

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

March 15, 2021

Meeting by teleconference (Zoom) – in accordance with procedures on agenda
1400 Highland Avenue
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ryan called the meeting to order at 5:02pm.

A. ROLL CALL

Present: Ibaraki, Manna, Marcy, Rubino, Chair Ryan

Absent: None

Staff present: Eilen Stewart, Interim Cultural Arts Manager (ICAM), Linda Robb, Management Analyst (Host Participant).

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 1, 2021

Commissioner Manna noted a typo on page 2 in the second full paragraph: “improving” insight should read “providing” insight. There being no further corrections, **Chair Ryan** moved for approval with one change as stated, second by **Marcy** and, there being no objection, the minutes were approved by a hand vote (5-0).

C. CEREMONIAL – None

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

E. GENERAL BUSINESS – Discussion of Work Plan Items

ICAM Stewart affirmed that **Commissioner Davis** has resigned from the Commission and suggested that some of the tasks **Commissioner Davis** was working on will be redistributed among the subcommittees.

Updates on Work Plan Items:

MBAC Revamp: **ICAM Stewart** informed that after close examination the Van Hamersveld frieze mural has substantially more damage than initially thought. She has discussed this with the installer and it was pointed out that the mural has been installed now for five years, significantly past its one-year warranty. The MBAC subcommittee had recommended that the wrap be power washed with other structures but now it is clear that this should be put on hold while deciding the future of the artwork. There are a number of options, including decommissioning and removal as well as repair but there are some legal issues such as the city’s obligations and authority since the piece is an installed artwork. She recommends that until staff hears back from the City Attorney, the washing of this and any other structures on the site be “on hold”.

The Commission had a brief discussion on the wrap and related issues focusing on decommissioning. **ICAM Stewart** confirmed that even though the City owns the mural she feels staff should hold off discussing options until hearing from the City Attorney.

PR and Marketing Campaign: **Commissioner Ibaraki** indicated that there were no updates.

Rainbow Crosswalk: Commissioners **Marcy and Rubino** gave a slide presentation, noting that there is strong support from Council but there are some concerns that need to be addressed. The presentation (including such concerns) covered: why project is important; research of other cities with focus on Venice, West Hollywood, San Francisco, and San Diego; and the consensus that these special colorful sidewalks, being more visible are generally more safe; there are various design choices but overall the advice is to “keep it simple”, surface applications that are available (two types/companies, depending on whether asphalt/concrete); Four location options and cost estimates for each (MBB/Redondo, MBB/Poinsettia, eight individual walks at MBUSD sites, and MBB/Morningside); estimated project timeline - starting with CAC approval of concept in 3/21 and ending with installation by 5/22 (would involve review by APPC); and finally but very important: encouraging info learned from other cities regarding public safety.

ICAM Stewart advised that this meeting is the appropriate time for the Commission to work on details but, emphasizing staff’s responsibility to see that the recommendation is realistic and doable, staff has two main issue areas that need discussion including locations and timeline.

Regarding locations, **ICAM Stewart** requested that the Commission rethink the MBB/Redondo intersection because the council has already indicated it would not support it, and to also rethink the group of eight school locations in that these would require a lot of analysis and work and should be represented as eight, not one location. She mentioned some other locations that staff supports: MBB mid-block across from the Art Center (although there is not a x-walk there currently); on Highland/Rosecrans, and at the intersection of MBB/Morningside in downtown.

Regarding timeline: **ICAM Stewart** made three points: 1) realistically she does not see that installation can occur until January/February, 2023; 2) having staff assume the task of handling the creation of artwork may expedite this project (recognizing that it would take staff away from and slow down other projects and is strictly up to City Council direction); and 3) the timeline does not include a public outreach component and staff feels strongly that this is necessary because if left out, it could result in a backlash. She concluded by reiterating that these are staff recommendations but ultimately the decision is up to the Commission which must stand by its recommendation.

The Commission discussed the issues. On public outreach, **Commissioner Manna** suggested from experience with a public works bike lane improvement project, that asking for input from the public can be counterproductive.

On locations there was much discussion. **Commissioner Manna** asked whether the rainbow design could be applied to the “scramble crosswalks” approved Downtown; **Commissioner Rubino** suggested Marine/Highland - near Bruce’s Beach, if Rosecrans/Highland were deemed inappropriate (concern that place as being considered for other art, may be too crowded). However, it was noted that the Marine location is not really in the “north end”, and this should wait until Bruce’s Beach issue comes to some resolution. There was agreement that Redondo/MBB should not be pushed if City Council is against it, however it was pointed out (**Marcy**) that perhaps Council might reconsider if it were presented with safety benefits. The downtown scramble sidewalks and school locations were also discouraged - the scramble walks, in that the concept was not supported by the APPC (would have to undo what has been already done and rainbow would compete with the central image) and the schools seem to be too much and possibly should wait until the rainbow crosswalk can be installed at some location, allowing them to become accepted and seen as improvements (**Manna, Ryan**).

