

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

November 12, 2013

City Manager's Conference Room
1400 Highland Avenue
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:01PM

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner James Gill, Nancy Dunn*, Russ Samuels, Lori Ramezani, Peter De Maria**
*Dunn arrived at 6:20PM and departed at 8:37pm **De Maria arrived at 6:02

Absent: None

Others Present: Recreation Services Manager, Gina Allen

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 30, 2013 and October 8, 2013, meetings were approved with the following amendments:

- September 30, 2013 minutes
 - Correct star to stair
- October 8, 2013 minutes
 - Add “*” after Commissioner Peter De Maria in the roll call section

Ayes: Commissioner Samuels, Gill, De Maria, Dunn and Ramezani

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

D. CERIMONIAL

None

E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (3-Minute Limit)

Stacy Dukes, artist and bench artist for the Strand Alcove Bench project, spoke about the Strand Alcove Bench Project and the spirituality of the program. He is very appreciative of the career opportunity. The program has promoted his efforts in the art field and has led to his recent recognition by the City of Seattle. He is now recognized by Seattle's public art program as an official city artist.

Chairperson Gill closed audience participation.

F. CULTURAL ARTS MANAGER REPORT

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen reported that the Cultural Arts Manager position will be opening again to the public in two weeks. Ms. Allen also reported

that Recreation Supervisor Megumi Sando will be retiring in December and the Supervisor position will be opening to public in two weeks.

Ms. Allen updated the Commission on the budget: for the Sculpture Garden the Commission has \$49,561.20, the Library art piece still has a budget of \$150,000, the Centennial art piece has a budget of \$129,581.51, the Arts Manhattan budget has \$5,290.73, and undesignated balance is \$85,938.94.

The Centennial Light Gate contract has been signed by the artist and Department Director and is currently with the City Attorney.

Commissioner Ramezani asked when the money gets deposited into the Commissions account from commercial development?

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen answered that the money is deposited when the developers pay for their permit.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen updated the Commission about the Strand Alcove Bench brochure and the final version should include the new Shell Bench design. In February, is when Commission will review any new design proposals.

Ms. Allen also updated the Commission on the upcoming department events including the ARTS Manhattan Presents: Super Collider Opening Reception on Thursday at 6pm, the Pier Lighting and Downtown Open House on November 20, and the Holiday Fireworks Festival on December 8.

G. CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Dunn reminded the Commission about the upcoming TEDx Manhattan Beach event on Saturday, November 16, 2013 at the middle school.

Commissioner Gill spoke about two upcoming art shows one show regarding Turkish women and the upcoming FOLA event in Redondo Beach.

H. GENERAL BUSINESS

13/0208.1 Sculpture Garden Annual Exhibition

Commissioner Gill asked if the invites had been sent out.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen replied yes, the invites were sent out. All the submittals will be organized for the Commissioners to review by November 29th. Ms. Allen stated that the Commission's next step is to review the submittals and select the finalists during the Commission meeting on December 10th. Ms. Allen has the finalist presentations tentatively scheduled for the City Council meeting on January 7, 2014.

Commissioner Dunn asked if there was a preexisting process for selecting the sculptures.

Commissioner Samuels answered that Commissioner De Maria was appointed to document the entire process which includes the history of the exhibition, the timeline, implementation, and process for gathering and choosing the sculpture.

The Commission left it up to Ms. Allen and Commissioner De Maria to refine the selection process.

Chairperson Gill opened the item for public comment.

No public participation

Chairperson Gill closed the item for public comment.

13/0208.2 Strand Staircase Project

Chairperson Gill had a meeting with Recreation Manager Gina Allen, Parks and Recreation Director Mark Leyman, and the City's Public Works department. Three cost levels were going to be turned over to City Council. The first level is complying with ADA requirements, level two is putting a living wall up on one of the bare walls, and the third level is the molded cement. Then they discussed railings that needed to be added to the ballast rings of the existing cement railings. Chairperson Samuels was happy with the proposed wave shaped artistic railings that may be used in the construction of the new staircases.

Commissioner De Maria asked about the resolution of the railings at the top of the tall walls.

Chairperson Gill answered that they would remain and all have to be redone. Removing the current cement balusters/rails in the areas where there was less than an 11 inch drop on the sides, was also discussed. However, both railings cannot be removed and one needs to remain for patrons to hold on to.

Chairperson Gill opened the item for public comment.

No public participation

Chairperson Gill closed the item for public comment.

13/0801.3 Ansel Adams Art Exhibition

Commissioner Dunn stated she would wait until later in the year to provide an update on the Ansel Adams Exhibit.

