

DRAFT  
CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH

*MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION*  
*December 13, 2005*  
6:00 p.m.

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I. CALL TO ORDER

The Cultural Arts Commission (CAC) of the City of Manhattan Beach, California met on Tuesday, December 13, 2005 in the City Council Chamber. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Greco (Chair), Shelby Phillips (Vice-chair),  
Candy Duncan  
Susannah Rosenthal  
Francey Seckinger  
Richard Gill, Director Parks and Recreation Department  
Juanita Purner, Cultural Arts Manager

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes for the November 8, 2005 Commission Meeting will be approved at the January meeting.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

No audience participation

V. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. 05/1213.1 Restoration of Gary Sweeny's Semaphore Art – Joslyn Center  
Mr. Bob Perkins, local resident.

Mr. Perkins' presentation to the Commission regarding the Sweeny Semaphore Art restoration provided some local history. (The Semaphore flag signaling system is an alphabet signal based on the waving of a pair of hand-held flags in a particular pattern.) Mr. Perkins family's involvement with the Boy Scout organization has spanned three generations. Mr. Perkins' father with the help of volunteers, built the Scout House. His interest in restoring the Sweeny art project stems from a personal admiration of the piece and the desire to retain the Boy

Scout themed art work alongside the Scout House. The Sweeny piece adorns the north wall of the Joslyn Center.

The semaphore art spells out the opening lines of one of the lines from John Milton's Sonnet VII:

“How soon Hath Time, the Subtle thief of youth,  
Stol'n on his wing my three and twentieth year!”

(The art work deletes the “!” , uses modern spelling of “stolen”, and changes twenty-third to “fortieth” perhaps because Sweeny was 40ish when he produced the art work; Milton was twenty-four.)

Mr. Perkins mentioned that Gary Sweeny's work is part of the collections at the Denver Art Museum, the Denver Airport and the San Antonio Museum of Art. Sweeny was part of this community and it would be appropriate to maintain an art work by a recognized visual artist.

Mr. Perkins acknowledged:

1. The art piece was temporary and despite rumors of restoration to the area in question, it would serve as a tribute to the Boy Scouts and to the Sweeny family contribution to the City history. Sweeny's father served as Mayor three times and as the Manhattan Beach School Board Chair. His hardware store was on Rosecrans and Highland.
2. Gary Sweeny's recognition as a visual artist could prompt the City to allow restoration of his piece.
3. There would be no cost to the City with Mr. Perkins providing the labor and materials.
4. The value of the piece once restored would increase the City's public art collection.
5. Removal of the work should involve a public process to allow citizens of Manhattan Beach the opportunity to express their views.

Juanita Purner mentioned the large boy scout color photograph she'd received from Gary Sweeny earlier this year and his interest in restoring his piece. Ms. Purner suggested he provide a proposal but did not hear back from him. She believed Gary Sweeny and Mr. Perkins were working together given Perkins was a local resident and he could facilitate the project. But they do not personally know one another.

The photograph is a picture of Gary Sweeny in his Boy Scout uniform, Troop 849's gear; and provides specific Manhattan Beach historical context. This image would replace the faded photo that is located in a light box next to the Semaphore art panels.

The Commission decided Ms. Purner would contact Mr. Sweeny to see if he wanted to complete the restoration of the panels or grant permission to Mr. Perkins.

## VI. REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Purner mentioned the art piece by Katy Stone (“*Wave*”) that Mayor Fahey suggested they view at the Cultural Arts Center. The Mayor’s enthusiasm for the piece, along with that of a couple Council members, led to idea of including the art at the Metlox site.

Not every Commissioner had the opportunity to see the work but plan to do so. The cost is unknown and Homeira Goldstein is trying to reach the artist. This site-specific piece is part of Katy’s exhibition Vital Fluid.

Mr. Gill reported to the Commission that \$50,000 was reallocated from the Public Art Trust toward the \$111,897 needed for the Metlox project elements. Mr. Gill indicated, that in addition to the \$50,000, \$24,000 would be appropriated from the accrued bond interest savings and \$37,000 from the Capital Improvement Plan Fund.

Commissioner Greco referred to the process stated in the City of Manhattan Beach Public Art Master Plan and the One Percent for Art Ordinance – Use of Funds. “Projects to be funded from the proceeds of fees collected hereunder shall consist of works of art placed in public places or incorporated into public buildings, art education programs or art display programs designed by the Cultural Arts Commission and approved or accepted by the City Council.” This section was cited in the initial discussion that took place two months ago regarding the use of trust monies for the Metlox project.

The other Commissioners shared their concerns and voiced frustration with the Commission being left out of the process.

## VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7: 45 p.m.