Further discussion was held including regarding public outreach and how to approach City Council: should the recommendation be more or less specific, and should public outreach be done before or after specific locations are proposed?

The Commission focused its discussion on forming a consensus on specific locations in three areas: 1) Manhattan Beach Boulevard at Peck Avenue; 2) northerly Highland Avenue at Rosecrans Avenue or a nearby intersection;

and 3) in the downtown area, MBB at Morningside Drive, where there currently is a “blue tile” crosswalk, but is not a “scramble crosswalk”.

Commissioner Rubino polled the Commission on eliminating the Rosecrans/Highland Avenue location and all present voted by hand in favor of eliminating this location. The Commission then discussed and arrived at a consensus that the Commission recommend two locations including MBB/Peck Avenue, near Polliwog Park and the Art Center, and MBB/Morningside Drive plus any alternative locations that Staff recommends.

Discussion next turned toward the timeline and the staff recommendation regarding extending it to include outside handling of the RFP and public outreach.

Commissioner Marcy stated that if it is critical that these two things need to be included, then he would support, however, he questioned if the public outreach can be done in such a way to educate on the positive findings they made regarding data and safety of rainbow crosswalks.

In response to **Chair Ryan**, inquiring whether there is a way to get an idea of what the Council’s ideal location is and how best to incorporate public outreach, **ICAM Stewart** stated that she believes there are two basic ways to do outreach: before the recommendation goes to Council, or after going to Council to firm up the locations. She also believes that the outreach would involve not only a written notice to those living within a radius of the crosswalk but also a website survey and in both cases, the time frame would be 2-3 weeks after notice has been circulated to allow public to submit input.

It was subsequently moved and seconded (**Marcy/Ryan**) that: 1) the CAC recommend two locations for installation of rainbow crosswalks, on MBB at Peck Avenue and on MBB at Morningside Drive, 2) prior to submitting the recommended locations to City Council, staff will proceed with a public notice and 3) the artwork of the crosswalks is to be developed in-house by staff.

Chair Ryan called for a show of hands in favor of the motion; the Chair announced the motion passed with a 5-0 vote (**Ibaraki, Manna, Marcy, Rubino, Chair Ryan**).

Arts Grants

Chair Ryan asked that each Commissioner make a report on each type of grant.

- a. **Murals.** **Commissioner Rubino** reported no further work has been done. **ICAM Stewart** updated that she has just heard from the City Attorney’s office that the City does not have to have a new ordinance in place before staff can write a mural project on private property into a contract with the City with some caveats, e.g., the mural area, to qualify must be readily visible to the public. **ICAM Stewart** also noted that she has requested the City Attorney’s office to begin work on a sample contract.
- b. **Utility Infrastructure Beautification.** **Commissioners Ibaraki** and **Marcy** shared an outline that represents a basic foundation for the program, covering the following: 1) the art must be appropriate for general audiences and demonstrate community values and incorporate a message of inspiration, diversity and inclusion. 2) A detailed budget must be submitted with application; a maximum of \$7,500 can be allocated for artists work and installation. 3) The submitted budget should outline any foreseeable maintenance costs associated with the project, and if the application is approved, a first payment of 80% will be awarded. 4) The final 20% of the award will be dispersed upon receipt of completed final report, which would be due 30 days after completion of project. 5) Artists are encouraged to propose at least 10 utility infrastructure units and to be creative in the types which could be utility boxes, fire hydrants, parking meters, etc.

Commissioner Marcy noted that, building off the former utility box wrap project, they want to show on maps some regions where there are parking meters, utility boxes etc. that can be beautified and encourage a storyline behind the art. They feel the \$7500 stipend could cover the cost of up to 10 units.

The Commission gave feedback. It was clarified for **Commissioner Manna** that the grey metal portion of a parking meter, though somewhat small, is the area that can be treated and by applying in a sequence to multiple meters in a row it can appear quite colorful. Some examples of beautified meters can be provided at a future meeting.

Commissioner Marcy clarified for **Commissioner Rubino** that the intent is to encourage multiple units in a proposal and this would apply to all types: parking meters, utility boxes, etc. and this would give the artist the opportunity to make a more substantial and cohesive proposal. The maximum budget of \$7,500 would apply to a proposal of 10 units. This is a starting foundation and it is expected to be fine tuned.

