

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

July 8, 2014

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

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM.

B. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Dunn, Gill, Samuels, May and Ramezani*

*Commissioner Ramezani arrived at 6:09.

Absent: None

Others Present: Cultural Arts Manager, Martin Betz; Recording Secretary, Linda Robb

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Samuels moved to approve the June 10, 2014 minutes as written.

Commissioner Gill seconded the motion.

Ayes: Commissioners Dunn, May, Samuels and Gill

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Ramezani

The motion passed.

E. CEREMONIAL

None

F. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chairperson Dunn opened the floor to audience participation; seeing none, the floor was closed.

G. STAFF ITEMS

Cultural Arts Manager Martin Betz gave an update on the Light Gate sculpture. Mr. Betz and Rebecca Ansert (consultant for the Light Gate sculpture) had a meeting with C.W. Driver, the construction company building the library, regarding the Light Gate sculpture. There were some changes made and the artist has reworked the design. There will be no

ramp and the piece will be mounted directly to the ground. The meeting covered division of responsibilities and the light fixtures that were added.

The communication process between the commission and City Council will be discussed at the end of September .

Staff very much appreciates the efforts of Peter DeMaria and the Cultural Arts Commission for preparing the Sculpture Garden process draft. The process is something that should be developed by staff and staff will use this as a template. The Commission should be discussing the schedule of the sculpture garden.

Chairperson Dunn would like for the ongoing 5 year process to be streamlined and wonders if it would be more efficient if it was unnecessary to seek City Council approval each year to discuss it. She stated that City Council would always

have final approval of the selections.

Chairperson Dunn requested that Commissioners review Peter DeMaria's Strand Bench Program and Sculpture Garden template for input to Mr. Betz.

Mr. Betz discussed the budget for the Public Art Trust fund. There is approximately \$27,000 available as of April 30, 2014.

November meeting will fall on Veteran's Day. The Commission asked staff to propose a new date for the meeting. A new date will be decided at the next meeting.

Commissioner Gill expressed his dissatisfaction with the Hot August Night Neil Diamond tribute that replaced Fantastic Diamond.

Commissioner Gill inquired about the mural and where it stands regarding uncovering. Commissioner Samuels stated that the immediate goal is to remove the curtain to view the mural and get some community feedback. Mr. Betz stated that the City Manager should be involved in the decision. The City Manager has not yet had a chance to review this issue. Commissioner Ramezani stated that the decommissioning process might be important to the mural discussion. Commissioner Samuels stated that the Community has a right to view the artwork and weigh in on its disposition. Commissioner May stated that the covering of the mural was a City Council Decision based on some residents being offended by the work. Commissioner Ramezani requested staff to provide some of the history of why the mural was covered in the first place. Commissioner Gill stated that the City Council gave the authority to staff to make the decision about whether or not to temporarily remove the covering curtain but staff hasn't made the decision. Commissioner Dunn asked that the issue of unveiling be researched to see whether or not it is a staff decision. Mr. Betz will do some research on the artist, Miguel Angel Velazquez. To Mr. Betz's knowledge, the artist is no longer an active participant in the art world. Mr. Betz stated that the mural was covered in 2003 because a member of the public complained about it. Commissioner Dunn asked audience member Gary McAulay if he knew anything about the mural and he stated that he had been unable to find any information on the artist.

H. COMMISSION ITEMS:

None

I. GENERAL BUSINESS:

14/0708.1 – Decommissioning Policy for Public Sculpture – Mr. Betz presented the document template for the Americans for the Arts decommissioning policy.

Chairperson Dunn commented that the artwork evaluation committee should include two commissioners. Commissioner Ramezani inquired as to the need for a separate committee when the requirements seem to be covered by the Commission and staff members already. Mr. Betz stated that it is good to have a separate committee as it protects the Commission. It is good to draw on additional expertise to make the decision to decommission a piece. Commissioner Samuels stated that it also gives greater credibility as the Commission is reaching out to the community and other professionals for different perspectives.

Chairperson Dunn proposed that it be worded “Two (2) commissioners appointed by the commission with one appointed to head the committee.

Commissioner Samuels asked – Question #2, add “if applicable” to the end of number 2.

