

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

December 8, 2015

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

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

B. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: none

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

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Gill moved to approve the November 10, 2015 minutes with changes below.
Commissioner Samuels seconded the motion. The motion passed.

P.2, paragraph 1- remove repetitive sentence "Commissioner Dunn stated that perhaps...should be moved."

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

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

E. CEREMONIAL

None

F. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chairperson Ramezani opened the floor to audience participation.

Seeing none, the floor was closed.

G. STAFF ITEMS:

Cultural Arts Manager, Martin Betz presented the following:

Mr. Betz asked the Commissioners to review work plans of other cities to get an idea of what other work plans look like. Commissioner Ramezani stated that many of the examples offered are not very comparable as those commissions seem to have a level of authority that this Commission does not have.

Commissioner May stated that the Downtown plan seems to be taking over some of the things that the Cultural Arts Commission should be involved in, dealing with arts related topics and signage. Mr. Betz stated that it would be good for the Commission to be involved

with the Downtown Specific plan as well as the Downtown streetscape plan. Commissioner May asked what the Commission could do to show that they are ready to handle public art. Mr. Betz stated that the Commission should write a memo to the Mayor advising him of their interest and willingness to participate and ask how best to do so.

Commissioner Ramezani asked how the Cultural Arts Division is involved in the Downtown Specific and Downtown streetscape plans. Mr. Betz stated that the division is actively engaged in trying to get involved in the projects.

Commissioner Ramezani asked if it would be more appropriate for the Cultural Arts Division and the Director of Parks and Rec to approach the City Manager about the Cultural Arts Division being engaged in the plans. She stated that this way, issues could be brought to the Commission as staff items for discussion.

Commissioner May stated that the Commission needs a joint meeting with the City Council; it is supposed to happen annually.

Commissioner Dunn stated that it would be great to go about this on the staff level and at the City Council level to gain some Commission involvement and get a joint meeting together for some dialog. She feels that it's time for the City to look to the Commission as a resource to help inject a sense of artfulness into everything that the City does. She would like to know if there is way for the Commission to have a voice in the Downtown plans.

Commissioner Gill stated his view is that the commission exists to help the City Council when they need help vetting. It is important for the Commission to come up with its own ideas but the ideas need to be succinct and not so general.

Commissioner Samuels made the following motion: "The Downtown Specific Plan and the Downtown Streetscape Plan are plans that directly affect the visual content of the City. Therefore, the Cultural Arts Commission would like to have the opportunity to offer expertise and recommendations. We hereby request from the City Council that we are able to discuss the Downtown Specific Plan and the Downtown Streetscape plan and that the City will continue to keep the Commission updated on the those programs." The discussion leading up to the motion is to be included in the memo to the City Council.

Commissioner Ramezani seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Commissioner Gill is concerned that the motion is too broad in scope.

Commissioner Ramezani opened the floor to public comment. Seeing none, the floor was closed.

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

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Budget update: Mr. Betz stated that the budget numbers have not changed since last month.

Commissioner Gill inquired about *Light Gate*. Mr. Betz stated two panels had been replaced. He added that the new panels look great but they make the old panels look bad so he is speaking with the artist to see how much it will cost to replace the other three panels. He confirmed that *Light Gate* has been cleaned and is now on a cleaning schedule.

Commissioner Dunn asked about the plaque for *Light Gate*. Mr. Betz stated that plaques will be made for all the art pieces. Once the decommissioning policy is in place, all of the art will be evaluated and plaques will be made.

Commissioner Ramezani asked for the timeline for the decommissioning policy so that the plaques can get done. Commissioner Dunn and the chair asked Mr. Betz to fast track the plaques for the artwork and not have them be contingent on the decommissioning policy. Commissioner Dunn asked that the Commission be involved in the development of the final wording for the *Light Gate* plaque.

Commissioner Ramezani is frustrated that the Commission works hard to do projects the community doesn't seem to be aware of the projects being done.

Mr. Betz stated that the staff is at capacity for programming which is why the City is not actively planning new activities at Metlox. Commissioner Dunn asked about an extension of the Farmers Market since there is already a structure in place. She asked if there could be an art component there, monthly, quarterly or at key times of the year.

Commissioner Dunn asked if there could be more of a partnership between the Library and Cultural Arts Commissions. Commissioner Gill encouraged Martin to keep an eye out for opportunities for the Commissions to work together.

H. COMMISSION ITEMS:

Commissioner Gill stated that the November 14th Light Gate event was very special.

Commissioner Ramezani reminded that the Neptunian Women's Club presentation is coming up on Tuesday, January 12th. They would like to hear about the outdoor art installations and the mission of the Commission.

