

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

December 9th, 2014

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

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM.

B. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: none

Others present: Cultural Arts Manager, Martin Betz and Recording Secretary, Linda Robb

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Samuels moved to approve the November 13, 2014 minutes with the following corrections requested by Commissioner May:

Page 2, paragraph 3 – the word “wide” will now read “deep”; “Shell design” will now read “terra cotta benches”

Commissioner Dunn seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Ayes: Commissioners Dunn, Ramezani, Samuels and May

Nays: none

Abstain: Commissioner Gill

Absent: none

E. CEREMONIAL

None

F. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

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

G. STAFF ITEMS

Decommissioning Policy - Cultural Arts Manager, Martin Betz stated that the City Attorney feels that the Cultural Arts Commission is capable of deciding whether or not to decommission a piece without a separate committee so the section regarding the subcommittee was removed.

Commissioner Gill expressed that he would like a chance to review the policy and discuss at the January meeting. It was requested that the Decommissioning Policy be included on the January agenda under Commission Items.

Harold Roach sculpture – Mr. Betz stated that we are waiting on the contract that needs to be signed before work starts.

Sculpture Garden – Mr. Betz stated that the RFP is out and many inquiries have been received. The RFP went out to the larger public art entities and will be published on the City website within the next couple of days. Submissions are due January 9th, before the commission meets. Commissioner Ramezani clarified that the timeline for the additional location is the same as the rest of the program.

Mr. Betz invited the Commissioners to the opening at the Manhattan Beach Art Center on Friday, December 12th. The show is called Dagnet, featuring LA Art Collaborative Durden and Ray, curated by Kio Griffith. The department is not renting space any more, all shows will have the city stamp on them. Mr. Betz stated that the next show coming up will feature three local Manhattan Beach artists (Terrel Kaisha, Abdul Mazid, Alex Weinstein.) and will open January 23rd.

Commissioner Gill inquired about funds showing on the budget for Arts Manhattan. Mr. Betz stated that would be removed. He stated that the City will not be paying people to show at the Art Center. The City may rent shows periodically if significant.

Commissioner May asked about the position on serving wine. She stated that she believed that the only thing necessary is to hire an insured caterer with a license. Mr. Betz stated that the openings are currently catered by staff because outside caterers are cost prohibitive. Commissioner May stated that the City would be allowed to serve wine if it had the appropriate insurance.

Commissioner Ramezani was pleased that some local artists are being featured. Mr. Betz stated that there are more shows scheduled in 2015 that feature local talent.

Mr. Betz raised the subject of Art Lab – educational programs at the Art Center – would like to promote programs for teens funded by the public arts trust fund for the first year. This would be a joint project with the Mira Costa art program. It would be a visual arts program that is a continuation of the education received at Mira Costa. High quality educators will be available to the youth to learn how to become professional artists.

Commissioner Ramezani stated that there are very limited art classes available to residents apart from the classes offered by the city. There was an art school [Manhattan Beach Art Department] that was open for about a year but closed. She recommended surveying public interest as maybe the program could be further reaching than just teens and visual arts. She stated that music and dance seem to be very popular. She pondered that perhaps the options for visual arts are limited because the right type of classes are not offered. Mr. Betz stated that this program is more like having your own art studio and trying to create a community. It is an experiment, an art lab that is a hybrid of studio and instruction. Mr. Betz stated that there are 3 programs with the MBUSD right now; Curator, Intergenerational and the proposed Art Lab.

Commissioner Dunn stated it seems that Mr. Betz is trying to fill a need that is not currently being met and that if it is a success, could be an example for others to follow.

Commissioner Samuels moved to request permission from the City Council to learn more about and discuss Art Lab. Commissioner Ramezani seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ayes: Commissioners Dunn, Ramezani, Samuels, Gill and May

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Mr. Betz stated that the footings for the Light Gate Centennial Art Piece had been poured into the plaza and the sculpture was half fabricated.

H. COMMISSION ITEMS:

Commissioner Samuels inquired about the budget sheet and pointed out that only \$25,000 had been allocated to the Strand stairs although \$90,000 had been approved.. Mr. Betz stated that \$90,000 was approved, so there is \$65,000 more approved to be used. Commissioner Samuels stated that he wanted to make sure that was the maximum and that more would not be allocated without the Commissions knowledge. He stated that on the flip side, he would be happy to consider allocating more if the project was going to be really spectacular. Mr. Betz stated that currently the bids received are not attractive so work has not yet begun.

Commissioner Gill inquired about the Shell bench. Mr. Betz stated that the issue would be raised at the 12/16 City Council meeting. Commissioner Samuels stated that he had gone down to test the bench and he agreed largely with Commissioner May's previous assessment. He spoke with a person who was sitting on the bench who liked it and that it worked for him and his yoga practice. Commissioner Samuels stated that it is a two-person bench and it would be uncomfortable to share the bench with a stranger. He also stated that the finish on the bench seems to dirty easily. Mr. Betz stated the bench had been coated. Commissioner Gill would like to explore removing it from the catalog because he thinks it is terrible. Commissioner Samuels questions removing the benches but would encourage future purchasers to go out and experience the bench themselves to make sure it is what they want. Commissioner Ramezani stated the benches are meant to be art pieces but they need to be functional and of good quality. Commissioner Dunn stated that the bench program came about because someone wanted to buy a bench with a back but tried for years and could not get a bench through the approval process. That is why the Commission decided to try to have a catalog of pre-approved benches to choose from. Commissioner May stated that the benches are not just art that they need to be functional. Commissioner Gill stated that if it was purely about functionality, it wouldn't be in front of the commission. He stated that there is an art aspect to the benches and they should be functional. Commissioner Dunn stated that maybe a life sized model should be provided before a decision is made for new designs in the future. Commissioner Gill stated that in the past, the commission had the ability to have a sample made but that was voted down. Commissioner Samuels stated that it is tough to ask for a full scale model due to cost. Commissioner Ramezani stated that we should define what functional is so that there is no question. Mr. Betz stated that there are many artists out there that know how to build benches.

Commissioner Gill asked if there has been any discussion regarding the mural. Mr. Betz stated that there has been no progress made on that point.

Commissioner Samuels reported that artist, Cathy Taslitz had been chosen for the Library Art.

Member of the audience and resident, Gary McAulay stated that he had said that he was glad that the BELIEVE sculpture was gone. He also stated that the benches are first and foremost benches and should be functional. He stated that it is great that they are artistic but that they are benches first and pieces of art secondary.

I. GENERAL BUSINESS:

None

J. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gill moved to adjourn. Commissioner Ramezani seconded the motion. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 6:59 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Ayes: Commissioners Dunn, Ramezani, Samuels, Gill and May

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None