manhattan Beach Boulevard

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