Commissioner Ramezani spoke with Leadership Manhattan Beach. She stated that the project they are working on is to install concrete ping pong tables at various locations. She stated that there may be an artistic element to the tables that should be reviewed by the Commission.

Commissioner Samuels commented on the move of the Patricia Vader piece from the Veterans Parkway to the Art Center. He offered the following statement: "We, the appointed commission appointed by and elected Council followed an approved and specific process that among other things included many opportunities for the public to speak out and had many opportunities for appropriate times to voice their concern. We went through this process, offered recommendations to the Council and it was subsequently approved. Outside of this process, in private conversations, decisions were made by staff that altered the Commission's recommendation and ultimately altered the Council's decision. I find that these actions undermined the commission and I feel that it disrespects the Council's process and decision and I also feel that it sets a dangerous precedent."

Commissioner Gill asked if the Vader piece would be returning to the Veterans Parkway. Mr. Betz stated there will be further discussion regarding that location.

Commissioner Ramezani agreed with Commissioner Samuels and added that after the decision was made, the Commissioners were not even sent a courtesy email to inform them of the location change.

Commissioner Dunn reported that Bergamot Station in Santa Monica will be holding their annual art sale.

I. GENERAL BUSINESS:

15/1208.1 Sculpture Garden 2016/2017 – Mr. Betz stated that from a staffing point of view, it has been a challenge to keep vital. One of the challenges is that the artists did not have enough time to get the pieces done by the deadline. He would like to talk about extending the timeline to give the artists more time.

Commissioner Gill stated that in the beginning, it was easy to find pot and pole art pieces because Southern California, specifically San Diego, was full of pot sculptures. Mr. Betz stated that once the program was discontinued in San Diego, the artwork dried up. The only city that still runs a similar program in Southern California is Vista. He added that artists creating pot and pole artwork depend on showing in multiple locations to recoup the cost of creating. Commissioner Gill stated that many want the poles gone but if the program goes away there could be many challenges for installation. Mr. Betz will put together options other than pots and poles and make a recommendation to the Commission.

Commissioner Samuels stated that he did not see the value, when the Commission voted to raise the stipend by \$500 to get the same thing they were getting before. He pondered how much it would need to be to get quality art work.

Commissioner Dunn suggested raising the stipend and doing an 18 month or two year program. She recommended choosing two rounds worth of art work for the next two programs. That way, when the second year art goes up, the Commission can be starting the process to choose the following year. Commissioner Samuels expressed concern about having enough quality submissions to choose two rounds worth. Commissioner Samuels supports the idea of extending the term. Commissioner Gill advised that Wayne Powell is very passionate about keeping the program at one year. He added that Mayor Burton was concerned with the stipend increase last year. Commissioner Ramezani stated that another stipend may be avoided by extending the term. She stated that the increased term would allow for the pieces to be shown longer because it takes into account the time needed to produce the piece. Commissioner Samuels stated that the timeline is off because of necessary extensions. He stated that a longer term would help keep the program on a more consistent timeline.

Commissioner Dunn asked Mr. Betz to do an analysis of the past five or six to see how much the extensions have cost the City and how long the pieces were displayed. She asked Mr. Betz to also include extra costs as this may help justify the idea of a longer term. Commissioner Dunn stated that a competitive analysis of what other cities are doing and how much are they spending would be useful. Commissioner Dunn asked Mr. Betz to research if there are any large benefactors that public with Cities for public art. Mr. Betz stated that a temporary sculpture garden almost feels like a missed opportunity to install permanent art pieces. Commissioner May stated that she would like to see more permanent

pieces installed in the City instead of having these temporary pieces. Mr. Betz stated that it would be great to have a permanent sculpture garden.

Commissioner Dunn stated that it may be the perfect time, because the economy is booming and the Trust fund is growing, to make a schedule to add permanent pieces or when the trust fund reaches a certain balance that a piece be acquired. Mr. Betz agrees that a plan would be in order.

Commissioner Samuels stated there is now about the same amount of money in the Trust Fund as the when the Commission committed to Light Gate and 50% of the Library Art. He agreed with Commissioner Dunn that it would be great if some parameters were laid down to determine when new pieces would be considered.

The sculpture garden reception will be January 7th, at 4:00 p.m. Mr. Betz reported that the last artist cannot install his piece until the end of January. Commissioner Dunn stated that there should be a program for a walking tour.

Commissioner Samuels asked if Public Works could look over the submissions to provide input on possible issues before the Commission reviews them. Mr. Betz agrees that would be a good idea as the Public Works department has a very good understanding of the public art in the City.

Commissioner Dunn wondered if there is a process of acquiring a piece from the temporary sculpture garden. Commissioner Samuels stated that the Commission always has the right to make recommendations.

J. ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Gill moved to adjourn. Commissioner Dunn seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM.