

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

January 12, 2016

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: Dunn, Gill, May, Samuels, Chairperson Ramezani.

Absent: none

Others present: Martin Betz, Cultural Arts Manager, Eilen Stewart, Ceramics Supervisor and Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 8, 2015

A motion was made and seconded (Gill/Samuels) to approve the December 8, 2015 minutes with the following changes:

Pg. 2: (typos) Second paragraph from the bottom: in sentence starting “Budget update...” add “d” to “change”. Last paragraph, first sentence: add a period after *Light Gate*.

Pg. 3: second paragraph from top, second sentence: insert “and the Chair” after “Commissioner Dunn”. Third sentence beginning “Commissioner Ramezani”: The Chair asked that staff listen to audio and revise accordingly to reflect her concern that despite the hard work that is being done by the Council and Commission, the community is not aware of the public art projects that have been completed.

Ayes: Dunn, Gill, May, Samuels, Chairperson Ramezani.

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

E. CEREMONIAL None

F. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION None

G. STAFF ITEMS:

Budget update

Cultural Arts Manager Betz distributed a print out of the Public Arts Trust Fund by Fiscal year (2003 – 2015) and a monthly summary as of November 30, 2015. Mr. Betz pointed out that currently the undesignated balance is 405k which is a significant increase from 2015 (215k). Comment was made that the amount of an incoming development fee can vary a lot. Commissioner Dunn raised the suggestion of finding a way to establish a process, whereby,

when the fund balance reaches a certain level, then staff could start the process for acquiring an art piece. CA Manager Betz suggested that that was something that might be good to discuss in the upcoming meeting with the City Council which is the next topic on the agenda.

Joint City Council meeting

Cultural Arts Manager Betz informed the Commission that staff is working on scheduling a joint session in March between the City Council and each of the three Parks and Recreation Commissions. This will be addition to the Commission's regular meeting and it will be a working session. It was noted that Mr. Betz would look into the format and he will provide more information at the February meeting, including how the Commission can come to a consensus as one voice on the issues or topics they would like to see discussed. Mr. Betz noted that staff already has a running list of topics (e.g. the Downtown Specific Plan) which he could formalize as an agenda item for the February meeting.

There was brief discussion about cross communication between the CAC and City Council and Mr. Betz stated his opinion that more networking will provide more opportunities for improving communication. Manager Betz reported on the status of the Downtown Specific Plan as reported by Community Development. The Plan has not yet been formalized but there will be two working sessions and the Cultural Arts Commission will be invited to participate. Brief discussion ensued regarding how best for the CAC to be kept "in the loop". Manager Betz stated that he would include the staff report in the "legistar" system, make sure that the CAC has opportunity to participate in the working sessions of the Downtown Specific Plan and will look into the protocol for communicating with the City Council.

Sculpture Garden reception update

Cultural Arts Manager Betz thanked and complimented the Commission for this event held at the Arts Center January 7. Mr. Betz noted that the artists were present and generally well attended and some in attendance were people who just happened to be visiting the Arts Center from out of town, and who were very positive. Chairperson Ramezani commented that she had a concern that there were no City residents in attendance but on the positive side, the artists showed a lot of appreciation that their art was being recognized. The Chair also made the suggestion that it would facilitate networking if at the beginning of such an event there were formal introductions of city officials (even though badges are worn) and key people - like the artists. Commissioner Gill added that they really found it gratifying to see the artists very excited as they have a very large investment and Commissioner May agreed and added that in the reception there was networking and perhaps that was the purpose - for everyone to know who was there. Chairperson Ramezani explained that she thought that formal recognition is important because it emphasizes the value of the event. Manager Betz stated that he was gratified to see people coming from far away just to see the art.

H. COMMISSION ITEMS:

Commissioner Gill brought up the strand bench program and regarding status, Mr. Betz stated that they are actively selling benches and there are 15 left. Further he stated there has

been no follow-up on the part of the individual who had approached the Commission with a bench design. Mr. Betz recalled that the Commission, when considering, wanted to see an actual design and Commissioner Dunn added her recollection that the issue was mainly color choice.

Commissioner Gill brought up the *Light Gate* installation and status of repair to which Mr. Betz responded that the artists will be giving staff an estimate of the repair cost and staff will bring this back to the Commission for review and approval.

Commissioner Gill raised the status of the miniature *Light Gate* and to have some event at the installation; various suggestions were made for such an event. Manager Betz stated he would look into having an event, noting that January 27th was the next date when the sun would set through *Light Gate's* keyhole.