Commissioner Gill requested that when the item is revisited to have a rough budget for the exhibition.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen stated the Commission would need to cover the costs for the exhibition preparation, the refreshments and the marketing.

The item was tabled for further discussion during the January Commission meeting.

Chairperson Gill opened the item for public comment.

No public participation.

Chairperson Gill closed the item for public comment.

13/1112.1 Harold Roach Art Piece

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen reviewed the cost for removing the piece and previous quotes for refinishing the piece.

To remove, the cost would be \$3,200. The City would need to rent a crane at a cost of \$1,500 to \$2,000, City labor is between \$850 to \$1,200, bringing the total estimate to \$3,200 to remove the art piece.

Commissioner De Maria asked if that cost of removal also includes the decommissioning of the art piece.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen answered yes, but that is a bigger issue that needs to be discussed further. Public Works staff would operate the crane and supervise the removal of the art piece, but once the piece is loaded onto a truck, it would be the artist or third party's responsibility as to what then.

Commissioner De Maria asked about the possibility of outsourcing the removal, or possibility refurbishing the art piece.

Commissioner Ramezani asked the question wait to be addresses until after hearing what the cost is for refinishing, since the decision of decommissioning has not been made.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen answered the first quote staff received was for \$3,000 for sanding and painting. The second bid was from \$5,000 to \$7,000 to restore, repair and conserve the art piece.

Chairperson Gill opened the item for public comment.

No public participation.

Chairperson Gill closed the item for public comment.

Commissioner Samuels states believes the Commission needs more information before deciding action. He personally does not feel that the piece needs to be

retained. He would rather decommission the piece and save the money on maintaining it in the future.

Commissioner Dunn agreed with Commissioner Samuels. Real numbers are needed. If the cost to refinish it is relatively the same as to decommissioning it, she would rather see the piece stay and be refinished.

Commissioner Ramezani stated that she would rather keep it and make sure it was safe and secure. She would not spend extra on paint, but only cover the cost of securing the piece. Then, once the Commission has confirmed a decommissioning process with City Council, the issue could be revisited.

Commissioner De Maria added that he felt that the Commission needed to understand the refinish cost much better than they do now. He also recommended that a removal bid be obtained by a private company. Finally, he strong argued the Commission the work on a decommission process. He is not in favor of removing public art, unless there is something replacing it. This concept can be added to the decommissioning process.

MOTION: Chairperson Gill made a motion to recommend to City Council to have the art piece restored and repaired for an amount that does not exceed \$7,000. Motion seconded by Commissioner Dunn.

Ayes: Commissioner Gill

Noes: Commissioner Samuels, De Maria, Dunn and Ramezani

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion did not pass.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen will gather more information and provide more options to the Commission for the Harold Roach Art Piece.

13/0002.2 Miguel Angel Velazquez Mural in City Hall

Commissioner Gill talked about the artist's background and history.

The Commission discussed various options on whether to keep the art piece, refurbish it, or decommission and remove the piece.

Chairperson Gill opened the item for public comment.

Mr. Gary McAulay, Manhattan Beach resident, stated people's views change on public art change and there should be some public input on whether to keep the art piece or remove it.

Chairperson Gill closed the item for public comment.

Commissioner Ramezani asked if any additional information about the piece could be provided

Recreation Services Manager, Gina Allen answered unfortunately, staff has not been able to locate any additional information other than what was provided.

The Commission proposed to City Council to have an unveiling of the art piece on December 6. The art piece would be visible for 2 months, and at that point the curtains would be reinstalled on February 7, 2014. Then there would be a public discussion regarding the art piece during the Commission meeting on February 11, 2014.

13/1112.3 Rory Barish Strand Alcove Bench Plaque

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen provided an update on a staff report regarding special wording on a plaque for a bench on the Strand located on 3rd Street. Ms. Allen stated that the proposed wording does not comply with the Artist and Donor Guidelines. Staff recommends that the request be denied so the wording on the plaque does not stray from Council approved wording. The matter is now up to the Commission to discuss and make a recommendation to be forwarded to City Council.

Commissioner De Maria asked, other than the wording, is the size or location of the bench being changed.

Ms. Allen said the size of the bench is the same as well as the location.

Commissioner De Maria asked if there as a diagram of what it looks like or where it was supposed to be.

Ms. Allen stated that the plaque is in the cement on the rim of the alcove.

Chairperson Gill opened the item to public comment.

Ms. Rory Barish, Strand Alcove Bench donor and Hermosa Beach resident, asked the Commission to do the right thing and allow the personalized wording on the plaque for the bench she donated. She was promised the wording. She believes her situation should be protected under a “grandfather” clause since many of the plaques along the strand have not followed the plaque guidelines.