As a next step **Commissioners Ibaraki** and **Marcy** were advised to discuss and fine tune the project with **ICAM Stewart** after which the project can be submitted to the City Attorney for review. **ICAM Stewart** indicated some areas where she feels more thought is needed, such as whether having a minimum number of units in a proposal would stifle diversity of artists, whether the budget should be revised or a stipend schedule should be more developed. She also advised taking a look at the utility boxes that have been already wrapped and whether that should continue (she recommends continue with wrapping, vs. allowing hand painting). She envisions giving a monetary award and having the artist be responsible for contracting with the installer instead of the City having to write a contract between the installer and each artist. **ICAM Stewart** also questioned the wording of the clause requiring 90 days to complete (make looser) and the 30 days for the city to pay the artist.

Chair Ryan suggested that each of the grant subcommittees work with staff offline on their projects and try to fine tune as much as possible for the next meeting. **Commissioner Rubino** commented more generally that she would like clarification as to the restrictions on who can apply – e.g., are members of the Commission allowed to submit? **ICAM Stewart** noted that this is a needed conversation and will apply to all categories of grants – across the board.

Commissioner Rubino suggested and it was agreed to put this topic on a future meeting agenda – the item would include the details of the general application, requirements, and who can or cannot apply and it will go under “General Business”.

- c. **Sculpture Garden.** **Chair Ryan** reported that no progress has been made and she takes responsibility as she has needed to spend more time with her daughter’s fledgling award-winning business. She will work on refining an outline until June 1 when her term ends and further shared that she will be not applying for a second three-year term on the Commission.
- d. **Performing Arts.** **Commissioner Rubino** reported that there was no new information. **Chair Ryan** gave a very positive review of the “First Manhattan Beach International Florana Film Festival” presented by a local film production company (credit to the son of Nick Tell, past city mayor), a drive-in event that was recently held on the top level of the mall’s south parking structure. **Chair Ryan** noted that she thought this a good example of a first effort for performing arts in the city.
- e. **Digital Wall Art.** **Commissioner Manna** inquired as to the reason that the art installation at City Hall recommended by the CAC was turned down by the City Council. **ICAM Stewart** responded that there was some thought from the public that the art was not as dynamic as it could be and that the price was not in line with the public exposure.

The Commission discussed what could be done in that space with a digital screen. **Commissioner Manna** emphasized that the subject should be some form of static art and cannot have an audio component which might distract city employees. **Commissioner Marcy** added that the intent is not to drive an audience into the building. **Commissioner Manna** noted that it could be a message board or show art around the town, or what is being exhibited at the Art Center; **Chair Ryan** suggested the screen could display student art as an award in a competition, or art made by older adults. **Commissioner Rubino** asked whether it would be a good idea to get clarification from the City Council as to what they want to see, but she loves the idea of it being an open-ended concept, perhaps providing a way to promote grand openings of exhibits and the like. It was agreed that the Committee will do more research, but they are on the right track.

f. **School/Education.** **Commissioner Ibaraki** had no new information to report.

g. **Permanent Sculpture.** **Chair Ryan** had not new information to report.

F. STAFF ITEMS

1. Cultural Arts Division Updates - **ICAM Stewart** reported: Staff is in the process of de-installing the sculpture in the water wise parkette on Aviation as it has come to the end of its loan as part of the Sculpture garden program; the Bo Bridges contract has been signed by the artist and so those murals are coming closer to being installed; the subscription ceramics program is running at full capacity, while cosmetic and structural repairs are being made to the ceramic studio; the A.C. Conner exhibition is still up and staff is finishing up with a walkthrough of the exhibit, and an expanded documentary video that will serve as the closing event. The virtual exhibit will stay up for a while with the documentary and the related craft kits are selling faster than can be produced. Outsourcing them is being investigated as they are great promoters of the center; and the art center tool kits have also been very successful as an educational component.
2. PATF Budget Update: no change at this time, but in speaking to Community Development, there may be a slight increase in the near future.
3. City Council Updates: The Bruce's Beach Task Force is giving its report to the City Council tomorrow which will include in the proposal, both a plaque and an artwork which will be brought to the CAC. Commissioner Marcy noted that in listening to the Bruce's Beach Task Force meeting, the APPC had been opened up to members of the Task Force and asked if Cultural Arts Commissioners could join the APPC as well.

G. COMMISSION ITEMS

1. **Commissioner Manna** informed that he may be out of town for the next Commission meeting. His attendance was checked and this absence will not affect his standing.

H. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:31 P.M, Chair Ryan, seeing no objection, adjourned the meeting to April 19, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.