Discussion focused briefly on the concept of a miniature *Light Gate*, with the Commission stating their expectation was that the artists were to produce a miniature replica, but Manager Betz stating that what he received was different - a small stainless steel "I heart Light Gate" composition. Staff brought a sample to the chambers which was passed around. Commissioner Dunn suggested the contract may stipulate miniature *Light Gates* would be fabricated and Manager Betz stated he would check on this. Commissioner Gill noted the ribbon cutting was February 25 last year and it was agreed that instead of a large public reception, the artists would be brought back at sunset and the little pieces that staff has would be handed out.

Chairperson Ramezani asked for a status report on the Art Lab program. Manager Betz stated that the name "Art Lab" will be changed because this name is already being used in El Segundo. StArt is the new name which has been approved by the City Council with General Fund monies. Mr. Betz reported that initially 26 students (Mira Costa AP Art mostly Juniors and Seniors) were accepted. This has dwindled to 8 students due to time demands, and they are working toward the goal of an installation in July. The main goal is for the kids to learn how to get ideas for an art piece entirely on their own. They now are learning with guidance from 2 professional artists, how to follow through with their ideas and do an installation. They work in the art center studio twice a week, 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm Wednesdays, and 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm on Fridays. Their projects were described and some are big undertakings. Manager Betz concluded that the project has had ups and downs and one big thing learned was that it takes so much effort to help the students come up with their project ideas.

Commissioner May reported on meetings she and Manager Betz have been having with residents including with two, Tony and Roger who are interested in becoming involved with the Cultural Arts Commission. They have a great art collection, a talent for putting things together and organizing and are involved in the international arts community. They are interested in organizing exhibits in local restaurants. Brief discussion followed and it was noted that the Chamber is interested in this kind of thing. To start, these interested residents should be invited to openings. The Chair noted this is an example of something that could be added to the ongoing project list that staff is compiling.

Mr. Betz agreed that these types of contacts can bring in ideas (such as from the City of Santa Monica in the case of these two residents) on how to achieve public buy-in to programs. It was noted that Santa Monica has a much larger budget commitment for cultural arts and programs which is related to development in the City. Some standout programs in Santa Monica are their art bank (buy art from local artists) program as well as their zoning includes the ability to have live-work housing units.

Chair Ramezani suggested that these ideas be included on a list of topics for CAC to discuss at the joint Commission/Council meeting. Manager Betz stated that staff will compile a full list for the Commission to consider and agree on for presenting to the City Council. The date of the joint meeting should be set in the very near future.

Chairperson Ramezani stated that the Commissioners are not getting notification of shows, and they would appreciate knowing in advance and getting reminders. Manager Betz responded that in the future he will add information on planned events in the meeting agenda under “Staff Items”. The Chair then reported on the presentation that she and Manager Betz gave that same day to the Neptunian Club regarding the cultural arts programs throughout the City. The presentation covered the CAC background, their purpose, various art projects and the process for acquiring permanent art pieces. Some Neptunians discussed with them after the meeting and a major point was that many were not aware of art pieces in the City. There were requests for a printed brochure and to have a walking tour of art pieces and benches.

Brief discussion ensued and ideas that emerged included: could there be more collaboration with other senior groups? Could the presentation be updated and added to the City website? Could this presentation be repeated in other venues such as Rotary and local schools? Mr. Betz suggested that more presentations could be done with more participation by the Commission.

Mr. Betz announced that the Parks and Recreation Department cultural arts staff will have a day long (9am to 4pm) retreat/work session on Monday, March 21, at the Heritage Square Museum in Los Angeles. Commissioners are invited to give comments and input in advance by email. Due to the Brown Act, only 2 CAC commissioners would be able to attend at the same time. It was suggested that if interested in attending the work sessions, the commission can split (2 each) in morning and afternoon, or Commissioners can attend certain parts such as the luncheon and/or tour. This will be discussed more at the March meeting.

I. GENERAL BUSINESS:

15/1208.1 Sculpture Garden

A staff memo with the subject “Discussion of plans for the 2016-2017 Sculpture Garden program” was provided to the Commission. Manager Betz advised that he needs to research this more and present this subject to the Commission in March with options. He encouraged the Commissioners to research as well. Chairperson Ramezani suggested getting a list of when all the agreements expire so they can devise a time frame. Mr. Betz will work on that.

J. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded (Gill/Dunn) to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with the following roll-call vote and the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 PM to February 9, 2016 in the Council Chambers.

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

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none