Mr. Gordon Louttit, Manhattan Beach resident, spoke in support of Rory Barish and asked the Commission to approve the specialized wording for the bench she donated. He agrees that the plaques should be uniformed, however, the City should honor the deal that was made at the time of Ms. Barish’s purchase.

Ms. Anne Marie Pearson, Manhattan Beach resident, stated she has a bench dedicated to her husband located on the Strand at 27th Street. The bench was dedicated in April

of 2011. She was initially told by the City that her plaque can only have ‘Donated by, For, and the artist’s name.’ Ms. Pearson felt this was reasonable, but she wants the Commission to understand that the plaque has more meaning than anything around that bench. She asked the Commission to consider Rory’s request.

Mr. Stacy Dukes, Strand Alcove Bench artist, asked for more flexibility with the wording that is allowed for the plaques on the bench.

Ms. Lesli Ramsey, Manhattan Beach resident, does not understand why the City would object to such small signage on the plaque inspired by someone, and the City should honor its initial agreement with Ms. Barish.

Ms. Sherry Banz, Hermosa Beach resident, spoke to the Commission in support of the wording of the plaque for the bench that Rory Barish donated.

Mr. Gary McAulay, Manhattan Beach resident, stated that he is not a supporter of private memorials on public property. These memorials sadden him, and Mr. McAulay also stated that the City has received numerous complaints from other residents who do not want to see these memorial plaques in public spaces all over the City because it makes them sad, and people don’t want to see these memorials everywhere. However, more importantly, Mr. McAulay thought the matter regarding the wording on the plaque was decided by the Parks and Recreation Commission and didn’t believe that the Cultural Arts Commission was the appropriate place to hear this issue.

Chairperson Gill closed the item for public comment.

Commissioner De Maria stated his initial thoughts were mixed on the issue. He felt that on one side there should not be private memorialization in public spaces, but on the artist side he did not feel it was a big issue and government should not be telling people what they can and cannot put on a plaque.

Commissioner Ramezani felt that these plaques were very significant and emotional. Commissioner Ramezani stated that this goes back to the issue that it is a plaque in a public place; the issue is that someone else may come along and take advantage of the flexibility and use wording that may be offensive to other people. Commissioner Ramezani pointed out that the City Council revised these guidelines in 2012, after the wording on the plaque was approved in 2011, then the wording on the plaque should be grandfathered in and approved.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen stated that the guidelines were never changed since the program’s inception in 2007. These guidelines are from the original proposal to City Council. One bench went through the formal process of asking for different wording, it went through formal procedure to address that request, and that wording was approved. That is the only bench that followed the procedure. There are other benches along the Strand that deviated from that guideline, and Ms. Allen

doesn't know why that happened as she was not in charge of the program, but these are the original guidelines.

Commissioner Ramezani asked that if it's true that there is no uniformity across the board regarding the benches.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen said that is correct that some of the wording on the plaques do vary. If the Commission would note that the bench located at 24th Street is the plaque that went through the proper procedure.

Commissioner Gill asked if all these were since 2007.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen answered correct. Except for the plaque located at 8th Street. The plaque located at the bench on 8th Street is what inspired the guidelines.

Commissioner De Maria asked Mr. Dukes how the wording on the plaques would impact the bench and would it lessen the quality of the bench?

Mr. Dukes said the guidelines were setup by City Council and when it came time for the plaque to be ordered, that order was placed directly with a staff member in the Parks and Recreation Department.

Commissioner Gill asked if the 8th Street plaque was the one that was approved.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen clarified that was the plaque that inspired the guidelines. The plaque at the bench located at 24th Street was the bench that went through the formal process for alternate wording.

Commissioner Gill stated that looking at the plaques, he does not see many that fit into the guidelines from 2007.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen stated that some of the plaques have deviated from the guidelines.

Commissioner Dunn said the inserting the word 'For' is part of the motivation for why someone would want to donate a bench. She feels the guideline is too strict and to allow Rory's plaque to go as she has proposed. Also, to ask Council to amend the existing guidelines so they are more uniform and make sense. That the guidelines be altered to encompass the verbiage 'By' somebody and 'For' somebody without any of the memorial wording. This way it is vague enough appease any concerns Council may have.

Commissioner Samuels asked about the 24th Street bench that was approved and the history behind it.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen answered that the family requested the special wording and this was the process it needed to go through.

Commissioner Samuels asked if there were any other benches that had been denied.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen stated that 24th Street was the only one that was presented to Council for special consideration.