Commissioner Dunn asked that the document specify that there should be a representative from the Public Works department included on the Committee. She also added that all occurrences of the word Agency should be changed to City.

Commissioner Ramezani inquired whether the committee needs to be so large. The larger a committee, the more difficult it is to come to an agreement or decision. She also inquired if there is a timeline attached to the process. Mr. Betz replied that there was not.

Commissioner Dunn proposed to change word organize to appoint.

Mr. Betz clarified that the word deassessment refers to a collection. The City’s public art should be treated as a collection. It makes it more difficult to decommission a piece.

Commissioner May stated that “a copy of the contract or agreement with the artist” should be added in the Acquisition Method section.

Mr. Betz stated that a large piece was recently decommissioned in New York and that he could research how that was done. He also stated that perhaps the Commission would like to request funds from the City Council to hire an art historian to research the Velazquez mural to get the history of the piece. Mr. Betz will make the changes to the document and have it reviewed by the City Attorney so that the Commission may vote to present the document to City Council.

Commissioner Dunn requested at all future documents have page numbers printed on them.

13/1112.1 – Harold Roach Sculpture

Commissioner Samuels asked if it is common for art pieces that require regular maintenance? Mr. Betz replied that it is pretty common for pieces to require maintenance.

Commissioner Gill made a motion to present the proposal to repair the Howard Roach Sculpture for \$6200 to the City Council. Chairperson Dunn seconded the motion.

Commissioner May gave a brief history of the Harold Roach piece. The piece was donated and has gone through a few iterations and color schemes. It was originally placed in front of the Police Department and moved to its current location in front of what was then the library.

Commissioner Ramezani stated that she would like to bolt it down and make it safe but leave it the way it is and not restore it. She believes that the money could be spent on other things.

Commissioner Samuels stated that history passes and things lose meaning. The sculpture looks dated and doesn't feel connected to the community. He stated that if someone offered this piece to the City to buy for \$6200, the City would not buy it. He doesn't agree that the money should be spent to fix it.

Mr. Betz offered that he could look into removing the paint on site to keep the costs down. He stated that his opinion is that every piece owned by a City should be treated as part of a collection and considered equally.

Commissioner Gill stated that he believes that the purpose of the Cultural Arts Commission is to maintain the art that the City has.

Chairperson Dunn believes that it is the job of the Cultural Arts Commission is to increase and enhance the presence of art in the City. Gary McAulay, resident stated that he thought Commissioner Samuels made some good points. Mr. McAulay stated that the piece was mass produced and donated to many cities and that the connection to the town is that it is here. He stated that the City took it because it was offered and there was space. Commissioner Gill asked if Mr. McAulay would like the Commission to consider decommissioning the piece. Mr. McAulay thought that perhaps the function of this piece is to provide a learning exercise for the decommissioning process.

Commissioner Ramezani stated that art is subjective and that is the beauty of art. This piece is not part of my own personal history but it is part of the history of others so if it is possible to keep it and make it safe for a reasonable amount of money, we should make a decision and move on to other issues.

Commissioner May asked to amend the motion to keep the piece but not spend the amount quoted. This amendment was not allowed.

Chairperson called to vote to approve he motion to present the proposal to repair the Howard Roach Sculpture for \$6200 to the City Council.

Ayes: Gill, May
Nays: Ramezani, Samuels, Dunn
Abstain:

The motion fails.

Chairperson Dunn asked Mr. Betz to explore cheaper options to do the repair/restore job onsite.

Commissioner Samuels suggested that perhaps there should be a provision in the decommissioning process that if a piece is decommissioned, another piece should be coming in to replace it.

Chairperson Dunn stated that would be worth discussing. For example, if it would cost \$6200 to fix a piece but a new piece that fit the community better could be acquired for \$10,000 that would be worth considering. Chairperson Dunn inquired as to whether a provision for replacement could be added to the decommissioning process. Commissioner May inquired what might be acquired for \$6200 as far as a replacement piece and Mr. Betz replied, "a proposal".

J. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Dunn moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Gill seconded the motion. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:51 PM.

Ayes: Commissioners Dunn, Gill, Ramezani, May and Samuels
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None.