Commissioner Samuels stated that all the plaques in question say 'For' somebody. Therefore, he is in favor of having a standard. However, he agrees with Commissioner Dunn in revising the standards and asking Council to revisit these guidelines. He stated that anything written on these plaques can be interpreted as a memorialization. He stated that if you allow personalized plaques for one bench then everyone else is going to want to have a personalized plaque. The concern is that these set guidelines don't appear to have ever been followed, if there is a consistent variation of that guideline. He would like clarification from Council as to why there is a consistent variation and why that would not be followed now, or if this is all in the past and they are reaffirming the new guidelines that will be set in stone from this point on.

Commissioner Gill asked if there was a copy of a written agreement that can be used to support Ms. Barish.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen answered that there is no copy because the agreement is between the donor and the artist. There is no agreement with the donor and the City.

Commissioner Gill said that he would not be willing to forward this issue to Council because the process took place many years ago when residents expressed their opinion about having anything resemble a cemetery along the Strand. However, the documents that staff presented clearly show that the current plaques out there say either 'For' or 'Of,' and, in my opinion, there is a flaw in the program description and rules and it needs to be addressed by Council.

MOTION: Commissioner Gill made a motion to seek City Council's approval for Ms. Barish's bench plaque which reads "Donated by Rory Barish for Nike. Artist: Stacy Dukes". Commissioner Ramezani seconded the motion.

MOTION DISCUSSION:

Commissioner De Maria stated that since the wording was currently being used it should be allowed. When he reads that the plaque is "for Nike" it piques his interest and he feels it encourages thought.

Commissioner Samuels asked when the 24th Street alternative plaque wording was approved.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen stated to the Commission that the alternate wording was presented and approved by Council in November 5, 2008.

Commissioner Samuels stated he is an animal lover however, he was concerned about giving priority to an animal over a person. He also felt that the process and guidelines should be followed, or changed in writing specifically. The Commission needs to ensure a proper system is being followed. The way the motion lies, he would vote against it. He would prefer a motion that would ask the City Council if they want it to be as it is or if they are looking for other options.

Commissioner Ramezani felt that there is a difference between when the loss of an individual is personal and when there is a memorial plaque with no personal connection. Commissioner Ramezani stated that she is still in agreement with the motion, since the guidelines were not followed in the past. If we do not honor this agreement with the person who is donating this bench, she felt like we are punishing the person who followed the process. Commissioner Ramezani's strong recommendation would be to go with the suggestion that has been put forth and then go forward updating the guidelines.

Commissioner De Maria stated when rules are broken either by the City or an individual that does not justify continuing to breaking the rules. This is true in the architectural world, however, he still feels Ms. Barish's wording should be approved because of the set presidency.

Commissioner Samuels still was not comfortable with the motion. He restated how specifically the guidelines are written and for that reason he felt alternative wording was not appropriate.

Chairperson Gill Called for a vote.

Ayes: Commissioners Gill, De Maria, Dunn, and Ramezani
Noes: Commissioner Samuels
Absent: None
Abstain: None

Chairperson Gill asked Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen if she needed to create a staff report on the Commissions behalf that goes against staff's original recommendations.

Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen said yes, there will be a more detailed staff report to Council.

I. COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner De Maria proposed re-making a recommendation to City Council about the Centennial Art Piece not losing its original location. The concern is the art piece will be moved or its location altered by additional trees or shrubbery.

Recreation Services Manager, Gina Allen informed the Commission that a meeting is being scheduled with the County architects to address the placement of *Light Gate*.

Commissioner Gill asked for an update on the staff report to Council in regards to the process of placing discussion items of commission agendas.

Ms. Allen replied that the staff report was going to Council from Mark Leyman, Parks and Recreation Director, for one of the December meeting.

Commissioner Gill spoke about the 'Doors on Doors' art piece and the process on how to go about that piece.

Ms. Allen answered that she had spoken with Ms. Leyman, and he indicated that the Commission needs to develop a process that will address the 'Doors on Doors' art project.

The Commission discussed prioritizing their future items on their agendas including the Strand Bench Alcove program and brochure, developing a process for decommissioning public art pieces, the Cultural Arts Commission Master Plan, the Sculpture Garden, Strand Staircase project, tabling the Ansel Adams exhibit, the Miguel Angel Velazquez art piece.

MOTION: a motion was made by Commissioner Gill to seek City Council approval to discuss the review of the Cultural Arts Commission Public Art Master Plan and explore the idea of hiring a professional. Commissioner Samuels seconded the motion.

Ayes: Commissioners Gill, De Maria, Samuels and Ramezani

Noes: None

Absent: Commissioner Dunn

Abstain: None

J. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: a motion was made by Commissioner Gill to end the meeting.

Commissioner Ramezani seconded the motion.

Ayes: Commissioners Gill, De Maria, Samuels and Ramezani

Noes: None

Absent: Commissioner Dunn

Abstain: None

Meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.